Deliverable - Admissions and Hiring Policies

Education is essential but action is also imperative for achieving the objectives of URGE. Therefore, each topic is paired with concrete deliverables for the individual pods to develop, draft, and share. This deliverable is examining the policies for admissions and hiring at your organization and identifying any new policies to propose or current policies to change.

Hiring and admissions is the entry point to your organization. Policies and procedures at this gate will have major impacts on the people who are part of your university or company, as well as the community who interacts with you. Some of these are legal requirements and some are guidelines that organizations have more control over. Hiring policies include the text of job advertisements, where those advertisements are posted, the requirements for an application, the makeup of your hiring committees and the rubrics/procedures they follow, the interview process, strategic hiring techniques including group or cohort hires, as well as the policies of your organization regarding compensation equity. In addition to the policies for hiring, academic institutions will have admissions policies including the application process (application fees, letters of recommendation, SAT or GRE[4] testing scores), an evaluation process and rubrics for applications, in-person interviews or campus visit days, as well as unwritten norms such as reaching out to an advisor via email ahead of time. Each one of these policies and procedures is an opportunity to improve the inclusivity and lower or remove barriers to your organization.

This deliverable is an audit of the hiring and, if applicable, the admissions process of your organization. As you investigate postings and advertisements, the application and evaluation processes, equal opportunity/inclusion language, and required fees or test scores, please also include proposed improvements that would increase the diversity of not only your applicant pools but also your new hires/admissions and the retention of these individuals.

Suggested discussion questions:
- What was your experience like going through hiring and/or admissions, start to finish?

Hiring (student perspective): Students are offered the opportunity to view candidate materials and view the job presentations. When giving feedback to the hiring committee, the students feel that who the student's prefer isn't always who is offered a position. The department could increase transparency between faculty and students.

Admissions (student perspective): Admissions and contacting prospective mentors feels very secretive and like an unspoken process. Transparent direction on how to contact mentors, and more importantly who has available funding, should be listed and made very obvious on multiple platforms (i.e. website and listservs).

Hiring (faculty perspective): Students perspective is taken into consideration as a measure of candidate acceptability - if students dislike a particular candidate, they are very unlikely to be offered a position. Faculty are allowed to meet with candidates outside of the hiring committee. Candidates are provided ample opportunity to feel comfortable, present their strengths to the committee, and understand if the opportunity is a right fit for them.

Admissions (faculty perspective): Recruiting students is driven in large part by inter-departmental risk aversion when deciding between particularly "strong" student candidates (e.g. those with previous research experience). For specific projects with goals that need to meet funding agency deadlines or requirements, faculty hesitate to admit students who they are unsure may not enjoy specific projects or share research interests with that project. Recruiting efforts will continue to be advertised more broadly to limit the accessibility barrier.

● Who is on your hiring and/or admissions committees? Who interfaces with applicants?

Faculty are on hiring and admissions committees. Students, faculty and staff and interface with applicants.

● Does your organization make their hiring/admissions policies public? Are they reviewed?

Yes. Compliance and non-discrimination policies are public as mandated by law for state universities.

https://marinesciences.uconn.edu/academic/apply-grad/
Policies here for graduate admissions

https://hr.uconn.edu/jobs/

Pods should upload their findings and proposed changes to admissions and hiring policies to the URGE website by 4/2/2021. We also encourage pods to post on their organization's website, and share over social media (#URGEoscience and tag @URGEoscience). Sharing deliverables will propagate ideas, foster discussion, and ensure accountability.

[1] R. E. Bernard, E. H. G. Cooperdock, No progress on diversity in 40 years. Nature Publishing Group. 11, 1–5 (2018). [2] https://notimeforsilence.org/
[3] https://www.change.org/p/geoscientists-call-for-a-robust-anti-racisim-plan-for-the-geosciences
[4] S. H. Ledford et al., #GeoGRExit: Why Geosciences Programs Are Dropping the GRE, Eos, 101, 10.1029/2020EO145223 (2020).