URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

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Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for University/Organization - Example URGE Deliverable

This is what was found by the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences (SEFS) Pod at University of Washington on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

Note: We acknowledge this information is not always accessible to students and even staff. If you do not have access to this information, please reflect on your own experience and outline what admissions and/or hiring should be like to foster a diverse and inclusive community.

- **What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement[1] is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available[2]?**
    - **Faculty hiring:** Standard statement on faculty positions. https://ap.washington.edu/eoaa/
    - **Grad students:**
        - No statement that we're aware of
        - Graduate Research Assistantships advertised through listservs and on the SEFS blog are primarily with external organizations, and so EEO statements are dependent on the organization. For example, this advertisement for a Forestry Technician position does not include an EEO statement, but this post for the US Fish and Wildlife Service does.
        - job/admissions advertisements that are internal to the department are rare - really lab/PI specific, initiated via email and personal connection
        - Information may be present on specific lab websites, but not as transparent as the university-wide HR requirements

- **Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?**
    - Faculty:
        - Formal UW hires system
        - Listservs
        - Professional societies
        - Social media (e.g., twitter)
        - Word of mouth

[1] R. Kelley, 10 Samples of an Effective EEO Statement, blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eeo-statement-samples, (2017).

[2] https://careers.whoi.edu/opportunities/diversity-inclusion/

[3] K. Cobb, #GRExit Resources, https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.13215461.v1, (2020).

[4] J. Posselt, Inside Graduate Admissions: Merit, Diversity, and Faculty Gatekeeping, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvjghw8s, (2016).

[5] https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/rubric-for-evaluating-diversity-statements.html

[6] K. Griffin, J. Bennett, T. York, Leveraging Promising Practices, Washington DC: Aspire Alliance, (2020).

  ■ Strategies: Collect data on how applicants heard about position and use results to broaden search/make it more transparent

Students:
- Again, depends on lab/PI positions since most students are admitted via conversations with PI
- If a professor wants a student, the student will get in regardless of the holistic admissions process so long as they submit the required materials
- Some advertisements posted to listservs (e.g., Ecolog) or job boards (e.g., College of the Environment job board)
- Strategies for reaching applicants
  - Send current grad students to career fairs/grad school fairs - that way they can interface with interested students and offer an honest perspective of what it's like to be a graduate student
  - Demystify the process of applying to grad school - provide seminar/course for undergrad students that provides resources for how to apply (i.e., cold emailing profs), search for programs, requirements, options for career with a grad degree, etc.
  - Behind closed doors talks between students and applicants during the application process to ensure candid communication of what it's like to be a grad student there

- **What are the requirements for an applicant, e.g. letters of recommendations, fees/test scores[3]/grades? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?**

  Grad students:
  - Requirements: letters of recommendation, personal statement, research statement, transcripts, GRE, application fee
  - SEFS recently dropped GRE requirement
  - SEFS in process of providing prompts for personal and research statements, no work yet on prompts for letters of recommendation
  - Application fee could be additional barrier to entry that could be lowered or removed
    - We could explore if funding is available through the department to waive application fee based on some criteria.

- **How are applicants/applications evaluated? Is that process and/or rubric[4,5] public? What kind of biases are introduced in this process and what strategies are used to address these, e.g. removing applicant names?**
  - Faculty and staff positions ([Public Hiring Procedure Document](#))
    - Typically, a search committee is established to hire for particular faculty and staff positions. The committee is made up of faculty members, undergraduate students, graduate students, and staff. Search committee members are appointed by the Director.
    - The search committee creates the assessment rubric that will be applied to each applicant, and coordinates the evaluation of resumes/ CV's, potential visits to UW, presentations on their work to the department, etc.
    - Biases:
      - Search committee has a lot of power over who ultimately gets selected; although there are some guidelines that the Director has to follow when appointing the search committee ("should seek to balance racial, ethnic, and gender diversity;" "should include senior and junior SEFS faculty, at least one faculty from outside of SEFS, a graduate student, and a current or former member of the diversity, equity and inclusion committee") they ultimately have the final say in who is on the committee.

  - Students
    - Each application is reviewed by at least 3 faculty members within SEFS; the applicant identifies three professors that they would be interested in working with on the application, and this guides the choice of reviewers.
    - The rubric is not publicly available, but the following information is provided on the program website (https://sefs.uw.edu/students/graduate-degrees/graduate-application-process/):
      - "...use a holistic review approach in order to recognize a broad set of achievements including academic achievement, potential for success in conducting research, and evidence of motivation, persistence, and leadership. In addition to traditional measures of academic performance (i.e., transcript, letters of recommendation, writing quality), other considerations include:
        - Academic excellence and growth
        - Strong work ethic and ability to progress toward a goal

- ○ Perseverance in the face of academic or other life challenges
- ○ Research experience in related field(s), publication or other activities
- ○ Experience with diverse cultures/ecological/socioeconomic environments
- ○ Potential for or demonstrated experience with positively contributing to a community that values equity, inclusion, and diversity"

- **Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?**
  - ○ Students
    - ■ MS and PhD: Each application is reviewed by at least 3 faculty members within SEFS; the applicant identifies three professors that they would be interested in working with on the application, and this guides the choice of reviewers.
    - ■ Master of Environmental Horticulture (MEH) and Master of Forest Resources (MFR): review process completed by a panel
    - ■ The Graduate Student Advisor and Student and Academic Services Manager (administrators) primarily interact with prospective and admitted students. We do not currently have a full time Graduate Student Advisor for the department (we do have a half-time interim advisor).
  - ○ Faculty Positions
    - ■ The search committee presents a recommendation to the faculty, who discuss and then vote on the acceptability of each individual candidate and the overall rankings.

- **Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?**
  - ○ We do not believe our department's hiring or admissions process has been evaluated by outside consultants
  - ○ Our Department's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEIC) has worked on a departmental plan that would include adding questions focused on DEI to the rubric and application process for faculty and staff. There has not been push back by our department.

- SEFS 2020 Holistic Admissions working group - listed in the DEI plan - came up with a list of exclusionary standards in current graduate admissions process

- **Has your university or company implemented or considered strategies like cohort hiring, mentoring, dual career support and partner hires, re-visioning your work culture, or other considerations outlined in "Leveraging Promising Practices"[6]?**
  - In the DEIC's Draft Plan: "Prioritize cluster hires of new faculty within SEFS and jointly across units to help create a cohort of new faculty to foster a greater sense of camaraderie and belonging."
  - Some new faculty can be paired with a tenured faculty program for some form of peer mentoring
  - The College of the Environment's Student Advisory Committee has developed a mentorship program for graduate and undergraduate students to discuss career goals, graduate school, etc.
  - The SEFS Graduate Student Council facilitates an opt-in peer-mentoring program for pairing incoming grad students with current grad students (often with no or limited support from administration)