

Session #5 Deliverable

This is what was found by **Woods Hole Interdisciplinary Pod** (mostly WHOI, plus MBL and UW) 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) statement¹ is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available²?**

WHOI supports a diverse and inclusive workforce, and we encourage females, minorities, veterans and those with disabilities to apply. WHOI offers a comprehensive benefit package that includes medical and dental plans, child care subsidy, an employer contribution retirement plan, vacation time, flexible scheduling, and family illness days. WHOI also provides Dual Career services for which we are committed to providing assistance to your spouse or partner should they be impacted by your career decision. We have a dedicated team who will work with applicants to identify and explore available options within WHOI or the community.

WHOI faculty jobs not only include EEO statements, but also a paragraph in the job description about DEI at WHOI. For example, here's a paragraph from the job description in a recent WHOI Physical Oceanography Tenure Track Advertisement:

"Diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral to WHOI's academic excellence and leadership in the global scientific community. WHOI stands committed to a sustained Institution-wide effort to advance inclusion and belonging throughout all levels of the Institution. We strive for a diverse and inclusive workforce, and particularly encourage women, minorities, veterans, those with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups to apply. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status."

We note, however, that some WHOI job postings actually list ability requirements, and we wonder if WHOI could do a better job on this.

And here's the EEO statement at the end of the advertisement:

WHOI is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer/Disabled/Veterans/M/F. We encourage Veterans and those with Disabilities to apply. Applications are reviewed confidentially. Applicants that require accommodation in the job application process are encouraged to contact us at (508) 289-2253 or email eeo@whoi.edu for assistance.

- **Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?**

To STEM professional organizations in the field of the search (e.g., AGU, UNAVCO, IRIS). In our recent search ads were sent to other organizations aiming to increase the diversity of potential applicants: Chronicles of Higher Education, HigherEdJobs.com, Association for Women in Sciences, Black Issues in Higher Education, and the National Association of Black Geoscientists. Can't evaluate if this had a positive impact from only one example, but a sustained effort from HR to post ads in these organizations may yield results in the long term. We note that some efforts we are aware of at WHOI have simply targeted lists of minority science institutions, although there is no uniform institutional suggestion or database is available on how to thoughtfully place ads to improve recruitment of diverse applicants.

- **What are the requirements for an applicant, e.g. letters of recommendations, fees/test scores³/grades? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?**

For faculty hires, there are no fees. Letters of recommendation are obtained by the Department, not the candidate. We do not know any problematic questions.

Requirements for graduate application: undergrad transcript, letters of recommendation, english proficiency exam for non-native speakers, statement of objectives, fee (waived if needed due to financial hardship), GRE requirement was waived in 2020/21 due to COVID and there is an internal review ongoing about whether to continue with the GRE requirement or not from 2022 on

Requirements for faculty application: research statement, diversity statement, references, CV, publications (3 most relevant)

- **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?**

Evaluations by Search Committee based on ad-hoc rubrics. There must be an effort to homogenize metrics across departments and fields. Rubrics are not public. Anonymizing candidates or eliminating info about school degree to eliminate implicit biases is not possible in our fields.

Presently, the evaluation process differs for each department and for each faculty search.

- **Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?**

A search committee put in place by Department chair guides the process and makes recommendations to Chair. Chair makes decision by consulting with the sci. staff

- **Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?**

Yes, WHOI HR is/has been consulting with an external firm to homogenize the hiring processes across the institution.

- **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?**

Yes, but not uniformly. For example, partner hires are possible but generally require the partner to apply to separate job call and successfully get the interview stage before any offer can be extended (i.e., it is more difficult at WHOI for a partner to be hired than at other institutions). Mentoring exists and varies by department, but generally includes regular meetings throughout the tenure process with a small committee of tenured staff both within the department and from other departments. Efforts have been made recently to shape a new “WHOI Vision” with the goal of changing research directives as well as the general culture, with particular emphasis on promoting DEI initiatives. It’s too early to know how successful this effort will be. We aren’t aware of cohort hiring efforts.

Our proposal to improve admissions and hiring at WHOI:

- Clear, transparent definitions of what defines (a) **merit** (i.e., what will be evaluated, and how) and (b) **success** are must be included in job advertisements and graduate application info (i.e., on the website/clearly displayed)
 - Note: “merit” and “success” in graduate school or as a faculty member need to be rethought (i.e., grades, GRE scores, number of publications alone are insufficient metrics of merit; writing lots of papers and grants is an insufficient definition of success). The status quo is not working to create a diverse geoscience field.
- For recruitment and retention of geoscientists of color in places like Cape Cod that lack the diversity of cities, we recommend institutional investment in building cohorts with the broader New England geoscience community, at the graduate, postdoctoral, and faculty levels. This can and should be developed and supported by a chief diversity officer / office of diversity. For example, we suggest that starting an official network for geoscientists of color (at grad/postdoc/faculty levels) among WHOI and geoscience departments within a ~100 mi radius (Brown, URI, MIT, Harvard, Northeastern, other Boston/Mass. schools) and putting in the institutional resources to facilitate regular social interactions and keep the network supported over time (since students, postdocs come and go) could go along way toward building an inclusive and welcoming community for geoscientists of color at WHOI. We also recommend cluster hires as a means of building cohorts.

- Standardizing hiring and admissions practices at the institutional level/across departments (in addition to making them transparent to applicants) and using rubrics to balance quantitative and qualitative metrics. Crucially, these rubrics can only be made once we have agreed upon how our institution reevaluate and redefines merit and success (see first bullet point).
 - We note that abandoning quantitative metrics altogether and instead relying on qualitative ones can be problematic, since decision making based on qualitative factors alone can allow for greater implicit bias. A nuanced balance must be sought and, ultimately, this requires more time and therefore financial investment on the part of the institution to support a more fair and thorough applicant review process.
- Efforts to weigh diversity versus other conventional factors are crucial at both the faculty and graduate admissions stages. However, we note that the earlier we can implement a holistic approach to down-weighting things like test scores and undergraduate pedigree and more thoughtfully considering an applicant's background, the better. By making serious commitments to enhance diversity in the current generation of graduate students, we will inherently increase the diversity of the next generation of faculty.
- We recognize that WHOI has in the past hired consultants to evaluate strategies to increase diversity. These should not be one-time events but should be followed up regularly to ensure a continued commitment to enhancing the diversity of our community.