Strategic Diversity Plan for Faculty Hiring and Retention
Unit Strategic Plan
5/15/2022

University of Utah Geology & Geophysics Department

Introduction

The Geology and Geophysics (GEO) Department values diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and is committed to improving the culture of belonging for students, staff, and faculty. These efforts are evidenced most publicly by a Department Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Mission Statement and Department Professional Ethics Policy, both ratified by faculty and posted on the department webpage. Past and ongoing DEI efforts that support this mission include diverse faculty and student recruiting/ hiring, mentoring, support, and retention, department- and college-level DEI committees, DEI training opportunities, and student groups and activities that promote inclusion.

Geoscience is one of the least diverse STEM disciplines and has not made progress in diversity over the past few decades (Bernard and Cooperdock, 2018). The broad lack of diversity in the GEO Department and College of Mines and Earth Sciences (CMES) is reflective of this problem.

The GEO Department is composed of faculty, staff and students that are variable in their level of commitment to practices that promote DEI. As a result, students, faculty and staff have a widely varying collection of experiences between individuals and groups as it relates to DEI. Collectively, we are only as strong as our weakest links in this respect.

DEI efforts are not included in the department budget in any formal way.

Self-Assessment

Department strengths & efforts

The Geology and Geophysics Department has demonstrated ongoing commitment to fostering a culture of inclusion, with a multi-pronged approach to improving diversity.

Recent faculty searches have been successful at diversifying faculty in the department. The last four GEO department hires over the last four years have resulted in hiring candidates from underrepresented groups in geoscience. Specifically, the recent spring 2022 faculty search for two open positions in the GEO department was successful in creating a framework for evaluation and hiring that prioritized the success of applicants from underrepresented groups in geoscience. Eight out of nine of the short-list candidates were from underrepresented groups. Negotiations with two candidates, one for each position, is currently ongoing. The evaluation criteria and process for the search is detailed in Appendix A at the end of this document.

Additional ongoing and past (2 yrs.) DEI efforts include:

- Assembling (July 1, 2020) and maintaining an active department-level Diversity and Climate committee
- Assembling (July 1, 2020) and maintaining an active college-level Committee for the Advancement of Inclusion and Diversity (CAID)
- Department and college-level DEI activities are closely coordinated with overlapping faculty and students serving on each committee
- College-level EDI action plan created, updated, and posted to website
- Participation (spring 2021) in Unlearning Racism in Geoscience (URGE) curriculum, NSF-funded, 3 University of Utah pods (36 faculty, staff and students) with resulting URGE deliverables posted to department and college website, ongoing management plan for recommended policy revisions in place
- Drafting and ratifying department Equity, Diversity and Inclusion statement
- Student leading and participation in a college-level Inclusive Earth group promoting DEI in in Earth Science and Engineering, founded and led by students in 2016, college provides funding
- Optional participation in the following virtual DEI faculty and staff trainings and seminars, promoted at department and college level: Whiteness at Work, Office of Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Title IX Seminar, Project Implicit (Harvard), STRIDE (University of Michigan), Design Justice (Middlebury College), LGBTQ Issues in STEM (Dr. Tony Butterfield)
- Optional participation in the following virtual DEI trainings and activities at the university level: Friday Forums and Collective Day of Action
- Updating college-level RPT policy to include DEI activities as indicators of excellence and effectiveness (ongoing, draft document in discussion)
- Hiring of three new faculty, with attention to improving diversity in recruiting, as well as systematic rubric-based evaluation of DEI criteria in application, interviewing and hiring decisions
- Application to American Geophysical Union's Bridge Partnership Institution Program to increase graduate students from under-represented groups in geosciences, submitted Fall 2020, revised and resubmitted Fall 2021, revision and resubmission planned for Fall 2022.
- Department Graduate Affairs committee prioritizes admission and funding support (fellowship, research assistantship, teaching assistantship) for applicants and current students from underrepresented groups.

Goals, Strategies, Deliverables, and Metrics

URGE deliverables and management plan as well as college-level EDI action plan are both sets of existing documents outlining department and college-level DEI goals, strategies, deliverables, and metrics that have guided DEI activities over the past year. Many (not all) of these plans have been carried out over the last year. These plans will continue to be in place and an monitored separately from the goals outlined below in this diversity plan.

The department Diversity Plan should focus on the following goals:

Goals:

1) Recruit and retain faculty of color, as well as those who identify as women and/or LBGTQ+.
2) Recruit and retain students of color, as well as those who identify as women and/or LGBTQ+
3) Enact equity initiatives that improve recruitment and retention
4) Improve mentoring framework and accountability for pre-tenure faculty

Metrics:
1) Maintain accurate annual data about all GG faculty, staff, and student demographics
2) Continue to prioritize more inclusive and equitable departmental cultures and policies
3) Provide annual opportunities for faculty feedback

Implementation Plan

EDI action plan and URGE management plan are already in place for implementation. The college level Committee for Advancement of Inclusion and Diversity as well as, secondarily, the department level Diversity and Climate committee are responsible for monitoring these plans.

Three year plan to achieve the goals and metrics listed above:

For fall 2022, improved mentoring plan will be in place, with the anticipated start of three new pre-tenure faculty. The department mentoring committee is responsible for carrying this out.

EDI action plan and URGE management plan will be monitored each semester by the Committee for Advancement of Inclusion and Diversity (CAID) and the department Diversity and Climate committee. CAID meeting monthly. The department Diversity and Climate committee meets as needed in line with priorities.

The department Diversity and Climate committee will meet once a semester with the department faculty at large and department chair to ensure progress is made toward each of the outlined goals and metrics, with appropriate resource support to do so.

The chairs of the two department and college-level committees will coordinate a once yearly meeting with the Assistant Vice President for Faculty Equity and Diversity as a progress check-in and for ongoing support and connections to other units doing this work.

Appendix A: Spring 2022 faculty search evaluation criteria

Evaluation of all applications

3 – 4 faculty reviewed every application (189 applicants for two positions) using the following criteria, with integer only scores of 1 - 5 in each category.

Scoring algorithm:
Rubric for screening (1=inadequate, 2 = adequate, 3 = outstanding, or 1=poor, 2 = fair, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=excellent)

1) Research performance and potential
   a. (1-3) Quality and quantity of research **performance** *relative to applicant career stage*, based on factors such as amount and type of research funding, number and quality of research publications, H-index, etc.
   b. (1-3) **Potential** for future accomplishment based on creative and ambitious research statement, breadth or emerging nature of research topic, and potential for excellence as identified by letter-writers, as well as potential for the applicant to leverage support for their research enterprise.
   c. (1-3) **Fit** to advertised disciplinary areas, and potential for department to develop needed facilities for the applicant to conduct their proposed research.
2) Recruiting, teaching, and mentoring performance or potential for a diverse and inclusive community
   a. (1-3) Demonstrated recruiting, teaching, or mentoring **performance** appropriate for the applicant's career stage, or **potential** to recruit, teach, and mentor**,** as indicated in their record and/or statements.
   b. (1-3) Demonstrated **performance** for the applicant through their recruiting, teaching, mentoring, and collaborations, or indicated **potential** based on their statements, to contribute to actively advancing a diverse and inclusive geoscience community where every individual is welcomed, respected, and valued regardless of their gender, race, sexual orientation, demographic, and intellectual point of view.
   c. (1-3) **Fit** to envisioned department's current and future recruiting, teaching, and mentoring needs.

Those with averaged scores (across all criteria and all six reviewing faculty) that exceed 4 out of 5 were advanced forward with requests for references. The averaged scores were also examined in terms of the effect of normalizing values to a common average for each criterion, which yielded similar results. The union of the two sets with scores exceeding 4 (non-normalized and normalized) produced 42 individuals.

Short-format interview process:

Scoring according to the above rubric was performed for all 42 subset applicants by all nine members of the committee. The scoring was performed on a 3-point scale with 1 as the top tier and with an eye toward obtaining approximately 7 candidates per tier.

Candidates were highlighted according to three metrics from the scores for the six criteria:
   a) Highest numbers of top-tier (1) counts
   b) Counts of top-tier (1) across the reviewer pool
   c) Counts of averaged scores across criteria that were below average (1 being top tier, 3 being bottom tier)

Candidates who were highlighted according to these criteria were considered for short-format interviews.

Short interview questions included the following:

1.	Tell us about your most important or exciting research accomplishment thus far.
2.	What are the societal impacts of your research?
3.	What do you feel is the most important thing an institution like ours can do to prepare students for their future, and what will you personally do to assist students in achieving success?
4.	How do you plan to recruit students from historically underrepresented groups in STEM?

Long-format interviews and hiring recommendation:

Following short-format interviews, each candidate was ranked relative to one another on a 3-point scale (with 1 as the top tier, 3 being bottom tier) on a number of criteria, one of which was DEI contributions. Committee deliberation and evaluation following long format interviews also considered DEI contributions as the one of the main evaluation criteria, ranking candidates relative to one another on a 3-point scale.