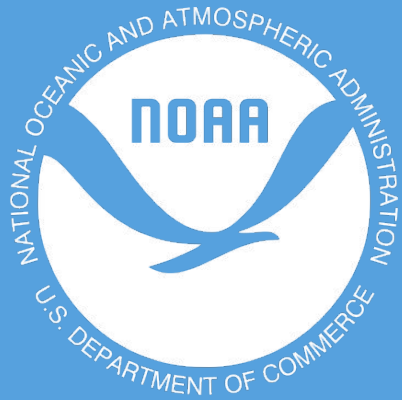
# Diversifying the federal workforce

## A DEI recruiting tool for NOAA

**Team Citrus**
**UW iSchool Capstone: Winter/Spring 2024**



# Project Introduction

**Project Title:**
Internal DEI Recruiting Tool

**Sponsor:**
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

## Team Citrus:

**Justin Sukomol**
UX Designer + PM

**Sarah Thomas**
UX Designer + PM

**Peijie Zheng**
Developer

**Hung Nguyen**
UX Designer

**Scott Nguyen**
Developer

# Project Context

## What is NOAA?

- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is science-based federal agency
- Aims to understand and predict changes in climate, weather, ocean and coasts + manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources

## Why NOAA?

- Team alignment with NOAA's mission to recruit a diverse workforce for the future
  - Provide diverse team POVs
  - Prior projects surrounding DEI initiatives
  - Potential to create a lasting impact

# Problem Context

## Lack of diversity in federal workforce

1/3 of the federal workforce will be eligible to retire by end of 2024

Executive order by President to improve outreach to underserved communities

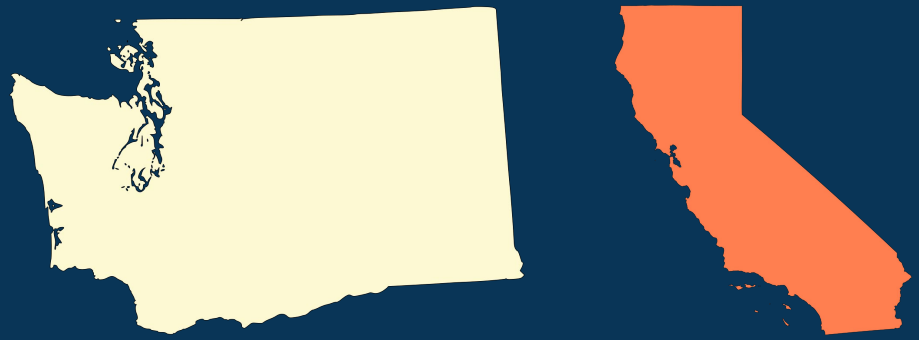
## Inability to connect with underrepresented students

No efficient tools to find underserved undergrad programs near NOAA offices

# Problem Context Continued

## Potential Demand

- Demand for increased tools encompasses WA and CA state NOAA employees (15+ offices)
- Most recent recruiting tool was made last year by a previous Capstone project
  - Lacks sophisticated data filtration, UI, & CA data



# Problem Statement

How might **NOAA staff** conducting recruiting efforts **achieve a more diverse workforce** so that they can better represent the communities they serve and **advance NOAA's mission**?

# Key Research Insights

## MARKET RESEARCH

- Data should be easy to understand → Less is more!

## USER RESEARCH

- “I am the only woman of color in a lab of 40 federal staff”
- NOAA recruits from same big universities

## LITERATURE REVIEW

- Diverse workforce → endless benefits
- Many companies lack a stance on DEI

**Elena Martinez**

NOAA Staff Member

# Persona #1

## SCENARIO

- Sole woman of color on the team
- Assists in NOAA internship recruitment

## PAIN POINTS

- Numerous universities to comb through
- UI challenging to navigate and digest

## GOALS

- Diversify NOAA's workforce
- Make educated decisions based on DEI goals
- Advanced filters

# Key Concepts

## Highlighting DEI Stance

- Important to contextualize DEI efforts — not just general statements

## Better Understanding of University Diversity

- Focusing on different types of schools with different demographics

## Outreach Efforts to Schools

- Effectively promote NOAA internship programs for targeted schools

# Concept Validation

## DEI

- Appreciation of the NOAA experiences for recruiting
- Better understanding of NOAA's DEI mission

## Demographics

- Clarity on how demographic data reflect DEI efforts
- How can recruiters reach out to targeted schools?

## Accessibility

- Use consistent language for a more intuitive experience
- Add annotations for acronyms/ terminologies

# Solution Approach

## Website

- Responsive password protected

## Technologies

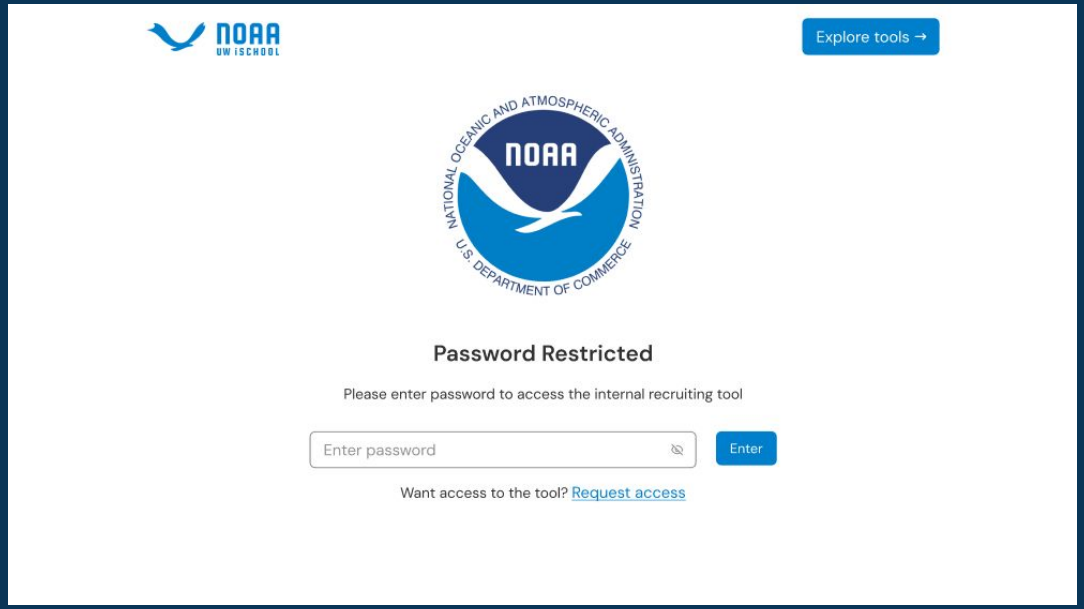
- React, Next.js, Tailwind CSS for development
- Vercel for deployment
- Github for version control & collaboration

## Future Management/Maintenance

- Transfer project ownership on hosted platforms (Github, Vercel)
- Create handoff to brief sponsor on how to continue forward

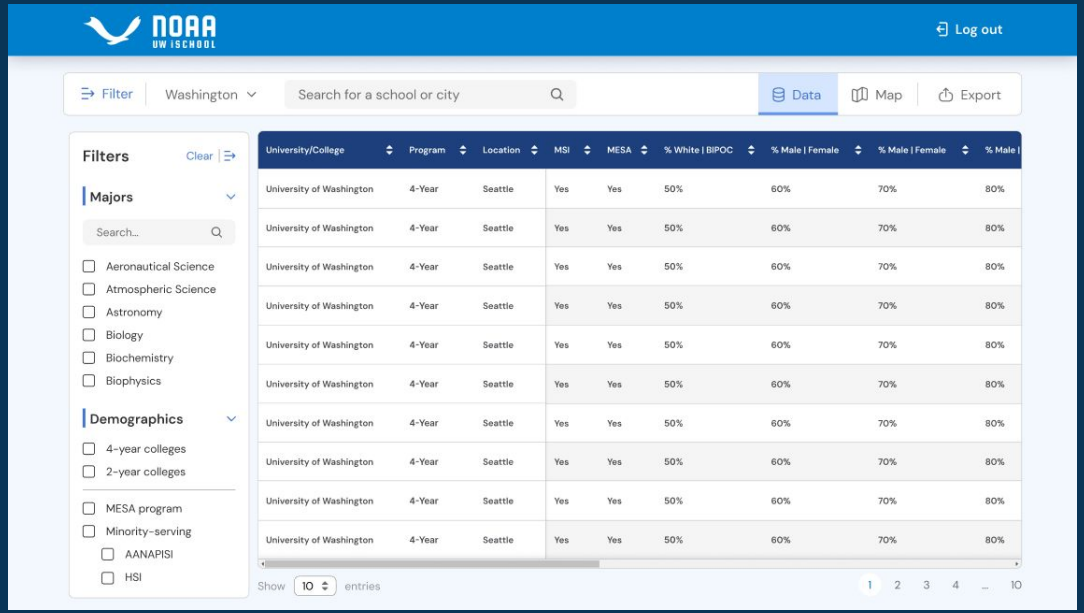
# Key Features

## Password Protection



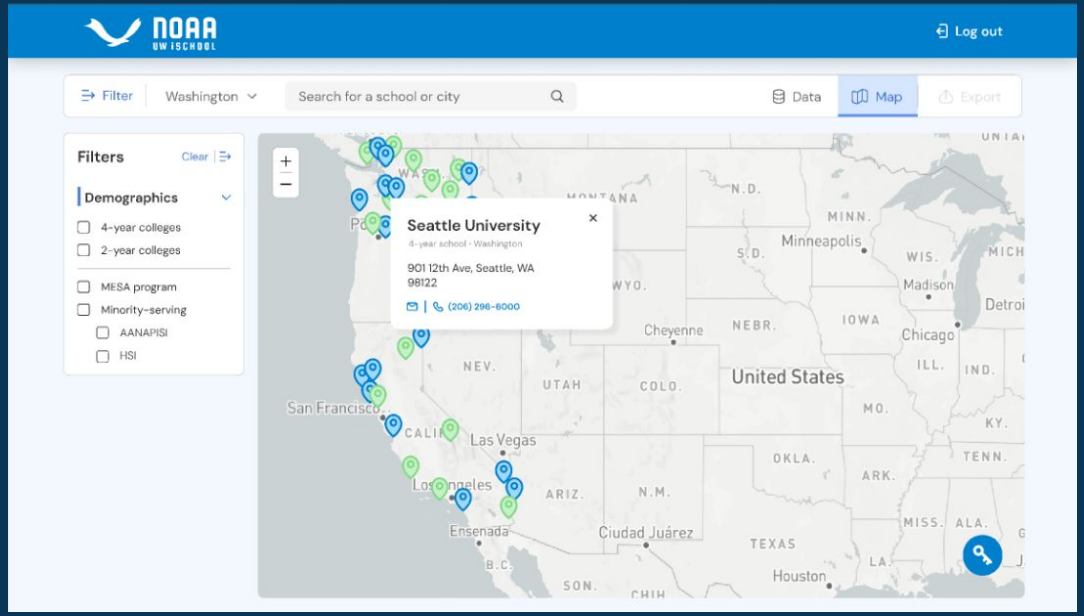
# Key Features Continued

## Data Table + Filters/Export



# Key Features Continued

## Map Visualization



# Demo

# User Testing

## Usability Testing

- Conducted testing sessions with 4 NOAA employees and 1 iSchool Associate Director via 30-minute interviews
- Validated major website features for user-friendliness and clarity

| User Insight | Change |
| --- | --- |
| *"I wish there was an added filter to explore this demographic..."* | Added a new filter ("TCU") to the Data and Map tools for further exploration |
| *"I don't know what the filter section's acronyms stand for"* | Include a popup icon that provides an explanation of the filter's information. |
| *"Where did this data come from?"* | Stated where the data came from on the homepage |

# Ethical Considerations

## Recruitment practices aligning with DEI

**NOAA's Commitment to DEI:**

- Questioning if the tool will help reinforce unbiased hiring

## Address responses and misrepresentations

**Federal Commitment:**

- Will applicants be more inclined to apply knowing about the effort of DEI?

## Adhering to data privacy laws and regulations

**Data Collection:**

- Handling public data confidentially

# Future Steps

| Project Documentation | Sustaining NOAA/School Relationships | Further Development |
| --- | --- | --- |
| • Proper documentation & knowledge transfer to sponsor + future capstone groups | • Provide ways to reach out to targeted schools<br>• Connect NOAA with school career services | • Collect data for additional U.S. states<br>• Add data visualizations<br>• Ability to search within map tool |

# Thank you!

# References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