Deliverable - Policies for Working with Communities of Color

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 policies and plans for working with communities of color.

Geosciences has strong roots in colonialism, with targeted expeditions that leverage local knowledge to accumulate valuable observations to be later analyzed and disseminated at home institutions with little to no collaboration or follow up with those previous contacts. The western approach continues in present day science; it will take recognition and commitment to change. Examples in the Session 4 readings include Indigenous, Arctic, and/or other international communities, but exploitation can also occur in non-Indigenous domestic communities of color.

Building productive relationships takes time. Laying a foundation of awareness, feedback, and buy-in is a start, but true inclusion goes beyond a “seat at the table.” Approaching an issue from different perspectives, not just the western or academic standard, acknowledges that there are multiple ways of knowing. The time and effort invested upfront can lead to more meaningful and impactful results, for example considering language barriers to earthquake shaking accounts\(^4\), including perspectives of Indigenous communities in climate assessments and reports\(^5\), and addressing environmental racism through environmental justice\(^6\).

The discussion questions below may not all be relevant or applicable to your pod, but we encourage you to think about how these can be addressed in the organizations or institutions you interact with as well as the broader geoscience field.

If you are involved in research with communities of color, in the US or abroad, have you…

- Actively sought out local collaborators / liaisons / guides? Why or why not?
  - Were they included in the early development and/or proposal of the research or project itself, or added at a later stage?
- There have been projects with attempted participatory research, however, the physical sciences at ISU tend to fail on this local participation, possibly due to it often being a long process.
- Participatory research has been difficult for traditional, geologic work. Colleagues tried to recruit Native students in Pueblo lands in NM, but they found difficulty there, and had real challenges then accessing lands.
  - Were any local collaborators included as authors on presentations and/or papers?
    - Not that we know of in our department.

- Actively sought to include local students in your research? Why or why not?
  - We don’t have a ton going on with respect to Indigenous communities, so this is an area where we could improve.
  - There are some local resources we need to get more involved in and not reinvent the wheel, including the Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP IINSPIRE), Science Bound program, ISU 4U PROMISE, and Research Experiences for Teachers program.

- Sought to build trust and form long-term connections and collaborations with local institutions if your project is multi-year / ongoing? Why or why not?
  - Were previous negative interactions, whether from inside or outside of your organization, addressed in the plans for building these connections and trust?
    - We should target recruiting graduate students from tribal colleges, especially the closest one to ISU in Sioux City.
    - Some surveys of diversity may not even recognize American Indians as a unique category, so perhaps our faculty have not been made aware of the issues.

- Shared data and findings with the local/regional community in a way that is more accessible? (i.e., translating into different languages). Why or why not?
  - Attending a different set of conferences that are more location focused to share both raw data and broader impacts of the work
    - If we intend on working with local people, we have to make sure they have ownership or co-ownership of the data.
    - Other ways for us to share the data is to attend a different set of conferences that are more location focused to share both raw data and broader impacts of the work.

- Educated yourself and your group/team about local politics, culture, customs, and
knowledge, including the history of colonialism / settler colonialism in the region? Why or why not?
  ○ Was sufficient time allocated to the process of working within the community’s governance, customs, and priorities?
  ○ Is respecting culture and customs included as part of your code of conduct? This will be addressed in Session 6 as well.
    ■ We will state the official ISU’s official land acknowledgement during our seminars and on the front page of our department website: https://ge-at.iastate.edu/.
    ■ Official ISU land acknowledgement: https://www.diversity.iastate.edu/dei-resources/land-acknowledgement
    ■ We will make sure to share this with our colleagues, perhaps the shorter version, so they can use it in presentations to other places, conferences, seminars, etc.
    ■ We should highly consider adding a course to our Wyoming field station that involves teaching about geologic history of the region, the main issue is finding an instructor to do this.
    ■ There is nothing on the field station website about the history of our field camp, so we should include some of the history of people in the area and where the land came from. This could be a potential collaboration with the University of Wyoming and local community.
    ■ We want to re-frame “outreach” to be a two-way street. We always frame it as us teaching the public, but should in this case we need to learn from the local indigenous community.
    ■ Ames renamed a local creek to Ioway Creek, we will update materials/have discussions in class on renaming sites/buildings/geographic features that are named after offensive/racist/colonialist figures.

● Acknowledged local communities / Indigenous tribes in your research results?
  ■ How do we incorporate local people in our research if we focus on the ocean or oru work is more model-based? We came to the conclusion that at least being aware of these issues helps us move forward by being active in communication of progress broadly (i.e., place name changes, etc.)

● Included local communities in your broader impacts in a meaningful way that builds on the community’s identified needs and concerns?
  ○ Did these efforts leverage community members, and was that work compensated
appropriately?
- We will include a discussion about broader impacts ideas that work with the local community in our annual training and add it to grad student orientation.

- Considered and prioritized research questions and research locations based on needs of local communities, in addition to how impactful they are seen within academia?
  - It is often difficult to have our research motivations (papers, funding, products) mesh with people who may not have the same goals or outcomes as we often do in academia.
  - Somewhere we can improve is the wild rice project in MN, where sulfur mining releases \( \text{SO}_4 \rightarrow \text{H}_2\text{S} \) and is toxic to wild rice. We can potentially make a clearer connection between the science and the impact on the local community.
  - There are potential financial links as well, wild rice as a source of income for the local community.

_Pods may have members from a range of career stages and involvement in the development and execution of research projects, and pod members may have different experiences or different perspectives when responding to these questions. Consider this in the summary document and focus on capturing responses that are representative of the range in your pod._

Pods should upload a summary document of previous interactions with communities of color as well as plans for an improved process to the URGE website by 3/19/2021. We also encourage pods to post on their organization’s website, and share over social media (#URGEoscienece and @URGEoscienece). Sharing deliverables will propagate ideas, foster discussion, and ensure accountability.