URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for Bates College EACS Department

This is what was found by EACS Department at Bates College on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

_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._

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:**
  - E.g. How many research projects were undertaken in countries or regions with communities of color, how many of those included meaningful interactions with those communities of color? Briefly describe one or more example projects to provide context for the following questions.
  - Locally in Maine much of our field research takes place on lands traditionally belonging to Indigenous peoples, and some of our water quality research in urban settings takes place in largely minority communities in the Lewiston-Auburn area.
  - One example is yearly water quality testing of Hart Brook by EACS 240: Environmental Geochemistry students. This project involves one day of field work by a class of approximately 30 students, followed by a lab report assignment with water quality metrics that are shared with local city officials.
  - Recently, efforts have been initiated to work with the Auburn Water District and communities of Lewiston and Auburn to help with drinking water quality assessments. Next year, we plan to start with analysis of drinking water in schools. We hope to build trust among all stakeholders (e.g., city officials, landlords, and renters) and perhaps expand our work to analyze drinking waters in the African immigrant communities in Lewiston/Auburn and/or native communities in Maine over the next couple of years.
  - The science of climate change, its impact on BIPOC and potential solutions (optimizing natural climate solutions, such as carbon sequestration in coastal ecosystems, for example) present exciting opportunities for collaborations/education/research among indigenous and Black communities and Bates students/faculty/staff. We hope to develop a full proposal to Maine Sea Grant in collaboration with indigenous partners on these very topics over the next 2 months.
• What worked well in these interactions?
  ○ *E.g.* Using local names for landmarks or features, adhering to restrictions and customs such as not scheduling outreach meetings/events during hunting season
  ○ Projects with data collection centered on meaning and importance to the BIPOC local community.

• What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?
  ○ *E.g.*, We did not include priorities of local communities of color when developing our proposal, and to address this in the future we will include community member(s) in the early stages of proposal planning and writing as collaborators
  ○ While we routinely reach out to private land owners when conducting field work in Maine, we rarely also contact traditional communities who may maintain a connection with these places.
  ○ While we share results with local officials, we would like to improve communication with residents as well.
  ○ Attempts have been made to work with local highschool students of color over the summer, and to hire local research partners from communities of color, but have not met with success thus far.

• Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?
  ○ *E.g.*, Work with and compensate community members to translate research results and outreach materials into local language, include acknowledgements in forthcoming publications and presentations
  ○ We would like to work with the Harward Center for Community Partnerships at Bates to strengthen our communications with communities of color and find avenues for greater collaboration.
  ○ We would like to expand field exercises to provide context on physical locations and appropriate conduct, and include tasks of research and reflection that build our students' understanding of traditional indigenous land, traditional ecological knowledge, and past and present connections between their field work and native communities.
  ○ We would like to include indigenous communities in the planning of future projects, and plan to acknowledge them in all forthcoming publications and presentations.

• Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?
  ○ *E.g.*, Additional support/funding for early planning process of projects to include forming productive and mutually beneficial connections with communities, establish a point of contact for interfacing with communities so as not to overwhelm with individual requests from researchers and collaborators
  ○ Curricular resources (perhaps from the Wabanaki Collection)
  ○ Plan with The Harward Center
  ○ As a departmental policy, interrogate BIPOC issues within the dept and the college.
  ○ Educate ourselves, communicate with each other, and learn from each other.
○ Establish a point of contact for interfacing with communities, so as not to overwhelm folks with multiple requests. Start by inviting experts to run workshops for the department, perhaps in conjunction with Colby and Bowdoin, and go from there.