URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at Indiana University

This is what was found by IU Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Pod at IU on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:**

  Examples of research projects undertaken in regions with communities of color include projects in Asian and African countries such as Taiwan and Tanzania as well as projects in the US such as water quality research in urban areas. Interactions with communities of color in these projects range from co-authors and collaborators on grants to hiring local people to help with sample collection or as guides. Atmospheric scientists in our department have fewer opportunities for international collaborators, as research sometimes lacks a local component.

  Our campus in Bloomington resides on the ancestral homelands of the Miami, Delaware, Potawatomi, and Shawnee people. Our field station in Montana resides on the ancestral homelands of Salish, Kootenai, Pend d’Oreilles people and others before them.

- **What worked well in these interactions?**

  Collaboration on an institutional level seems to be commonplace, with organizations or universities from different countries collaborating on grants and other research initiatives. When doing field work in Argentina and Chile, one professor in our pod found that making connections outside of science, through sharing food, helped her communicate with landowners. When writing grant proposals with non-academic colleagues, one pod members finds it useful to sign written agreements to set expectations.

- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**

  Multiple PIs express issues with their funding organizations. It is difficult to pay local communities of color or develop research plans that account for their needs within the funding structure of academia.

  We spent some time discussing parts of past research we found problematic. In a few instances, local collaborators were just “tacked-on” to projects or were not allowed to play meaningful roles. Additionally, although we do collaborate with local institutions, this does not necessarily include local communities of color. In other accounts, students realized that although they know tons about the geology of a location, they know little about the people who live there. By recognizing and learning from past problems with our research, we can limit their reoccurrence.
Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?

In motivating our science, we should consider more the local implications of the work and include this in written products. When finalizing those written products, we should be better at acknowledging contributions from local collaborators, such as those who help in sample collection, is necessary for respectful interactions. Finally, we also aim to include acknowledgement of native land at the field station in Montana.

Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?

- We need more funding for international collaborators, or relaxations on certain rules for existing funding sources. This would allow PI’s to collaborate with and compensate more local scientists.
- The Diversity and Inclusion committee will make recommendations for a land acknowledgment and add resources for collaborating with local communities from the beginning of a project to its web page.
- By hiring and admitting future faculty, staff, and students who value collaborating with communities of color, we hope to improve our interactions with them.