URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, Minneapolis, MN

Information compiled by the UMN Eclogite Pod.

Below is the information that currently exists in the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences (ESCI), the College of Science & Engineering, and the University of Minnesota (UMN) for handling complaints, reporting, resources, and possible outcomes. The last item of this document is a description of our proposed changes to the ESCI website to make support information much more accessible for the Earth and Environmental Sciences community at UMN.

**CURRENT**

What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?

An individual in ESCI can find information about reporting:

1. **On the ESCI website:**
   - as links on a webpage with information about Diversity, Equity & Inclusion resources;
   - as links on a webpage with information for current graduate students;
   - in a resource guide for faculty;
   - in a resource guide for researchers; and
   - (some information) in an e-mail sent by the ESCI administrator at the beginning of each semester; see below for a copy of relevant text from this email.

   We note that this information is currently not well organized and is not as accessible as it could be. The ESCI website is undergoing extensive revision, and a new version will be launched on 30 March 2021; this will have a new ‘workplace issues’ page in a prominent location and will utilize some of the suggestions from this document and those of other UMN ESCI pods in the URGE program.

2. **On the College of Science & Engineering website / Diversity & Inclusivity Alliance**

3. **On websites of the University and units therein** (e.g., the Graduate School, Postdoctoral Association, Human Resources), including:
A fairly comprehensive list of reporting options is on a webpage for Student complaints and grievances, and many of these options are also available to others at UMN (researchers, staff, faculty). These include links to the UMN Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action office for issues of discrimination or harassment and to the Bias Response and Referral Network for anonymous reporting of bias incidents (with follow up, if requested, to help with additional resources). Other useful options are:

- University of Minnesota Office of Conflict Resolution: https://ocr.umn.edu/
- University of Minnesota Student Conflict Resolution Center: (http://www.sos.umn.edu/)

Are reporting policies regularly reviewed? Whether policies are regularly reviewed is unknown at the University level. At the ESCI level, reporting policies and procedures are occasionally (but not regularly) reviewed to update them for completeness and accuracy.

What is the process for changing policy? The process for changing a policy at the University level is unknown. At the ESCI level, there have been discussions in recent years about how best to provide reporting mechanisms and resources within the School, given the challenges of its being a relatively small unit.

Are the rates of reporting made publicly available (e.g. # of reports each year)? Not to our knowledge. There is information available on the Bias Response and Referral Network (https://bias-response.umn.edu/). The most recent report is available here.

Who are the designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents? This information is sent to the ESCI email lists at the beginning of each semester by the ESCI Administrator:

1) Sexual Harassment Awareness, Prevention, and Reporting - New employees, graduate students, and those that have not yet done so: you must take the online training. You will get an email directly from the University with a link unique to you, please fill this out in a timely manner. (be sure you get a ‘receipt of completion’). Note that the U is launching a new, expanded version of this training soon (probably in March), so keep an eye out for an email from the U about that.

2) Conflict Resolution
Our hope is that any conflicts that arise can be resolved within the department. Start by contacting your advisor/supervisor, director of graduate/undergrad studies and/or Jen Petrie
(students), Sharon Kressler (department admin/HR), Donna. If you need help outside the
department, please contact
College HR Director, Joy Wise Davis, jwisedav@umn.edu
Or visit one of these offices, both of which include excellent resources for students, staff,
researchers, and faculty:
Student Conflict Resolution Center
Office of Conflict Resolution.

- 3) Research Ethics
  - Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) - is required of any and all personnel funded by
    extramural grants (e.g.

  - Reporting Research Misconduct and/or Compliance Violations - Should you find yourself in a
    position where you feel it necessary to report misconduct or compliance issues, you may report
    online or directly; more information on this subject can be found here:
    https://research.umn.edu/ethics-compliance/reporting-research-misconduct

  - All faculty and other researchers must have a Report of External Professional Activities (REPA);
    new researchers must fill one out soon after arriving, and continuing researchers must fill out a
    new form when prompted to do so each winter. It is best to fill it out immediately after receiving
    the prompt to do so; otherwise you will continue to receive reminders, and eventually the
    department head will be contacted and asked to help to get you to fill out the form.

    The first week of March is Research Ethics Week at the U. There will be a department event
    related to the theme of research ethics during a pandemic... please watch your inbox for details.

- Reporting online: Yes, via email to ocr@umn.edu or on the UMN Equal
  Opportunity and Affirmative Action website (https://eoaa.umn.edu/)  Anonymously? This
  reporting is not anonymous. Reporting for sexual assault or harassment can
  be conducted anonymously via the Aurora Center (http://aurora.umn.edu/).
  Complaints to the Bias Response and Referral Network (BRRN) are anonymous
- Who do in-person and online reports go to? Who has access to see reports?
  This varies depending on the nature of the reporting mechanism and incident. For
  example, the names of the team members of the BRRN are listed on their webpage.
  The names of EOAA staff are also listed; each complaint is assigned to one or more
  of these staff members. The Office of Conflict Resolution has a similar mechanism.
- Are police included in the process? When and how? Are individuals accompanied by
  an advocate or someone from the organization? This varies with each unit, but most
  do not involve the police. Unlike BRRN teams at other universities, UMN does not
  include campus police.
What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?
• Possible outcomes for an incident reported regarding an employee (non-student) include: follow-up by supervisor or member of the Dean’s office, requirement for specific training (bias, etc.), disciplinary action (including suspension), or termination.

• Who decides the outcomes/consequences? What is the process? The outcomes/consequences are decided at various levels depending on the severity of the conflict. In some instances, conflicts are resolved within the School and/or the college. Training and follow-up meetings may be part of the resolution process. In the case of a recommendation (e.g., by the EOAA) of termination of employment, the decision of whether to accept or reject this recommendation is made by the Dean. If the Dean decides to reject the recommendation, there is a meeting with EOAA to explain the decision.

• Are reports tracked? How are they tracked? By whom? Reports of bias reported to the Bias Response and Referral Network are logged, and results are aggregated so that university leaders can be aware of the numbers and types of complaints, and take action as necessary. We do not know the specific process of this tracking, including which U leaders are involved.

• Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process? It depends on whether the complaints are against a student or an employee; there are distinct processes for each. For employees, there is not a ‘disciplinary board’, although the Dean’s office may effectively have this role.

What resources are available for individuals reporting?
• Counselors or advocates, especially those of the same race, ethnicity, and gender can be contacted through the University’s Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence (MCAE). Here is the introduction to their mission statement, as copied from their webpage (https://mcae.umn.edu/about-us/mission).

• The Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence (MCAE) is a community-based space focused on the academic experiences of first-generation students, students of Color, and American Indian students. MCAE supports students from the beginning of their time at the university to achieve their academic aspirations.
We validate the multiple dimensions of identity our students hold and recognize the unique barriers and challenges they will encounter within predominantly white academic spaces. Our work aims to equip students to navigate this reality in meaningful ways.

Also available are ‘Champions’ assigned through the college’s Diversity and Inclusivity Alliance. From the webpage, Champions work is defined as:

- Committed to learning and unlearning in D&I spaces
- An active Ally for building inclusivity within their local spheres of influence
- Examines and addresses their own biases and non-inclusive behaviors
- Intervenes when witnessing racist, biased, or discriminatory behaviors
- Engages in CSE D&I Alliance activities and other DEI events across campus
- Champions DEI efforts in their own departments and units
- Spends approximately three hours per semester on Alliance activities

Automatic or requested investigation of potential impact on grades or evaluations. Unknown

Protection against retaliation or repercussions, accommodations for continuing work/courses, option for pass/fail or outside assessment. Protection against retaliation is a major priority of EOAA reports and recommendations, as well as of other units such as the Office of Conflict Resolution.

What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?

- We don't know of any recent examples of a petition drive, but UMN and collegiate leadership have held town hall-style and other meetings about major issues. In some cases, separate meetings are held for students and for faculty/researchers/staff.

- Within ESCI there is a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee comprising undergraduate and graduate students, postdocs, faculty members and research staff. The goals of the committee are to develop a departmental climate that will attract and support students and prepare them for their futures, and to foster a more welcoming and inclusive environment within ESCI. As described above, there is also the Diversity & Inclusivity Alliance within CSE; this group has been working since early 2019 to implement changes in the college. Their specific strategies and progress are outlined in a publicly available document.
Regular surveys are conducted among the graduate student population in ESCI at the end of their studies. Recent anti-racism surveys have been conducted within ESCI (June 2020) and in CSE (July 2020). Results of these surveys have either been circulated within the department via email or, in the case of the CSE survey, are available on the CSE website. There have also been meetings (ESCI, CSE) to discuss the results.

We propose to suggest the following text and links be added to a prominent location in the revised ESCI website that is currently under development:

School of Earth & Environmental Sciences Workplace Issues

All members of the School are responsible for creating a positive work environment that is inclusive and that respects diversity in all forms. Actions that result in a hostile work environment, discrimination, or bullying violate the code of conduct of the School and the University.

SCHOOL OF EARTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES CODE OF CONDUCT

Although our goal is to have a completely welcoming and inclusive work environment for all, we recognize that issues may arise. This webpage has information so that all members of the School know what their options are for reporting incidents or concerns related to their work and/or learning environment.

Depending on the nature of the situation, you may want to seek help from resources or people in the Department/School, the College of Science & Engineering, or other units of the University. You should choose whichever option will be most helpful to you.
Key Contacts

We hope that ESCI personnel can help resolve most issues, but if that is not the best option for you, there are many UMN resources available. Our main concern is that everyone in ESCI has the support they need to work or learn in a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment.

The information below is intended to help you determine the best option for you. Please know that the Department/School of Earth & Environmental Sciences (ESCI) is here to support you and will help you in any way possible.

contacts for everyone
Sharon Kressler, ESCI administrator and Human Resources representative
Donna Whitney, Head of the School and Department
Cara Santelli, Crystal Ng: chairs, ESCI Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
any other faculty, staff member, or peer you feel comfortable talking to!

additional contacts for undergraduate students
Josh Feinberg, Directory of Undergraduate Studies
Jennifer Petrie, Student Personnel Coordinator
any member of the Undergraduate Studies Committee

additional contacts for graduate students
David Fox, Director of Graduate Studies
Max Bezada, Associate director of Graduate Studies
Jennifer Petrie, Student Personnel Coordinator
any member of the Graduate Studies Committee

UMN Graduate School

other options for grad students include ESCI grad peer mentoring and other mentoring programs in CSE
additional contacts for employees (faculty, researchers, staff)
Joy Wise Davis, CSE Human Resources director (*highly recommended for confidential consultation)
UMN Postdoctoral Association
UMN Human Resources Office
Employee Assistance Program

Workplace Issues

Some issues that may arise can be reported to the School and some must be reported to the University. For example, University of Minnesota employees must report incidents of sexual harassment, any form of discrimination (including harassment), and relationship violence to the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA) office.

Options for reporting misconduct of various types include:

the EOAA website: for reporting sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment, nepotism, or retaliation; this site has a link to the anonymous UReport system. Note that the EOAA can also assist with consultation and informal problem-solving, in addition to more formal investigations that could lead to disciplinary action. Please do not hesitate to contact the EOAA if you want to discuss or report a problem.

the Bias Response and Referral Network (BRRN): reporting is anonymous. The BRRN responds to all reports of bias on the UMN-Twin Cities campus and refers those making a report to the best resource for the reported issue. The BRRN is not involved in investigations or discipline, and does not involve the police in complaints. All reports to the BRRN are logged so that UMN leaders can be aware of the numbers and types of incidents reported.
the Office of Conflict Resolution (OCR) is a unit of the Office of Equity & Diversity and provides support for both formal and informal resolution of interpersonal, work-related conflict. Services are confidential.

the Student Conflict Resolution Center (SCRC) provides informal services related to instructional complaints; the SCRC has resources for students, staff, and faculty, and provides confidential and impartial advice and information to resolve conflicts related to teaching and learning.

Safety is an important aspect of having a good work environment and climate; the Safe Campus website has information and resources related to substance abuse, crime and threats, health emergencies, mental health, sexual misconduct prevention, transportation safety, and workplace (including lab) safety.

For students: a one-stop site for reporting a complaint or grievance is an online form that is routed to the appropriate UMN unit depending on the nature of the issue.

Other excellent resources for many issues are the College of Science & Engineering’s Diversity & Inclusivity Alliance website, the UMN Office for Equity and Diversity (OED), and the Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence.