These are the findings by the DMV Planetoids pod at NASA Goddard on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

On the individual level, it’s difficult to audit interactions with communities of color, especially with a NASA center like Goddard of approximately 7,000 civil servants and contractors. For this deliverable, the DMV Planetoids pod combined our knowledge of existing interactions at the individual, division, center, and agency level. In addition, we included adjacent programs and interactions from institutions that we are not directly affiliated with, but work closely with.

In addition to the discussion questions presented in the deliverable from URGE, our pod also answered the question of: “What can be done to ensure this information is centralized and easily found in the future, and what structures can be put in place in our institution to help facilitate interactions with communities of color?” Which will be answered at the end of this document.

- Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:
  - MUREP (faced plenty of cuts and not a lot of direct fellowships)
  - Meyerhoff Scholarship Program (UMBC)
  - Jenkins Pre-Doctoral Fellowship (isn’t well advertised to the point where many believe it ended)
  - MUST – Motivating Undergraduates in Science and Technology (no longer exists, funded by Hispanic College Funds but coordinated with NASA)
  - SHARP – Summer high School Apprenticeship Research Program for scientists of color (no longer exists)
  - Goddard DEI committees – African American, Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander, Individuals with Disabilities, LGBTQ+ (although this one is not in the formal EOPO website but it exists), and Women’s Advisory Committees
  - SSERVI and STMD call have an inclusion plan in the proposal
  - TREX group working with Hopi people (NE Arizona)
  - PISCES work on the big island, does land acknowledgements, gets local native Hawaiians to bless their work
  - LEADER/Howard U connection – this was a long-standing internship program, backed in part by a NSF MOO grant (attained by a LEADER Co-l based at HU and in part by SSERVI funding). The program was cut last year (cause: loss of MOO grant and major cuts in SSERVI funding).
  - NASA Indigenous People’s Pilot program
  - And all the fieldwork that happens that is not always documented
What worked well in these interactions?
- Directly giving money to students of color – disclaimer here is that apparently a lot of non-POC received the Jenkins fellowship and other funding, but otherwise, direct support for the entire duration is key
- Including an inclusivity plan in a proposal can provide those involved with strengths and weaknesses to build upon

What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?
- Old Pathways program in code 600: though not directly for researchers of color, funding was taken away mid-opportunity and people had to struggle to fund themselves
- Advertisements of these opportunities are not good, as well as the pool of funds that entities like MUREP have are shrinking or stagnant
- No mandatory formal mentorship training or focus on mentorship unless it’s led at the grassroots level or individuals take it upon themselves to receive this training
- Reviewers themselves are also not trained in identifying strengths and weaknesses in inclusion plans in proposals
- Work with local MSIs typically only target physics/astro programs, not enough geo
- No training on how to incorporate Indigenous researchers in projects, how to approach these communities, and working with these communities in general
- Though NASA has a high school intern program, the opportunity is not well advertised from Goddard especially at the local level
  - “Local” also needs to be addressed – the magnet and private schools in Montgomery County, for example, are not equal with other local schools in terms of opportunities presented

Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?
- Land acknowledgements when giving talks
- Centering and uplifting Indigenous knowledge and voices in presentations
- Go through current policy and comb through language that is discriminatory or can enable discrimination

Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?
- Talks like the one we saw this week, and talk on how to give proper land acknowledgement (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgxfugOIAY) should be centered
Establishing a cultural ethics office – or at the very least a liaison – that constantly reviews and improves guidelines and have people to check on projects to see if they are adhering to guidelines when working with Indigenous communities

- This office will also establish these guidelines and provide additional resources when working with communities, including possible seminars for PIs to attend
- People from this office or the liaison will also facilitate conversations with local communities so communication does not become overbearing
- Enforce that these collaborations should be thought about and happening early in the process

Language of including an inclusion plan in proposals needs to change from “recommended” to “required”

Train reviewers to accurately judge strengths and weaknesses for inclusion sections of proposals – both sides of the proposal process need to be covered

Be cognizant of which schools we are advertising opportunities to and going to: are local public schools receiving the same attention as magnet and private schools?

What can be done to ensure this information is centralized and easily found in the future, and what structures can be put in place in our institution to help facilitate interactions with communities of color?

Our pod feels as though there should be a central effort (hopefully one day a separate office of cultural ethics) that can facilitate these discussions, provide learning material, provide liaisons, include check-ins for projects involving local and Indigenous communities, and work to improve our standards of interaction and compensation overall, including the documentation of these activities and accessibility of the materials used by this office.

In addition, amongst our spaces in and adjacent to NASA Goddard, we noted that there are various internships, fellowships, and programs for physics, astro, and computer science, but not nearly enough for geoscience. We hope to inquire about this further. We also discussed how the pedagogy of geoscience, and especially planetary science, can do more to connect to early career scientists and incorporate Indigenous knowledge. For example, geoscience can be linked to solving problems with local waterways, or involving local wildlife. Planetary science can be discussed in ways that does not insinuate that only engineers can be involved, but rather requires an extensive knowledge base of various fields. We discussed hosting talks from the Indigenous community that discuss their ways of studying the cosmos, and their knowledge of geoscience and local features as it has changed over generations.