Policies for Working with Communities of Color for Stanford University, ESS Department

This is what was found by Earth System Science at Stanford University 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._

I. Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:

In general, pod members had not worked closely with communities of color. Research initiatives from members of the pod are primarily mechanistic in nature, and interactions with local communities in research projects were minimal. However, two pod members had interacted with Indigenous communities and a key summary of those interactions included:

- Access to communities’ spaces coincided with efforts to learn about local culture and include local students, private landowners, and other stakeholders in broad research discussions.
- If local knowledge is not accessible ahead of time, we can help by being respectful, asking appropriate questions, being an engaged human being; One student helped by volunteering in the local agricultural/community gardens; These kinds of interactions that are more organic can help build trust.
- PI of graduate student had spent over a decade forming community relationships before the project. This point is critical in most community work.
- It is difficult to translate data in a way that is useful to local communities. Students were able to find other ways to facilitate outreach and engagement by:
  - Including local students in the field research experience.
  - Educating teachers by hosting science field day for their students.
- Making reference to spaces in local language; Use the local language and knowledge to properly conduct yourselves in these spaces.
- Researchers and graduate students can be conduits between resources, community members and institutions.
What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?

One pod member noted that we are often not very intentional if the opportunity is presented to engage local communities in our research. We did not include priorities of local communities of color when developing our proposal, and we can address this in the future by including local knowledge in the early stages of proposal planning and writing as collaborators. If communities are not directly involved, learning about the local spaces and field sites, as well as their historical uses can be done in the early stages of the projects.

Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?

Pod members have not done this, but like the idea of including acknowledgement of local communities in site description or acknowledgements section of research papers.

- One example of including local communities in broader impacts is translating the nitrogen cycle into an indigenous language to expand science in that indigenous group.

II. Plans for an improved process

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

- Additional support and training from the institution or department to form mutually beneficial connections with communities or spaces, if needed; current support (if any) is only present at the PI level
- Additional funding for budgeted line items to compensate site partners (non-indigenous partners); Create policies for compensating community partners.
- A course that outlines:
  - How the geosciences have (and continue to) oppress communities of color
  - Stanford’s history with BIPOC communities
  - How to initiate and maintain equitable relationships with communities of color in research – a course could provide a community space for discussion and more thorough understanding of any department/school guidelines

Develop guidelines for:

- Including community partners as co-authors on manuscripts of papers.
- Including a land acknowledgement and space/community acknowledgement in presentations and publications.
- Including members of the space/community in research process.
• Translating data and/or abstracts to lay language or Indigenous languages as needed.
• Learning about the history of spaces/communities before engaging in research at these spaces.
• Adhering to protocols for cultural etiquette around sample collection and return, and navigating field sites.
• Deeply reflecting on how the outcomes of the research (including research done at sea) could impact surrounding communities and making sure they have access to relevant information, and the final manuscript/data.
• The value of establishing equitable relationships with communities of color in research to the institution; i.e., some policy acknowledging the amount of work that goes into establishing these relationships and that the department/school acknowledges and recognizes the value of this labor.