Safety Plan

This safety plan is proposed by the UNC Marine and Geosciences URGE Pod at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This plan includes a code of conduct, a complaints and reporting policy, information on available training resource and requirements, and field work guidelines, including information on how to conduct a racial risk assessment of field sites and procedures for documenting incidents in the field.

- Where is your work done? Are these spaces uncomfortable or unsafe for people of color?
  - Members of our department conduct work at a variety of locations, including in labs on the UNC Chapel Hill campus, at the UNC Institute of Marine Sciences (IMS), and at local, national, and international field sites. Research is also conducted aboard research vessels at sea, where weather conditions can be challenging and activities can be labor-intensive.
  - These environments could potentially be uncomfortable or unsafe for people of color - the population in some locations is predominantly white (e.g., at IMS, certain field sites, on research vessels), and other locations (e.g., UNC Chapel Hill) may hold the trauma of the time in which they were built, including a history of racism and discrimination.

- What training does your organization require or offer? How often? Do you find this training effective? What would you introduce to make it more effective?
  - Title IX Training
    - Students, faculty, and staff are required to take this training annually.
    - Members of our pod have reported that this training primarily highlights big, obvious examples of harassment or discrimination, but doesn’t do a particularly good job of addressing smaller, day-to-day issues (e.g., microaggressions, how to bring up, discuss, or address sensitive subjects).
  - Bias Training
    - This is a new training that has not yet been taken by members of our pod
  - The [UNC Equal Opportunity and Compliance office](https://www.unc.edu/equalopportunity/) also provides the following list of additional trainings:
    - [HAVEN (Helping Advocates for Ending Violence Now) Training](https://www.unc.edu/equalopportunity/programs/haven/)
      - (optional) trains participants to be allies to those who have experienced violence
    - [OneACT bystander skills workshop](https://www.unc.edu/equalopportunity/programs/bystander/)
      - (optional) bystander intervention training focused on recognizing the early warning signs of sexual and interpersonal violence
    - [Responsible Employees and CSA training](https://www.unc.edu/equalopportunity/programs/csa/)
      - (required for employees designated as Responsible Employees)
  - Lab and research-related trainings:
    - Chemical/biosafety training - (lab dependent)
    - Responsible Conduct of Research - (required for those with an NSF/NIH funded grant)
General Safety Plan

This safety plan is intended to be used as a framework for individual labs to expand upon, as the nature of field work varies widely within the department, and some situations may be unique to individual labs. This safety plan thus primarily contains suggestions of topics labs should consider including in their individual safety plans.

- **Code of Conduct**
  - The UNC Marine Science department encourages diversity and equal educational and employment opportunities throughout the University community and is committed to fostering a diverse and positive lab climate. To this end, we aim to 1) provide a safe, equitable, and inclusive environment through deliberate actions, 2) to celebrate our differences and use them to better our science, 3) respect individual needs, learning styles, and career goals and mentor accordingly, 4) take action to broaden representation in STEM to correct historical opportunity imbalances and improve science.

- **Complaints and Reporting Policy**
  - Our department is still working on establishing a robust interdepartmental reporting system that ensures anonymity (see Week 2 Deliverable). We’d like the reporting system to be available to both students or staff members conducting research in labs as well as students who attend classes offered through the department. This structure of a department-wide reporting system, rather than a lab-based reporting system, will ensure the anonymity of those reporting.
  - Additional complaints and reporting policies for field sites and research cruises:
    - UNOLS (https://www.unols.org/) has policies posted on research vessels. Issues would probably be reported to the ship captain and/or the head PI.
    - We are still determining the best way to handle reporting issues from remote field sites - we’d like to include more comprehensive information on this in our Departmental Complaints and Reporting Policy.

- **Training Resources**
  - University trainings, in addition to those listed above:
    - Safe Zone training and additional trainings: https://lgbtq.unc.edu/programs/education/safe-zone-training
    - Managing bias training (link provided to management staff by university)
  - Additional diversity and inclusivity training may also be provided at conferences or workshops (e.g., AGU, ASLO).

- **Field work guidelines**
  
  Below are some suggestions of things that should be included in an individual lab’s field work guidelines. In general, labs should consider including information on how students or staff are expected to prepare for field work (i.e., what to bring, what to expect, etc.), safety measures, and a racial risk assessment.

  - **General safety**
    - If the student or staff member is comfortable with police and/or working with others comfortable with police: the Alert Carolina app can be downloaded for use when working on campus at late hours or during any potentially unsafe circumstance. The user can set it to say what times they will be working, and if they don’t note that they made it home, campus police can come and check on the situation.
We recommend that the department and/or individual lab groups use text, WhatsApp, Lab Agenda, or other apps to create 'in house' versions of the Alert Carolina app where students and staff can check in on each other.

- **Racial Risk Assessment**
  - PI’s should inform themselves of the local news, police reports, demographics, and other information available for the area in which the field work will be conducted; PI’s should not rely on the student or staff member to tell them what issues they might face.
  - The PI should look into what labs have studied at the site before, and talk to them about their experiences there; PI’s should be aware that areas will change over time, and the information received from groups who have previously worked at the field site may not be applicable to the current situation there.

- **Make a list of “risk prevention” procedures:**
  - Having people work in teams. If another person is unavailable, make sure someone is aware of your location and schedule.
  - Give students thorough documentation, contact numbers, and have students carry credentials (ID, student ID, permits, etc.).
  - “Official” looking clothing to signify part of a university.
    - To Do: Ask department to make gear available.
  - Be proactive in contacting locals or campus patrol ahead of time to let them know your students will be in a certain place at a certain time.
  - If working internationally, be aware of local and national laws and social norms.
  - Utilize training opportunities that will increase safety in the field, especially in remote locations (for example, first aid training, self defense).
  - Problems could arise off campus - especially at late night times, how can you make students feel safe - use Alert Carolina or ‘in house’ check in system to ensure safety until student/staff gets home.
  - Use Lab Agenda to organize late night lab work. Minimum two students in dept. Must be present in the building for late night work (can be different labs).

- **Pre-departure checklist**
  - Inform students about how it might be hard to access products (hygiene, food, etc.) that one might need. As much as possible, ensure that students or staff know to bring items they will need and are able to do so.
  - Include information about passports/visas (especially if you have an international student).
  - PI should make the students know what risks are inherent in the environment they are going to.