Session 6: Racism and Inclusivity

Safety Plan

SEA’s reporting policy is included in the SEA Code of Conduct and is available on the SEA website. There is no separate set of practices for students in the field, as the SEA code of conduct applies to all locations where students, faculty, and staff operate.

During the next review of the Code of Conduct and Reporting Policies the SEA URGE Pod has some suggested changes and additions:

- Make the code of conduct and manuals easier to find on the SEA website.
- Review the “reporting mechanisms” in the personnel and operations manuals. We currently say who to report complaints and incidents to but not how, so we need to make this more explicit.
- Create an anonymous form on the SEA website for people to report complaints and incidents. Make sure this is easily accessible and that SEA staff members and students are told where to find it and when to use it (e.g., include in DEI statement in course syllabi). Have a robust system in place to address complaints.
- The system and resources available for petitions and groups to submit complaints or suggestions for improvements at SEA need to be more widely known.
- Add stronger and/or more explicit language related to DEI into the code of conduct that clearly defines and prohibits racism. For instance, the SEA URGE pod recommends language similar to what is found in the Code of Conduct model, provided by URGE, from the Basin Research Group. Specific items are listed here, but we recommend careful consideration of the entire document:
  - “All communication, be it online or in person, should be appropriate for a professional audience, and be considerate of people from different cultural backgrounds. Sexual language and imagery is not appropriate at any time.
  - Be kind to others and do not insult or put down other group members.
  - Behave professionally. Remember that harassment and sexist, racist, or exclusionary jokes are not appropriate.
  - Harassment includes offensive verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of discussions, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention.
  - Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.
• Contribute to discussions in meetings with a constructive, positive approach.
• Be mindful of talking over others when discussing in groups and be willing to hear out the ideas of others.”

SEA does not yet have consistent DEI training for students in the field. Training for staff and faculty is offered annually, but it is not mandatory or always specific to safety in the field. The members of the SEA URGE pod would like to see this training increased and made a regular part of professional development for all personnel. Likewise, the pod recommends that more in-depth training for students occur at the start of every program offered by SEA.

Creating more space for feedback can help inform and highlight where specific training is needed and help us better assess whether our learning and field spaces are comfortable for all members of our community. Some ideas to increase feedback include hosting listening events and including questions about the comfort of students in port stops and other spaces in existing end-of-cruise surveys.

Safety plan protocols exist for each program in the field, and an informal racial risk assessment is completed by faculty for port stops. Safety plan protocols include a requirement for a “buddy system” in any work not directly supervised by faculty. Additionally, all field work is carried out in daylight hours, and any free time is structured and monitored.

Because SEA does not have a universal safety plan document that extends beyond the code of conduct, the members of the SEA URGE pod recommend a check list for all faculty organizing field work. This would help formalize the assessments that happen prior to cruises and provide a resource for new faculty to use.

Overall, the members of the SEA URGE pod recognize that training for field work safety should be more deliberate, frequent, and regularly reviewed. Issues related to BAJEDI initiatives should be more central to this training.