This deliverable outlines a resource map to support people of color at USM in the Division of Marine Science and in the surrounding communities. Our pod addressed the following suggested discussion questions.

**What was your experience when you first joined your organization or moved to this location? What barriers were there when you first arrived and how did you overcome them?**

One of the unique challenges our institution faces compared to other universities is that our department’s primary campus is located at a NASA facility. This adds additional barriers for site access, work hours, and other challenges regarding housing and transportation, which are outlined below.

- **Housing** is a barrier to new students in particular because there is no on-campus, dorm-style housing. New international students face additional barriers with the need for a social security number and US bank account for making a down payment on an apartment and setting up their payroll account at USM.
  - Our department has considered trying to utilize temporary housing at one of USM’s other coast campuses, but there are barriers regarding infrastructure as this campus is traditionally a commuter campus with limited campus housing.
  - One of our student organizations has created housing guides and a platform to find roommates. These resources are not comprehensive, and newly admitted students/new hires may need to utilize additional resources to find a place to live.

- **As a NASA facility and site housing multiple government agencies, badges are required to get on site. This process can take multiple weeks to get a background check. International students/post-docs are often required to have an escort while on site, adding additional barriers to site access and limiting the hours in which they are allowed to work.**

- **Transportation** is another barrier to new students, faculty, and staff.
  - Public transportation is extremely limited, unless you live in New Orleans or another larger city in our area. Uber, Lyft, and taxi services are also limited in some areas.
  - To get to and from our campus, you must have a vehicle or carpool with someone.
  - Van pools and other carpools exist, but the cost can add a financial barrier. They also tend to meet at set locations and times, which may not be accessible for all individuals.
    - Van pools to and from New Orleans are common but may be more limited in other surrounding communities.
There are barriers to designating USM vehicles as shuttles related to cost, liability, and policies surrounding the acceptable vehicles uses. These barriers are particularly challenging for new international students and post docs. Many do not have a US driver’s license when they first arrive, limiting their ability to get site access and complete required paperwork. Affordability of cars is also a limiting factor.

- Other barriers for retention include varying degrees of major adviser support during the transition.
  - Our department is having discussions about how to improve information access and clarity.
  - We still need to further development solutions to keep new students from falling through the cracks if their adviser is not assisting them with housing, transportation, or other difficulties.

How would someone new find their community in your location? What additional barriers may a person of color face in your community? Consider that Black, Brown, Indigenous, and people of color will face different challenges from one another.

Finding community
- Within the department, student organizations host social events to connect students.
- We also have department teatime/social hour usually once a week to connect faculty, students, and staff.
- There are groups focused on shared interests or hobbies, like local soccer leagues, swing dancing, cricket club, and kayaking groups.
- Bumble for Friends, Meetup, local Facebook groups and other platforms can be helpful to find connections with people with shared interests.
- Online communities and other groups, such as SACNAS, NAGB, AISES, and GeoLatinas, can provide support.
- NAACP Mississippi Chapter: [http://naacpms.org/mississippi-naacp/](http://naacpms.org/mississippi-naacp/)

Additional barriers to people of color:
- Facing racial aggression and microaggressions within the community (outside of USM)
  - Feeling unsafe and unwelcome in their new community
  - Mental toll of dealing with racism
- Police interactions—especially for international students of color this could be a harsh new reality (culture shock) leading to serious consequences.

What resources are available at your organization? What resources should be added?

Resources that are available:
• Student housing guides produced by graduate student organization
• Department (DMS) Handbook, which outlines platforms for reporting incidents of discrimination, harassment, etc., mental health services, hurricane preparedness, among other topics
• Graduate Student Handbook, which is similar to the DMS Handbook with but with greater specificity for grad students
• Our department is in the process of putting together on-boarding documents for new domestic and international graduate students, post docs, and staff. These documents will outline the barriers that new hires may face regarding housing, transportation, and other pertinent information before moving to our region.
  o For new international students and post docs, the document will clarify how to get a driver’s license, including driving schools in the area and other resources.
• Student mentoring program
  o This program matches first year grad students with a grad student in their second year or beyond. The program was started in Fall 2020 to improve student support during virtual learning as a result of COVID-19.
  o The mentor’s primary role is to provide academic and social support as new students adjust to grad school and student life.
  o The goal is to match mentees with mentors who are able to provide the degree of support they need.
  o Students are matched with mentors in their first semester in the program.
  o We are considering expanding the program to match newly accepted students with a mentor before the move to the area to answer questions about housing, student life, academics, and other questions.

Resources that should be added:
• Setting up a carpooling network or platform where individuals can share the town/city in which they live and whether they’re looking for a ride or are willing to give rides could be beneficial. Currently rides are coordinated amongst students via SMS, but generating a document similar to the “roommate finder” may be an option.
• Resources regarding professional development, which can be helpful to those who are first generation students in higher education
  o This could include topics about how to write a manuscript, how to write a grant proposal, and other field specific knowledge that may not have been covered during undergraduate education
• A quick guide of resources and contacts for a variety of services including but not limited to:
  o Mental health resources/USM Counseling Services
  o Office of Inclusion and Multicultural Engagement (USM)
  o CARES program
  o Health center programs
  o Counseling Services
Faculty-Student Liaison
- Graduate Affairs Committee
- Department Chair
- Student Ombudsman
- School Director
- Dean of Students/Dean of College
- USM professional development programs, such as Professionals in Preparation
- HR

- A guide of research and professional organizations that members of our department may be interested in, such as SACNAS, NAGB, AISES, GeoLatinas, MTS, and AAAS for forming a broader network, mentoring and fostering meaningful connections (more organizations can be found at https://libguides.mssm.edu/diversity/orgs)
- A guide for funding opportunities to attend conferences, such as USM Travel Awards
- Having additional resources for cultural sensitivity could be beneficial for all members of the department
  - Interactions within the community
    - Resources for how to navigate racist interactions
    - How to interact with police (especially helpful for international students)
    - Cultural training
    - How could students, faculty, and staff report an incident outside of USM, such as experiencing racism in their day-to-day life outside of the institution?