



March 2021

UNR Geoscience Units' Policies for Working with Communities of Color

The following information was found by the UNR Geosciences pod at the University of Nevada, Reno regarding faculty and student interactions with communities of color. Proposed action items to assist future collaboration and outreach while addressing identified shortcomings are listed.

Audit of previous and ongoing interactions with communities of color:

Here we compile a non-comprehensive list of pod member reflections on previous and ongoing interactions with communities of color. They attempt to address 1) what worked well, 2) what did not work well, 3) ways to improve outcomes for projects already underway, and 4) ideas for resources or actions to improve outcomes in future projects.

- *Professor:* Field work in Bhutan. The Kingdom of Bhutan has clear boundaries set on where outsiders are allowed to travel within the country, including prohibiting research or visits to certain sites. Local geology guides were not compensated monetarily, but through training in field methods. An agreement was also made to have a local geologist attend UNR for a Masters.
- *Professor and former Graduate Student:* Field work in Papua New Guinea (PNG). In PNG, there was a clear sense of mistrust in outsiders given the history of exploitation by the mining and oil and gas industries, but there was an effort made to mend that. Local guides were compensated monetarily. Educational outreach efforts were focused on tsunami hazard awareness. Other members of the PI team also had students from a local university help with the field work.

Conditions and infrastructure were such that it was unclear where additional compensation and resources could be best put to use.

- *Graduate Student:* Works with an Alaska-based organization that does not seem to adequately incorporate indigenous perspectives into their work, particularly in the determination of geologic hazards, potentially causing harm to local communities. Unsure of how to effectively change the culture and policies of the organization as a student.
 - *Graduate Student:* Made an effort to use original place names when presenting work in Oregon, but through contacting local tribal organizations found that the oral tradition that preserved these names had been lost.
 - *Professor:* Included educational outreach with a tribal organization in Montana as part of a grant proposal but acknowledges that the organization should have been brought in earlier to avoid tokenization.
 - *Professor:* Working on installing fire monitoring cameras throughout Nevada and southern Idaho. Has had success working in indigenous communities in Nevada, but has had difficulties in southern Idaho due to the local Native Americans' negative history with the BLM, who he is working with, highlighting the importance of fostering positive relations with local communities on a long term scale.
 - *Graduate Student:* Work does not include research at field sites, so the primary way it connects to the broader community is through public outreach. This has included positive experiences with speaking engagements in schools and museums, but not efforts to specifically reach communities of color. Making those efforts and researching available opportunities would greatly improve the impact and experience of doing that work; having a departmental list of resources and contacts would also be very useful. Additionally plans to include land acknowledgements in writing and presentations.
-

What actions can be taken to address shortcomings in these interactions?

Through the reflections summarized above, we have identified the following action items that DGSE should use to strengthen and equitably approach interactions and collaborations with communities of color:

- Create a departmental database of contacts for local indigenous communities. This resource can be referenced when proposing or planning work so that established connections can be strengthened and broadened beyond a single project. This database should include the following:
 - The name, contact information, region served, and tribal affiliation of any current or past contacts if applicable.
 - Ethics protocols on partnering with communities of color, such as those hosted by the Alaska Native Science Commission.
 - An up-to-date list of resources related to community outreach opportunities. A similar list is currently being compiled by the DEI Committee.
- Write and publicly display a Native Land Acknowledgement. This can either be an adoption of the UNR DEI office's acknowledgement or one tailored to the history and work of our department (e.g., mention of indigenous communities beyond campus that our research is indebted to, and the specific role that geologic resource extraction has played in the displacement of indigenous people).
 - The department should adopt related guidelines and/or recommendations for including land acknowledgements and acknowledgements of community collaborators at the outset of meetings and activities (e.g., seminars) or when presenting research results.