

URGE Deliverable - Safety Plan
University of Michigan Dept. of Earth and Environmental Sciences

Summary:

The University of Michigan Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences (EES) engages in a wide range of research and teaching activities both on and off campus. Typical work for student, staff, and faculty members in the EES community occurs on University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, central campus in 1100 North University Building (NUB) and in the Biological Sciences Building (BSB). We acknowledge that within these spaces our BIPOC students may feel uncomfortable, especially because most members of the department (students, staff, faculty) are not people of color, while much of the University's support and custodial staff are.

Our department stands to benefit from a formalized plan that is centered around supporting students of color and underrepresented minority students as they enter the field. Our department conducts field work in a wide range of locations (throughout the US and internationally) using a variety of approaches (land-based, ship-based). Field work may be offered through EES as part of courses offered through the university (e.g. for undergraduate and/or graduate students, for a grade) or as it pertains to the research being conducted by individual PIs and their lab groups. Throughout a graduate student's tenure at EES, they may be a GSI for a course that conducts field trips, either locally (Midwestern US, e.g. MI, OH, IN, PA/MD) or nationally (Southwestern US, Wyoming). In these locations, we acknowledge that our BIPOC community members may face differential safety concerns and additional challenges to working alone and/or in public spaces based on the composition of the community they are entering.

For this deliverable, we are focusing mainly on improving the physical and emotional safety we provide our students at our field station in Jackson, Wyoming (Camp Davis). Every EES undergraduate major is required to take a course at Camp Davis over the course of their degree, and many of our graduate students serve as graduate student instructors at this field station. As stated above, BIPOC students may face different challenges at Camp Davis as the result of the composition of the community in Jackson, Wyoming; however, we acknowledge that we can play a major role in helping our BIPOC students feel safe within the community of our classes at the field station by building trust between participants and instructors, providing structure for team building, communicating clearly and openly about our plan in the event of physical (e.g. natural hazards) and emotional threats to student well-being (e.g. harassment), and by fostering positive interactions. It is well known that a lack of structure in remote field settings can lead to unsafe situations where participants gravitate towards people and things that feel familiar to them (e.g. share similar social identities, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, ability status), ultimately inhibiting group cohesion and amplifying implicit biases.

On-campus Safety

Current safety resources:

- At both NUB and BSB there are formal laboratory safety protocols that are regulated by the university [Environment, Health, and Safety](#) division, which oversees Occupational Health and Safety (OHS). OHS guidelines for laboratory research safety can be found [here](#).
- We also have a [Department Lab Safety Coordinator \(Angela Dial\)](#) who serves as a resource for research lab staff, PIs, and student researchers in individual labs. The Departmental Lab Safety Coordinator reports to the LSA Safety Committee.
- The Division of Public Safety and Security (i.e. campus police) maintain safety related resources on their website [here](#).
- Official university harassment and discrimination grievance and dispute procedures are located in the standard practice guide [here](#).

Ideas for improvements:

- Implementing a way to tacitly signal “I work here” to avoid harassment and exclusion
 - Lanyard for M-card
 - EARTH branded gear (e.g. for backpacks, fleeces, etc.)
- Incorporate risk assessment into proposals for field work and fieldwork
- Make a template checklist, including cultural awareness, and race and gender discrimination
- Consider collecting data about undergraduates’ experiences in the department through anonymous exit surveys
 - We recognize that a recurring problem is an apparent conflict between the department community interests and legal restrictions on the University.
- Expanding training & resources (e.g. antidiscrimination, bystander intervention, and de-escalation training)
 - **Currently there is no required training that covers safety in regards to racism**
 - NSF required ethics course (online and EARTH495) is currently very research-focused, but could be a good venue for providing trainings and having relevant discussions with all incoming graduate students and postdocs
 - Optional teaching training material is available through CRLT ([program listings](#))
 - Other trainings that we should probably implement:
 - Know your rights training for interacting with police (including regular police vs campus police)
 - <https://studentlegalservices.umich.edu/article/video-know-your-legal-rights>
 - <https://www.jimtoycenter.org/know-your-rights>
 - Bystander intervention training (can be provided through existing UM programs)

- <https://www.csg.umich.edu/bystander-intervention-training>
 - <https://hr.umich.edu/working-u-m/professional-development/courses/change-it>
- Offer more GeoClub camping experiences for student who do not have previous outdoor experience want to learn without the pressures of a class field trip
 - How to set up a tent
 - What do you need to bring
 - Personal care
 - Full overnight experience for students who want it, but option to return home in the evening

Research Group Codes of Conduct

We suggest that research groups formulate their own codes on conduct to establish expectations for all group members. The suggested content below can be tailored to the group's usual activities and spaces. Examples of research group codes of conduct from our department can be found here: [Chris Jackson's Basin Research Group](#); [Jennifer Glass's Research Group](#)

- Expectations and time management
 - Respectful interactions
 - Working hours (40-50 hours/week, may vary on a week to week or month to month basis depending on lab, field, conference commitments)
 - Expectations depending on funding sources (e.g. division for GSIs vs. on fellowship or grant)
 - Expectations/availability for weekend or after-hours work
 - Coordinating use of facilities among group members
 - Meetings
 - One-on-one with advisor: standing meetings expected?
 - Committee meetings
 - Full lab group meetings
 - Semi-annual activity reports or other built - in schedule to evaluate mentor/mentee relationship and academic progress
 - Purchasing/ reimbursements
 - Who purchases what? What is the reimbursement process? How does this differ for students with particular fellowships?
 - Clarify expectations about using graduate student start-up funds
 - Expectations for when certain conversations need to happen throughout course of the degree
 - When to review IDP each year
 - When to schedule committee meetings
 - When to discuss career paths (preferably in 3d year)
 - Dedication to other projects
 - How much time/resources to spend on work from pre-UM (e.g.

- undergrad or previous graduate work)
 - Crediting any extra resources from UM
 - Time commitment (i.e. only on your own time in addition to 40hrs, or OK as part of “regular” hours as long as other work is getting done?)
 - UM advisor willing to talk about/edit work?
- Safety Training
 - Required trainings; who to contact; info about safety gear
 - Blue book location
- Communication
 - Who in the group is a mandatory reporter?
 - What is the primary mode of communication for the lab
 - In-person: door open/shut/half shut policy on offices
 - Email:
 - Remember emails can be forwarded
 - Are there limited hours for non-emergency emails?
 - Cc guidelines- who gets cc'd on emails, when are cc's unnecessary
 - Phone:
 - When is it appropriate to call/text?
 - Zoom:
 - Etiquette
 - Food/drinks
 - Backgrounds
 - Video on or off
 - Mute/unmute
 - How to handle interruptions: pets, children
 - Slack
 - Google Drive or other Lab Storage
 - Social media: what to post, permissions, when to tag the lab
- Vacation
 - We suggest “you are expected to take X days off, in addition to bank [University] holidays.”
 - University leave policies should be stated (additionally clarified in Department orientation and EARTH531)
 - At UM, graduate students (specifically GSIs) are eligible for up to 6 weeks of medical leave per year. Leave is also available for immigration proceedings or bereavement. Accommodation is required after the birth or adoption of a child, including 6 weeks of paid maternal leave or 3 weeks of parental leave and up to 8 weeks of leave total for either parent.
 - Postdocs (through UM, not necessarily external) have 22 days off, 3 weeks of medical leave, and 6 weeks parental leave.
- Inclusivity and Diversity
 - Standards for respectful communication
 - Enjoyable, high-quality research can only be conducted when you feel safe, secure, and supported. All group members are thus dedicated to a

harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, age, and/or religion.

- How to treat staff members
 - Introduce yourself to staff members, including janitorial staff
- Mental Health
 - Mental health concerns that graduate students and postdocs may experience during research:
 - Low pay and quality-of-life issues
 - Feelings of isolation in your research
 - Uncertainty in your research - please know that both questions and outcomes in research are filled with uncertainties and unexpected or “negative” results are common and likely in every project
 - Uncertainty in your post-PhD career
 - Burnout; i.e. feeling the need to work endless hours to make up for the above issues, and the subsequent exhaustion
 - Also see [this piece on mental health in the field](#).
 - Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES) at the University Hospital
 - Crisis phone service: 734-936-5900
 - PES provides emergency/urgent walk-in evaluation and crisis phone services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for people of all ages. Services include: psychiatric evaluation, treatment recommendations, crisis intervention; screening for inpatient psychiatric hospitalization, and substance abuse treatment referral information.
 - CAPS
 - Peer support groups such as the CommuniTEA groups, other campus groups like the U-Michigan SACNAS chapter or Spectrum Center programs
 - Time off for mental health: up to 6 weeks of medical leave can be utilized for mental health care
- Conferences
 - List of conferences people in the group are likely to attend
 - Conference costs/ travel
 - Who pays? What is eligible for reimbursement?
 - Relevant conference travel grant options from UM or external
 - Deadlines
 - Inform all co-authors of your intention to submit an abstract for a conference as soon as you decide to do so.
 - Conference abstracts must be sent to your advisor at least [two] weeks before the abstract deadline AND to all co-authors at least [one] week before the abstract deadline
 - Upon acceptance (or rejection) of your abstract, you must inform all co-authors of the outcome as soon as possible.
 - A final draft of your presentation or poster must be sent to your advisor at least [two] weeks before the date of the presentation AND to all co-authors at least [one] week before the date of presentation.
- Publication and Authorship

- Expectations for output: numbers and timelines of publications
- Guidelines for authorship: who is listed as an author vs. acknowledged, how much time is expected for coauthors to review abstracts or manuscripts,
- What happens to data & papers that aren't finished when a student graduates - grace period, change in authorship order, etc.
- Data
 - Archiving
 - Ownership
 - Policies on sharing with other labs
- Applying for Student Research Grants
 - List of common sources (NSF GRFP, GSA, departmental grants)
 - Students can take initiative to seek funding
 - Timelines for sending application materials to advisor ahead of time
- Letters of Recommendation
 - How far in advance to request
 - What information to provide
 - Following up/reminders

General Field Trip Safety Plan

- Some members of our department work with the University of Michigan Biological Station. For field trips at UMBS, consult the Biostation [safety information](#) and [code of conduct](#).
- The University of Michigan maintains a portal for resources related to international travel, which includes extensive information about developing safety plans for travel ([here](#)).

Camp Davis

This section covers safety at the two University of Michigan Earth & Environmental Sciences department field camp, Camp Davis in Wyoming.

Camp Davis brings together undergraduate students, Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs), and faculty instructors. Participants come from a variety of backgrounds in terms of racial/ethnic identities, gender identities, sexual orientations, physical disability or discapacity, fitness level, socioeconomic background, and more. Participants furthermore may not have any outdoor experience at all or may not have camped for an extended period of time. In considering these factors, we identify the following priorities in developing safety plan infrastructure at Camp Davis:

1. Pre-trip preparation and training
2. Establishing responsible persons for after-hours safety
3. Providing access to third party harassment/misconduct reporting and mediation
4. Facilitating access to mental health resources
5. Clear delineation of responsibilities of faculty and GSIs

Current safety documents:

- Current Camp Davis [safety and rules document](#).
- Biostation [safety information](#) and [code of conduct](#).

Pre-trip preparation and planning (items in chronological order)

- **Syllabus and curriculum preparation**
 - Instructors (faculty and GSIs) meet to discuss plan for the class, including:
 - Distribution of experience with Camp Davis and teaching the course
 - Develop a Teaching Team Communication Form for Camp Davis
 - Curriculum preparation (materials needed, assignments needing updating, maps/assignments that need to be printed on campus)
 - Workload distribution among faculty and GSIs, both before going to Camp Davis and during the class
 - Evaluate the curriculum (i.e. projects, hikes) in the context of inclusivity, accessibility, and the learning goals of the class.
 - Faculty are encouraged to evaluate their practices and how they contribute to student learning. How can we maximize accessibility of different physical activities and set students up for success? (e.g. reordering the hikes throughout the duration of the course to improve accessibility)
 - Are there alternative ways for students physically unable to complete the activities to achieve the same learning goals and not feel isolated from their peers?
 - Consider making a detailed checklist document for the class ([example for EARTH 116 here](#))
 - Plans for inclusivity built into class structure, considering physical, medical, and emotional needs. Expectations should be set in writing on the syllabus.
 - Protocols should be established for evaluating risks specific to participants with minoritized identities.
 - Agree on a plan for building community amongst the students, both during the zoom pre-field meeting, and during the first 24-hours at camp
- **Trainings for instructors**
 - All instructors:
 - Mandatory Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or First Responder (WFR) training for instructors (GSIs and faculty) is forthcoming (from Kurt Burmeister, or through Campus rec)
 - All GSIs and faculty would have at least WFA training, and a subset (1-2) would have WFR training
 - Mandatory [QPR training](#) for instructors to help deal with mental health crises.
 - Training for alcohol, drug consumption and responsibilities

- We suggested designated responsible faculty member (not GSI) each night; this needs to be clearly indicated somewhere public
 - Need regulations for alcohol consumption that are clear
 - Additional GSI-specific training:
 - Intergroup dynamics, de-escalation training, recognize students in crisis
 - Who to report to, how and when
 - Define reasonable purview of GSIs
- **Pre-Departure Material checklists**
 - Student roster with severe allergies /medical conditions (+ instructions for use/application as needed)
 - Camping reservations
 - Camp davis handbook (distributed to students who get quizzed on the material upon arrival to camp davis)
 - Teaching materials (coordinated with faculty instructor)
 - Additional camping gear for students (as needed)
 - GSI personal belongings (camping gear, personal effects,)
- **Pre-Field Class meeting:** The role of this meeting will be to provide a structured introduction between the course instructors and the GSIs prior to boarding the vans to head to Camp Davis.
 - Short ice-breaker and introduction of faculty instructor, GSI, and students
 - Review process for students to communicate their individual needs to the instructor (e.g. equipment needs, medical concerns)
 - A typical day at Camp Davis
 - Go through a daily schedule (inc. description of physical activities and options)
 - Provide a template for what students should expect
 - Review of syllabus and expectations
 - Affirmation of commitment to inclusivity

Culture-building and experiential learning

Fieldwork carries inherent risk, and developing trust amongst students that their peers and instructors carry their physical and mental health and comfort at heart is critical to ensure that instruction at Camp Davis fulfils its educational goals. The responsibility falls on every individual's shoulders to contribute to a positive, inclusive, and equitable learning environment.

- Camping/fieldwork novices
 - Include discussion of sanitary needs using gender-neutral language
 - Going to the bathroom while in the field (good resource [here](#))
 - Availability of facilities
 - How to go to the bathroom outdoors
 - How to dispose of solid waste
 - Menstruation
 - State availability of sanitary pads and tampons, suggestions for other products students may bring themselves such as Diva

- Cups
 - Include guidance on disposing of or sanitizing products after use
 - Personal hygiene
 - Washing and brushing teeth
 - Hair care in the field (considerations for students with natural hair)
 - Optional practice camp-out (overnight optional)
 - Access to supplies
 - Geoclub Gear Recycling Program (for loaner supplies)
 - U-Michigan camping rentals
- Culture-building among participants
 - Members of each class meet before the drive out to discuss expectations, guidelines, and formal code of conduct (discussed above)
 - Outline specific activities for that class
 - Create a space for questions and icebreakers to build familiarity and trust among students, GSIs, and faculty that will hopefully facilitate the voicing of concerns later on

Next steps for improving Camp Davis safety

- Instructor WFR and WFA training, physical safety - is this feasible for 2021?
 - Follow up with REI and/or Campus REC
- Focus groups of alumni GSIs for Camp Davis to plan for this year
- Establish required orientation for Camp Davis instructors in advance
 - Find ways to establish the culture of the experience
 - Provide “community building” resources to instructional team (faculty and GSIs) in advance of Camp, encourage conversation between instructional team members about the role each of them will play in building and maintaining positive course community
 - For 2021 Madelyn has shared “Biggest Bag O’ Tricks” document in the URGE drive, a resource from the American Youth Foundation that has many different community building exercises and ice-breaker activities for small groups
 - Help establish your role in the group, to help prepare individually and also help people articulate their needs
 - Clearly define GSI role for Camp Davis - put together a Camp Davis GSI handbook/resource book and fill out a teaching team communication form for Camp Davis
 - Question, Persuade, Refer ([QPR](#)) training for GSIs and faculty
 - Pre-camp training for GSIs (winter semester potentially)
 - WFR (wilderness first aid/first responder) training
 - Central Michigan University has a faculty member (Rob Schumacker, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Leisure services) who teaches WFR courses through Wilderness Medical Associates.

- Intergroup dynamics, de-escalation training, recognize students in crisis
 - Who to report to, how and when
- Work with [Joy Pehlke](#) (Wellness Center) about mental health plan for Camp Davis
- Hire independent professional staff member as counselor for camp (to handle psychological issues, harassment, violence, isolation, etc)
 - Telemedicine (CAPS, wellness center, etc)
- Pre-camp participant meetings
 - Meet as a class before leaving for camp
 - Outline expectations in terms of safety (personal and group) and intragroup dynamics
 - Group meet and trust-building activities, teamwork activities, community building
 - UM culture standards for incoming students or students from other Universities
- Safety procedures for unstructured time
 - Designate a point person who is on call each night (need someone to be able to drive in the case of an emergency and someone who is easily identifiable from the posted work schedule). Have clear contact means (walkie-talkie, cabin number, etc)