

POLICIES FOR WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES OF COLOR VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE / WILLIAM & MARY

The following was found by the VIMS/W&M URGE Pod on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources at both VIMS and W&M.

I. PREVIOUS INTERACTIONS WITH COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AT VIMS AND/OR WILLIAM & MARY

- [VIMS REU Program](#):
 - recruits and supports underrepresented minorities to come to VIMS for a 10-week summer internship.
 - connects with the Pamunkey Tribe for a tidal freshwater kayaking field trip for the summer interns and highlights the Pamunkey culture, including a visit to their museum. This connection should be further expanded to include paying members of the tribe to lead the excursion and talk directly with the interns about their long history of living on the river and sharing their scientific knowledge of the local area. This could be a great way to involve younger tribe members and continue building trust between this community and VIMS.
- [VIMS/CBNERR](#):
 - partnership with the Gloucester Boys and Girls club for their summer camps. They reserve a set number of camp slots for kids participating in the Boys and Girls Club.
 - Since summer camp hours are 9-4, it can be difficult for working parents to be able to pick up and drop off at these times, so the B&G club staff transports the kids and extends the hours for the parents.
 - This has been a successful program and has been fully booked every year.
- [W&M Camp LAUNCH](#):
 - summer enrichment program for high school students from marginalized groups and communities to engage students in the Marine Science discipline.
 - provides eligible students in grades 7-10 with unique academic and enrichment opportunities.
 - Campers are recruited from school districts throughout Virginia to participate in this two-week program with courses in STEM, Writing, and Personal Development.
- [W&M Phage Lab](#):
 - research-based, year-long laboratory experience that incoming students from underrepresented groups have the opportunity to take in place of the standard Introductory Biology Laboratory (that is a co-requisite for BIOL 220 and BIOL 225).
 - part of the nationwide HHMI SEA-PHAGES (Science Education Alliance – Phage Hunting Advancing Genomic and Evolutionary Science) program.
- [WMSURE Program](#) supports undergraduates from underrepresented groups during their time at W&M, through research experience, advising, and cultural programming.
- [Virginia Scientist Educator Alliance \(VASEA\)](#):
 - allows students to develop lesson plans alongside local educators
 - keeping in mind the diversity of students who may use these lessons could be important
- W&M has Green Fee scholarships that are awarded to students to carry out sustainability projects, there could be a lot of ways in which these projects could be tailored to benefit communities of color.
- Miscellaneous Other Outreach / Partnerships:

- REU Anthropological work at W&M with Rowan Lockwood on historic oyster reefs in conjunction with the Pamunkey Tribe. Start with museum orientation as an introduction to the Pamunkey tribe.
- VIMS researchers have collaborated with local watermen in the past and should continue to seek outreach opportunities within this community, particularly with watermen from underrepresented minorities.
- W&M Radon Project has recently begun testing homes in Williamsburg, James City County, and York County for radon at no cost. Advertisements have been placed in local newspapers & town offices for test kits
- Discontinued Programs (formerly funded by NSF):
 - Hall-Bonner Program for Minority Doctoral Scholars in the Ocean Sciences: partnered with VIMS, Hampton University and Old Dominion University; focused on increasing the diversity of students earning doctoral degrees in the marine and ocean sciences.
 - DREAMS (Diversity in Research in Environmental and Marine Sciences) Undergraduate Program: VIMS partnered with Hampton University for training students from underrepresented groups in environmental biology and marine science.

II. WHAT WORKED WELL IN THESE INTERACTIONS?

- Helpful to have cohort-based programs that bring in multiple individuals that are underrepresented so they have a community within the larger institutional community
- Asking students from underrepresented groups how W&M can more effectively support them, rather than assuming that W&M faculty already know what they need/want.
- Bringing in communities on the ground level of a project/grant and working with them in a co-production of knowledge to fully develop the idea increases the trust and active participation rather than only including BIPOC communities when you get to the DEI statement. It also caused the final proposal to be much more relevant and interesting than the original concept.

III. WHAT DID NOT WORK WELL, AND HOW CAN THIS BE BETTER ADDRESSED IN FUTURE PLANS?

- Last-Minute Addition of DEI / Community Outreach:
 - Funder-driven initiatives to integrate indigenous knowledge (e.g., Navigating the New Arctic program from NSF in 2019), when timelines between RFPs and deadlines are short, lead to last-minute “add-on” style reaching out to communities of color.
 - When DEI activities are created within weeks of a proposal deadline, the ideas are haphazardly put together, which does not lend those activities to being sustainable or meaningful/impactful. Spending an equal amount of time on the DEI/broader impacts statements as you did with the proposal can really create a sustained project or idea. Be intentional about considering DEI at the beginning of the process; only with practice will it become second-nature to include community when doing science.
- These programs were discontinued for funding yet the need still greatly exists. Cohort-based systems seem to be more effective in recruiting/retaining students of color because there is more support over the duration of their program when they have other students they can relate to and share with.
- Many of these programs are run by faculty of color who already have heavier service loads. This is frustrating because W&M does not generally value service and DEI work of faculty as highly as they value research and teaching. This can be addressed by white faculty stepping up to help with the programs (asking faculty of color how they can help).
- Funding sources, like NSF, create barriers to finding local community members when working internationally.

IV. WAYS TO IMPROVE THE OUTCOME OF PROJECTS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN, OR FUTURE PROJECTS

- Building Communities of Trust:
 - Dedicate the time to promote trust building among community members. It is important to have consistent, transparent, and strong communication.
 - Be honest about intentions to prevent one-sided relationships.
 - Researchers should first come to the community with an open-ear to really listen about what the community needs, and make sure not to tell the community what the researchers (or what their research findings) think the community needs.
- Considerate Interactions:
 - Remember that culture is not the same as race or ethnicity and not all indigenous groups are the same. Don't tokenize people or extract from their community without giving back.
 - Understanding where and how our samples are collected. Are there local communities we should be engaging in our research (not as an afterthought, but upfront in the research process)? Are there ways of knowing we have not considered?
 - Transferable lessons from working with communities of color to "community science" more broadly.
 - It is important to have transparency about what resources and connections are already established (e.g., what email listservs or which people are good resources to share information about paid internships that support underrepresented minorities, HCBUs, etc.).
- Two-Way Knowledge Transfer & Integration:
 - Approach the groups with reverence for their knowledge, and invite them to share their knowledge with the research community. (e.g., Watermen have been working the land/water for generations and they have valuable knowledge that would be helpful if western scientists could appreciate it).
 - Researchers can go back to these communities and share the findings/results to keep building trust over time and on other projects and include them on papers/presentations/outreach (as appropriate) so they are also part of the scientific effort.
 - Make sure that you share the results of your project with the people you're working with along the way, even if the results are not fully complete. Be transparent that it will take some time to get those results back to them.

V. SPECIFIC RESOURCES/GUIDELINES NEEDED TO IMPROVE THE PROCESS FOR PLANNING AHEAD & WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

- Continue to link underrepresented groups in STEM fields with other local underrepresented groups to find and foster other connections (*i.e.*, taking minority students kayaking on the Pamunkey reservation, and connecting with local tribal leaders for tours of the Indian reservation)
- Leveraging Institutional Longevity:
 - facilitate opportunities and links with local HBCU to our area so we do not need to keep reinventing the wheel and other institutions are not tokenized.
 - Have past projects and connections archived for colleagues.
 - Develop resources for how to maintain institutional connections that go beyond the relatively short terms associated with grant-funded project.
 - Place responsibility on those in privileged positions (*i.e.*, PIs) with longer-term contracts and ability to establish & nurture relationships with underprivileged communities. PIs with established relationships with underprivileged communities can facilitate introductions into those communities for their students and staff who are generally at W&M or VIMS for shorter time periods.
- Incorporating traditional/indigenous knowledge:

- Seek to source indigenous communities learned/encoded observations in papers & reports
- Develop a resource on how to navigate maintaining indigenous communities' data sovereignty within the western granting process since most granting agencies require your data to be fully public. Include a list of granting agencies who are cognizant of data sovereignty, or examples of how to work with your granting agency to protect native/indigenous communities' sovereignty.
- Use a military model of data collection where the tribes can see/verify data first before any intellectual property is created.
- Note: find ways to compensate these communities or individuals to show we value their knowledge
- Include projects with interdisciplinary joint-report teams (for example: anthropologists, sociologists, etc) which builds a deeper relationship with indigenous communities.
 - Ex: Chuck Bailey's (Geo dept.) Oman collaboration with Anne Rasmussen (Music dept.)
 - A list of previous community partners that groups/departments at VIMS/W&M have worked with, what the project was, and how it concluded?

VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF VIMS/W&M LAB/UNIT/DEPARTMENT/INSTITUTION POLICIES

- Recognition of Indigenous Communities:
 - Normalize land grant acknowledgements in formal and informal presentations, but with actions that support this statement fully.
 - Develop a VIMS-specific land grab acknowledgment that could be posted on the VIMS website.
 - Include an introduction to the local indigenous communities in orientation activities for Geo/VIMS students. This could be modeled similarly to the VIMS REU Program's field trip to the Pamunkey Indian Reservation Museum that is already in practice.
 - Data use and sharing policy need formal agreement upfront from the indigenous community before collecting or creating intellectual content. (ex: prevent ASU misuse of DNA samples without further authorization)
- Development & Maintenance of Relationships & Programs:
 - Focus on prioritizing the continuity of programs. Perhaps find additional funding (non-NSF) that can increase the longevity of relationships at HBCUs and with local tribes.
 - Encourage PIs to start establishing relationships with local indigenous groups. This could establish ties for future research as well as trust to recruit students for VIMS REUs.
 - Extension specialists (e.g., those in the VIMS Marine Advisory Program that includes experts in education and outreach) are needed to help build relationships with local indigenous communities.
 - Additional funds to support a program similar to the Hall-Bonner program (supporting PhD students of color) could be sought.
- Incentivization of JEDI & Working with Communities of Color:
 - Redefine how researchers (any everyone else) are evaluated. The institutional review system (hiring, tenure) favors researchers with fast productivity which is incongruent with the time necessary to develop relationships with local communities.
 - Re-shape tenure requirements to include recognition of JEDI work & working with communities of color as part of a tenure evaluation. This may help promote collaborative research with indigenous groups, particularly for early-career faculty who may not have time to think about the "long game" of building relationships that may not be used until years in the future.
 - Include space for DEI & working with communities of color it on the annual evaluations (note: this is a long-standing recommendation to VIMS administration).