URGE
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES

Deliverable – Safety Plan

*This is a living document that will be continually updated   *last updated 4/16/2021*

<u>For Attendees/Mentees/Students:</u>

- Before field experience, investigate potential safety issues (profile of the site)
  - Both physical and cultural information should be collected and considered:
    - Physical:
      - Environmental factors such as field conditions, accessibility, and realistic physical abilities of each individual participating
      - Access to first aid equipment, personal navigation, and emergency contacts (standard safety protocols)
      - Additional field guides/protocols for how to understand and interact with the field area of study and what to be mindful of once there including
        - Wildlife
        - Property lines
        - Specific issues/concerns/conditions different and unique to the area (like urban areas vs rural/remote)
    - Cultural and Equity:
      - General current climate of the area, including but not limited to: crime, political, and/or general unrest; analogous to the perspective of a tourist with no knowledge of the area and include all travel concerns
      - Hold meeting with local authorities, elders, and stakeholders to learn about recommended customs, discuss team code of conduct, and invite involvement at all levels. If possible, generate document signed by local authority granting team permission to be in the area – each team should carry a copy of the document.
      - Consider safety and comfort with safety guidelines for each individual

- o Additional considerations:
  - Lodging needs and availability/accessibility
  - Access needs for attendees with disabilities
  - Any specific local concerns towards the group attendees
- Create a group dynamic where members not only account for themselves, but also look out for the rest of the group
- Create guidelines to interacting with the community the group enters; for example, each member should have a set of frequently asked questions pertaining to a project like what is happening, what does XYZ study/project do and mean for the community, who the group is, and who to talk to for further questions or questions that are beyond the knowledge of the member asked
- Create additional guidelines/informational steps that include what any attendee could and should do in case of emergency or confrontation, including instituting a "no-repercussions stop work" policy
  - o Find people who are familiar with the area, if possible, include them in planning or ask them to be involved in the field excursion
  - o Further, if able, the group of attendees (whether faculty/leaders, mentees, third party participants, and administration) should meet together to address all guidelines/protocols/details of project
    - Additional topics to cover:
      - Any and all concerns from any member involved in the project regarding safety - each perspective holds equal weight and should be addressed to an acceptable comfort standard for all involved
      - Any and all questions of understanding of the information
      - Keeping this dialog open for the entirety of the field experience
- Every person (student and leader) has the right to stop work for any reason explicitly to communicate concerns, identify undesirable situations, and to build a plan of action to overcome potential or extant problems.
- Ability/system to report (anonymously or otherwise) any participant in field or non-field settings and consequences for certain actions

For Faculty/Leaders/Mentors:

There should be a minimum of two leaders on site. It is the leaders' responsibility to establish a physically and culturally safe field environment. Leaders should:

- Set daily expectations, but be open to revising them according to mentee needs;

- Be receptive and flexible to student input about safety issues - perhaps a sounding board/briefing for students to discuss expectations and guidelines;
- Be open to having private conversations with students who want to address a potential issue – anonymity is important in field settings.

Every student should be empowered to bring up their concerns, and there will be a third party mentor or leadership role if concerns are about mentors/leaders.

Mentor training:

- First aid and wilderness preparedness training, as appropriate
- In depth understanding of field area and inherent risks, points of contact, and emergency plan
- Understand racial bias in the U.S. and field of Geoscience (maybe borrow key literature/videos from URGE programs)
    - Allow mentors to be open listeners and better at advising BIPOC mentees

Currently there is no training for, e.g. faculty advisors to grad students, to ensure they are good mentors and can meet their mentees' needs (which will differ by mentee). Advisors should be expected to go through training and demonstrate their ability to mentor, much like researchers train to use specialized equipment in labs. The privilege of having grad students should be dependent on an advisor's ability to mentor appropriately. This can incentivize a more holistic understanding of mentees' needs, e.g. in cases of white mentors with BIPOC mentees, and lead to better mentoring relationships.

- Leaders, and all team members, should be aware of and be comfortable with each other. Specially in a new environment, leaders should ensure that the team is a trusting and supportive environment. For example,
    - Have a pre-trip social meeting to learn about team-mates and to discuss potentially difficult situations.
    - Set up expectations about communications, individual culture, safety, and teamwork
    - Learn about and from team-mates in a social setting
    - Request a review of safety guidelines from physical and cultural safety perspectives

Consequences for breaching guidelines

- Attendees/Mentees/Students
    - Initial breaching of the guidelines would include actions that are dealt with on site depending on the infraction and have applicable college consequences as defined by the Colorado School of Mines (general Colorado School of Mines policies and procedures are in place across the board)
- Faculty/Leaders/Mentors

- o Third-party enforcement (school department, field program, etc.) should have the power to remove mentors from the program immediately upon a breach of protocol, depending on the severity