

URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Shamberger Lab Safety Plan

Consider spaces in your organization as well as in the broader geosciences that have barriers to access for people of color. Much of the attention on this topic has been regarding field work but this also applies to spaces closer to home, e.g. a Black graduate student walking home late from lab work may be more likely to be stopped and questioned by police. Consider that Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other people of color will face different challenges from one another. This safety plan will remain a work in progress that is revisited and refined as needed.

Where is your work done? Are these spaces uncomfortable or unsafe for people of color?

-Most of our work is conducted either in the laboratory or in the field on research cruise ships. These ships may feel uncomfortable to women and people of color because often it is very apparent that they are the only diverse members on that cruise. Additionally, there is not much in the way of any code of conduct/diversity training required before these cruises so if something were to occur, they may not know the appropriate channels to report it. Additionally, these are typically very close quarters with small groups so it may make them hesitant to report any forms of harassment. Field work can also seem very inaccessible to people with disabilities and so there needs to be plans to make these experiences welcoming and accessible to them. Graduate students do not live on campus, however when commuting to/from campus to work in lab BIPOC could be pulled over more often. Especially if working late hours in the lab, which we often do because our instrument takes quite a bit of time to set up, run and break down each day.

What training does your organization require or offer? How often? Do you find this training effective? What would you introduce to make it more effective?

-Employees are required to complete discrimination-free workplace training bi-annually and students are only required to take their new student orientation and Title IX training. These trainings are not sufficient because we have seen in our discussions that faculty and students often do not know where to report hate crimes and discriminatory acts. We had to actively search out this information to find the correct online portal. Additionally, antiracism, justice, equity, diversity, & inclusion (AJEDI) training is not required for students or all faculty (faculty on search committees must take Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence (STRIDE) training) which would benefit the entire community at TAMU. However, TAMU does offer bystander and ally training programs that students and faculty can choose to participate in (see below).

Deliverable: Develop and publish a safety plan specific to your pod (lab, university, organization). This safety plan should include a code of conduct as well as a process for reporting violations, as covered in your Complaints and Reporting Policy deliverable from Session 2.

Shamberger Lab Safety Plan

Overview

The Shamberger Lab, in the Department of Oceanography at Texas A&M University (TAMU), values the participation of every member of our community and we want to ensure everyone has an enjoyable and fulfilling experience, both professionally and personally. Accordingly, all members of the Shamberger Lab are expected to always show respect and courtesy to others. We create our culture, and our culture is inclusive.

Please note that this code of conduct is not a legal document, supplementing, but not trumping, Department- and/or College-level policies for your level of employment or study.

Inclusivity and diversity

High-quality research can only be enjoyed and 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. We do not tolerate harassment by and/or of members of our group in any form. Harassment includes offensive verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of discussions, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention. We ask all members of the community to conform to the following Code of Conduct for inclusivity and diversity:

1. All communication, be it online or in person, should be appropriate for a professional audience, and be considerate of people from different cultural backgrounds. Sexual language and imagery is not appropriate at any time.
2. Be kind to others and do not insult or put down other group members.
3. Behave professionally. Remember that harassment and sexist, racist, or exclusionary jokes are not appropriate.
4. Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.
5. Contribute to discussions in meetings with a constructive, positive approach.
6. Be mindful of talking over others when discussing in groups and be willing to hear out the ideas of others.

In addition to making group members feel safe and secure, diversity and inclusivity has numerous benefits to us all. Put simply, the greater the mix of people in our group, the greater the mix of skills, experiences, perspectives, and ideas we can collectively draw on. The benefits of diversity and equality cannot be fully achieved without first creating an inclusive environment.

Dr. Shamberger will discuss the Code of Conduct with all new lab members before they begin working with her group so all are aware of the expectations for the group. Dr. Shamberger will discuss the Code of Conduct again with any lab members who violate these rules, no matter how much they contribute to the lab group, or how specialized or needed their skillset. If inappropriate behavior persists after this initial discussion, formal processes, in line with

TAMU's work practices policies, will commence. To report an issue, please contact Dr. Shamberger (katie.shamberger@tamu.edu); all communication will be treated as confidential. If you do not feel comfortable contacting Katie directly, please feel free to contact PhD students in the lab group (Tacey Hicks and Ally Savoie) or the College of Geosciences Assistant Dean for Diversity and Climate (Ishara Casellas Connors: icasellasconnors@tamu.edu).

Online Reporting

In addition to reporting issues directly to Dr. Shamberger, the following online reporting forms are available through Texas A&M University.

- [Tell Somebody Reporting](#)
 - Can be anonymous
 - Reviewed by a team to determine necessary action (no specifics listed)
 - Reports are not guaranteed to be confidential - determined by State law

- [Stop Hate](#)
 - Can be anonymous
 - Reviewed by a team to determine necessary action (no specifics listed)
 - Reports are not guaranteed to be confidential - determined by State law

- [Campus Community Incident Report \(CCIR\)](#)
 - Can be anonymous
 - Report are reviewed based on stats of person engaging in alleged misconduct
 - Student misconduct: Student Conduct Office (SCO) or Department of Student Affairs in Qatar
 - Staff misconduct: Human Resources
 - Faculty misconduct: Dean of Faculties
 - Reports are confidential - SCO staff, accused student, and those with an educational need to know will view the report
 - Note: no action may be taken if incidents fall outside of university jurisdiction, do not involve a current student or employee, have a lack of evidence, or if the reporting party is unable to specifically identify the alleged offender(s).

Training Resources

Outline training resources that are available and requirements for antidiscrimination, bystander intervention, and de-escalation training.

- Discrimination-free workplace training

- Required by TAMU employees bi-annually
- Through TrainTraQ
- Green Dot Bystander Intervention Training Program
 - Free optional training through TAMU
 - How to be aware of potential violence around them and provides skills, strategies, and tactics to use the power of peer influence to intervene appropriately and safely in high-risk scenarios
- Online Bystander Intervention Training
([https://rise.articulate.com/share/ypJhlQVYQqlbJ8wTipZbYNncui1h0dE#/\)

 - Prepare to take action when witnessing harassment and discriminatory behavior. This training will help eliminate the uncertainty of how to intervene, particularly in uncomfortable situations. You will gain a more in-depth understanding of:
 - How bystander intervention can protect targets of discrimination and harassment.
 - How to deter harassing behavior.
 - How to prevent future incidents.](https://rise.articulate.com/share/ypJhlQVYQqlbJ8wTipZbYNncui1h0dE#/)
- Aggie Ally Workshop
 - Allies include staff, faculty, and students at Texas A&M University who have committed to providing a safe space for GLBT individuals. This can be done by displaying an Ally **placard** outside their office or residence hall room, interrupting homophobic language, being a movable safe space, etc. This placard identifies them as individuals who are willing to provide a safe haven, a listening ear, and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people or anyone dealing with sexual orientation issues.
- College of Geosciences Cares Workshops
 - Sexual assault, rape, and the cycle of violence happens here. Do you know what to say? What not to say? What to do? What not to do? Introductory sessions on the realities of sexual assault and ways in which you can help without hurting. We will discuss terminology, facts, resources, and the interconnected yet varied roles 'reporter' and 'supporter' can have.
- Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence (STRIDE)
 - Only available for faculty.
 - A two-hour, interactive workshop designed to provide attendees with strategies and tactics that will maximize the likelihood that well-qualified and diverse candidates will be identified and recruited for faculty positions at Texas A&M University. During the workshop, participants learn about best practices to ensure a fair and equitable search process and to minimize the influence of implicit bias. The workshops are intended for

search committee chairs, search committee members, and department heads. All faculty serving on a faculty search committee are required to complete the workshop within two years of the time they are appointed to a search committee.

Field Work

For field work, include a racial risk assessment of sites, a pre-departure checklist of discussions within the field team, procedures for documenting incidents in the field, as well as additional required or supported training. This safety plan is a work in progress that is revisited and refined.

Researchers can reduce risk for at risk groups while in the field by following the recommendations from Demery and Pipkin 2020, which include:

1. Talk with colleagues and supervisors about the risks, preparations to minimize risk, and reporting mechanisms. Be aware that the conversation will likely be difficult and will require mental and emotional readiness by both parties. If a supervisor is dismissive of this conversation, individuals should be informed that they can and should reach out to additional mentors, institutional or industry advocates (e.g., ombudsman, Equal Employment Opportunity officer, Diversity and Inclusion administrators, Student Disability Services, or other trusted professionals) to have this conversation.

2. The scale of risk can be higher at international field sites (e.g., identities may be criminalized). At minimum, be aware of and abide by any international laws and customs in addition to local foreign laws, current political situations, actual degree of law enforcement, and mandate a conversation between researcher and supervisor to establish an emergency contingency plan.

3. Contact others (especially those who share an at-risk identity) that have previously used a field site at a location where there is a history of risk. It is recommended that researchers document all known cases of risk at that location.

4. Take advantage of training opportunities to increase field safety and promote awareness (e.g., self-defense courses, first aid, safety aids, cultural history course about the location of the field site).

5. Know who manages the field site(s) and inform the field managers when/where you will be at those locations.

6. Introduce yourself to the neighbors surrounding the field property, or leave a short note informing neighbors about research being conducted at nearby locations and who will be conducting the research. It is advisable to also include contact information, preferably information that clearly demonstrates affiliation with the research institution to provide additional credibility.

7. Engage in fieldwork with another person, when possible. When this is not possible,

have a point of contact (preferably the supervisor) who is aware of your whereabouts and expected schedule on a given day. A written communication plan that gives notice of field plans is another way to maintain communication with a point of contact.

8. Always carry credentials in case someone challenges why you are at the field site. These include photo ID (driver's license, passports, institution ID), and relevant permits. Any additional form of identification that clearly demonstrates affiliation with the research institution can also be helpful (i.e., University apparel, institution bumper stickers/car magnets, etc.).

9. If at any time you feel unsafe, you should contact your supervisor to discuss ways to modify the project. While supervisors work closely with researchers, they often do so outside of the field site, and therefore may not know of the risks and dangers therein encountered. It is paramount that at-risk individuals advocate for themselves.

Our research aboard UNOLS vessels have a committee for Maintaining an Environment of Respect Aboard Ships (MERAS) by researching existing policies and practices aboard their vessels. This is based on NSF's Stop Harassment policy that states they "will not tolerate sexual harassment, harassment based on ethnicity, race, gender, or disability, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault, within the agency, at awardee organizations, field sites or anywhere science or education is conducted. NSF has taken steps to help ensure all NSF-funded research and learning environments are free from sexual harassment and other forms of harassment. Additionally, NSF is bolstering our policies, guidelines and communications so that organizations clearly understand expectations and individuals understand their rights."

More information on UNOLS MERAS committee:

https://www.unols.org/sites/default/files/Guidelines_and_RecommendationsAug11_ver3.pdf

Procedure for documenting incidents in the field:

- If on a research vessel or at a field site:
 - Report incident to Primary Investigator (PI), Chief Scientist, and/or Captain of vessel.
 - Thoroughly document or have PI/Chief Scientist/Captain document the incident in as much detail as possible/comfortable.
 - Contact Dr. Shamberger via email or phone as soon as possible if she is not in the field with you.
- Once on shore, reports can be made to the above online reporting sites and/or Dr. Shamberger can report if she is not in the field with you.
- Incidents may also be discussed with the Oceanography Department Head or the College of Geosciences Dean for Diversity and Climate.