URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience (URGE; www.urgeoscience.org) is a community-wide journal-reading and policy-design curriculum to help Geoscientists unlearn racism and improve accessibility, justice, equity, and inclusion (AJEDI) in our discipline. URGE's primary objectives are to (1) deepen the community's knowledge of the effects of racism on the participation and retention of black, brown, and indigenous people in Geoscience[1], (2) use the existing literature, expert opinion, and personal experiences to develop anti-racist policies and strategies[2,3], and (3) share, discuss, and modify anti-racist policies and strategies within a dynamic community network and on a national stage. By meeting these objectives, we hope that Geoscience departments and societies will be able to implement a well-researched crowdsourced group of anti-racist policies.

Deliverable - Safety Plan - (Bio)geochemistry UMN

Education is essential but action is also imperative for achieving the objectives of URGE. Therefore, each URGE topic is paired with deliverables for individual pods to draft and share. This deliverable is a safety plan, whether you work in a laboratory or in remote field settings.

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[4] 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.

Suggested discussion questions:
- Where is your work done? Are these spaces uncomfortable or unsafe for people of color?
- 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?

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. Outline training resources that are available and requirements for antidiscrimination, bystander intervention, and de-escalation training. 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[5]. This safety plan can (and should be) a work in progress that is revisited and refined.

- Example Safety Plan: (Demery & Pipkin, 2021) www.preprints.org/manuscript/202008.0021/[6]
- Example Code of Conduct: Basin Research Group (under "Inclusivity and Diversity")
- More Resources: https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/field_work.html

Pods should upload their safety plans to the URGE website by 4/16/21. We also encourage pods to post on their organization's website and share over social media (#URGEoscience & tag @URGEoscience). Sharing deliverables will propagate ideas, foster discussion, and ensure accountability.

[1] R. E. Bernard, E. H. G. Cooperdock, No progress on diversity in 40 years. Nature Publishing Group. 11, 1–5 (2018).
[2] https://notimeforsilence.org/
[3] https://www.change.org/p/geoscientists-call-for-a-robust-anti-racisim-plan-for-the-geosciences
[4] www.sciencefriday.com/segments/making-outdoors-inclusive
[5] J. Anadu, H. Ali, C. Jackson, Ten steps to protect BIPOC scholars in the field, Eos, 101, DOI: 10.1029/2020EO150525 (2020).
[6] AJ.C. Demery, M.A. Pipkin, Safe fieldwork strategies for at-risk individuals, their supervisors and EOS: Ten Steps to Protect BIPOC Scholars in the Fieldinstitutions. Nat Ecol Evol, (2021).

DELIVERABLE - (Bio)geochemistry Pod SAFETY PLAN

This safety plan includes:

1. Code of Conduct:
    a. The Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences has a website where relevant code of conduct information is presented and/or linked ([Link](#)). The University Student Conduct Code is listed ([Link](#)) as well as Community Standards ([Link](#)). Included on the webpage are the Department's specific Code of Conduct ([Link](#)), a Field-specific Code of Conduct ([Link](#)), a Field Course Sexual Misconduct Policy ([Link](#)) and a Resource Guide for Workplace ssues ([Link](#)). Acknowledgement forms for the aforementioned code of conduct policies are also linked for Department members to sign.

2. Process for reporting violations (as covered in your Complaints and Reporting Policy deliverable from Session 2):
    a. [Summary of University Reporting Options](#)
    b. [HR Policy on Filing a Discrimination Complaint](#)
    c. [Title IX Office](#)
        i. Concerned with discrimination based on sex or gender
        ii. Primarily deal with sexual harassment, stalking, sexual assault, and relationship violence
        iii. Title IX violations primarily reported through EOAA
    d. [Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA)](#)
        i. Per their website, focused on "discrimination, harassment, nepotism, sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking and relationship violence) and related retaliation"
        ii. [Data about reporting available here](#)
    e. [Office of Conflict Resolution](#) (OCR)
        i. Concerned with violations of specific University rules, regulations, policies or practices pertaining to employment
    f. [Bias Response Referral Network (BRRN)](#)
        i. Responds to reports of bias incidents, refer individuals to appropriate campus offices, log all reports and track for trends, notify campus leaders of ongoing bias incidents and trends
        ii. Annual reports available on their main site.
    g. [Student Conflict Resolution Center](#) (SCRC)
        i. "Informal conflict resolution services to resolve students' university-based problems and concerns"
    h. It is critically necessary that any research group, whether in the lab or field, establish well defined procedures for reporting violations that may impact the full and effective participation and inclusion of under-represented groups. Although field and laboratory activities can be radically different owing to different physical settings, the essential element of both to achieve success in learning and participation involves the existence of an effective chain of communication, where all voices are heard and welcomed. During URGE session 6, the Bio-geochemistry pod discussed this in detail and provided in-depth examples from student and faculty perspectives of how and how not to create an inclusive environment, where violations can be reported without any possibility for retribution. This is particularly challenging in some field based activities, such as seagoing science, where close contact of individuals with non-traditional backgrounds for long periods of time is the norm. In all cases, however, leadership must be shown that makes clear to all

that an inclusive and non-threatening environment is to be maintained, not just desired. Daily conversations in both large and small groups plays a role in facilitation. It is understood that Black, Brown, and other peoples of color come into STEM fields with their own experiences and cultures and these too must be respected for the common good.

3. Outline training resources that are available AND
   i. The Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences has a website (Link) that provides a variety of information on summer field courses, including course descriptions, field safety, codes of conduct, cost estimates, and many other useful information.
   ii. There is a document available on Educational Goals for University of Minnesota Earth Sciences Field Courses. The document primarily describes field course goals and other pertinent information on field safety and logistics.
   iii. Additional and more specific information is typically also provided in the syllabi of individual field courses.
   iv. The hydrogeology group in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences is also currently developing a Land and Water Acknowledgement Statement that recognizes much of the land and water we are on today was acquired from local tribes under coercion, and urges for consideration of Indigenous communities and environmental justice during field work.
   v. Outside the campus, there are several useful online resources for field teaching and learning, such as teaching and safety training material from NAGT (Link 1, Link 2).

   b. Requirements for antidiscrimination:
   i. Requirements for antidiscrimination are incorporated in ESCI Code of Conduct, Field Code of Conduct, and Field Course Sexual Misconduct Policy (Link above). Students and personnel are required to acknowledge that they have read and understand these policies.

   c. Bystander intervention:
   i. Anyone can request a workshop from the Aurora Center for Advocacy & Education using this link. Trained and confidential facilitators offer an interactive workshop for anyone. Among other skills, this series of workshops focuses on "learning skills for bystander intervention and supporting survivors."

   d. De-escalation training:
   i. The PE department offers a course each fall and spring with the following description: Physical, psychological, and de-escalation skills for acting in crisis situations. Distance, body language, and tone of voice are addressed. Physical skills include striking, kicking, shifting, blocking, releasing techniques, floor defenses, and applications to armed attackers and multiple attackers.
   ii. Conversations about field safety should occur before entering the field. Communicate with all participants about their right to feel safe, the pathways for communicating concerns, and plans for dealing with any issues that arise. Consider setting norms and guidelines as a group and holding a session for all participants to review strategies for de-escalation

together.

e. Racial risk assessment of sites
    i. The Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences Summer Field Course website provides information about various aspects of the field courses available but does not provide any information about whether a racial risk assessment has been performed on the field sites or about available protocols to address potential discrimination that BIPOC students may experience in the field.
    ii. The website also mentions alternative options to ESCi Geology field courses that are available to students under certain circumstances such as a) interest in taking another course, b) physical accessibility and, c) cost/ personal responsibilities. However, there is no mention of circumstances related to racial risks.
    iii. The field safety page of the website lacks information about racial risk assessment of the field sites or surrounding areas that the students will visit/ experience during the duration of the course.

f. Pre-departure checklist of discussions within the field team
    i. Interactions between group members
        1. communicate boundaries to avoid microaggressions
        2. communicate about accessibility (in case anyone has a disability, not able to perform certain tasks due to religious reasons, etc.)
    ii. Interactions with people outside the group
        1. how to recognize that you or your fellow group member is being discriminated against (race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion)
        2. how to difuse or de-escalate a situation in which you or your fellow group member is experiencing discrimination
    iii. Know who to report to in an incident occurs and have contact information of group members and superiors in your lab group
    iv. Know where you are going and when
        1. Avoid going anywhere alone (i.e. out in a remote location in the field, shopping for supplies at the store, returning to the hotel room or Airbnb)
        2. Check on group members if they don't meet at the expected time and place; Keep track of who is not there
g. Procedures for documenting incidents in the field
    i. When possible, have at least two people doing field work at all times.
    ii. Before starting field work, introduce yourself to whoever manages the field site.
    iii. Discuss field work plans with your supervisor beforehand. When possible, arrange so that you can make contact with your supervisor during field work if necessary. Supervisors should be willing to allow modifications to projects if necessary for researcher safety.
    iv. Incidents posing immediate risk should be reported to the field site manager or the research supervisor, depending on any logistical constraints and the discretion of the researcher.
    v. Details of incidents should be recorded in writing as soon as reasonably possible after they occur.
    vi. Upon returning to the university, incidents can be reported to the relevant

office. E.g. incidents of gender-based harassment can be reported to the Title IX office or the EOAA; incidents of racial or ethnic bias can be reported to the BRRN.

h. Additional required or supported training

Responsible Conduct of Research training is supported by the Department (Link). To supplement the above information and resources, the Department could also incorporate suggestions from Demery and Pipkin (2020) (Link), Anadu et al., 2020 (Link), and others listed above by URGE.