

URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

Session 8: Racism and Accountability

Deliverable: URGE Management Plan

Harvard EPS/ESE URGE Pod

Deliverable	Existing Policy or Resource?	Initial Point of Contact(s)	Where It Is or Will Be Posted	Review/Update Interval	Training Recommended?
Complaints and Reporting Policy	Mixed	-variable by complainant position	-recommended department website	Recommended annually	Professional misconduct/power-based harassment/bullying training advocated for
Demographic Data	Yes	-GSC -Graduate Program Coordinator	department website (assuming that anonymity is protected)	No set interval, suggested annual but may vary depending on anonymity measures	Not planned
Policies for Working with Communities of Color	No	None yet (need to appoint/hire someone to work on this)	Department website, also directly given to PIs	Recommended annually	Recommended after policies are developed
Admissions and Hiring Policies	Yes	-GSC -Graduate Program Coordinator -Academic Coordinator	Department website	No set interval, recommended annually	Not planned
Safety Plan	No	None yet (need to appoint/hire someone to work on this)	Department website, also directly given to field team leaders	Recommended annually	Not planned
Resource Map	No	-variable by group membership (undergrad vs. staff, etc)	Given directly to new community members, also on department website	Recommended annually	Not planned

*No racial risk assessments for activities done in the department currently exist. Adding racial risk assessments should be considered in the future.

- **Agreement** - The pod plans to meet with department chairs and the academic programs manager at the end of the semester (June) to discuss leadership commitment to suggested action items.
- **Pod Guidelines** - URGE pod will meet 3 times a year (once a semester and once over the

summer) to assess progress on the goals set forth in the deliverables.

Additional notes from each deliverable, including a list of action items and the group/individuals who ought to be responsible for the action items, in parentheses:

- **Complaints and Reporting Policy -**

- There exist no current department policies for reporting professional misconduct
- The associated deliverable and the EPS Diversity & Equity [reporting page](#) contain summaries of reporting avenues that exist at Harvard (which are not specific to our department)
- The informal nature of reporting across institutional levels leads to lack of tracking/accountability: people are encouraged to report at lower levels before higher ones (i.e. GSAS-wide reporting will encourage you to talk to your supervisor or department first), but since those lower levels rarely gather (and never publish) statistics the scope of reportable issues may never be recognized
- ACTION ITEMS (for department leadership):
 - Formalize a department procedure for collecting and tracking reports of incivility/harassment to the various organizations within EPS (DIB, GSC, etc), recognizing that we will never know the full scope of incivility in our department or be able to develop targeted plans to address it if we don't keep track of this information ourselves.
 - Statement of Shared Values should include a link to one (or all) of these reporting resources, as a place to go if the values are violated.

- **Demographic Data -**

- No demographic data related to race and gender on students, faculty and staff is currently published. Some demographic data of graduate students is tracked by the department but not shared.
- ACTION ITEMS (for us):
 - As a pod, decide which data we think should be collected (e.g. seminar speakers, graduate students, postdocs), how it should be shared, and appropriately anonymized
 - Ask GSC or department leadership to appoint a committee to organize and keep track of data collection methods, how it will be anonymized, etc.

- **Policies for Working with Communities of Color -**

- Results from the survey sent out revealed that many people in the department do not actively think about how their work uses information and data from communities of color nor about the research's broader impacts on these communities. Many researchers in EPS doing modeling/computational research do not interact with communities of color.
- We noted a broad sentiment that impact statements included in grant applications are often vague and/or not realized throughout the research process.
- Graduate students feel that PI's are not supportive of their efforts to incorporate

community engagement into their research projects, with PI's suggesting that doing so will slow the efficiency of research production and/or publication

- The major challenges are: PIs don't value collaboration with communities of color so graduate students don't have access to the resources to do it themselves. Modelers find it harder to connect the relevance of their research to specific communities.
- ACTION ITEMS:
 - (DIB subgroup) Establish clear guidelines for working with communities of color (how they will be compensated, recognized in scientific work, etc.)
 - (department leadership, Campbell) Establish department resources and funding for PIs looking to start collaborations with communities of color

- **Admissions and Hiring Policies -**

Admissions & Hiring Policies Action Items

- List all Ph.D. requirements and common practices for admission clearly on the EPS website for prospective graduate students (e.g., informal prospective PI interviews)
- Faculty attend yearly conferences, such as SACNAS, for recruitment / make more of an effort to recruit a diverse community
 - Take a look at what SEAS is doing for recruitment
- Remove the GRE entirely from grad admissions (currently listed as optional)
- Continue to push faculty to post FAQ and lab expectations documents on their personal/lab websites

- **Safety Plan -**

- The DIB has published a Statement of Shared Values, but there exists no departmental code of conduct
- [The EPS Grad Student Resources Field Trip Policies and Procedures](#) details much of the information related to the field trip planning, safety, inclusivity, and risk assessment. This resource does provide a great deal of information, but falls short in specifically addressing risks to minority groups. The EPS Policies (Section 3 of the above [link](#)) states that tailored approaches are available, so perhaps there are opportunities that are not well-advertised. The Title IX office does have some more specific training.
- Racial risk assessment of sites is a difficult task for each PI / field trip leader to conduct individually and independently. The department should seek and support expert advice for these tasks.
- ACTION ITEMS:
 - (DIB subgroup) Standardize racial risk assessment and accessibility assessment for all field trip leaders and ensure this is conducted as part of the field trip proposal and planning stages.
 - (GSC/DIB subgroup) Make trainings prior to student field trips mandatory. This should at least include antidiscrimination, bystander intervention, de-escalation. These can be conducted virtually or in-person. It appears the current practice is to ask students to affirm (by checking a box) that they have reviewed the guidelines for "Maintaining a Safe Environment"
 - (department leadership) Require all field teams (research or course-related) to meet and discuss publications and documents surrounding appropriate fieldwork. Suggested readings can be found in the "Pre-departure checklist of discussions

within field team” section of the deliverable.

Additional notes:

- The deliverable asked us to develop and publish a safety plan for the lab/university/organization. An appropriate level is the department, but developing the safety plan is a massive undertaking. It is a work in progress under the DIB committee, but it is something that the department or university at large should fund/support/standardize. This may include hiring outside professionals to conduct these trainings, or urging the Title IX office to add these trainings to their offerings.

- **Resource Map -**
 - The deliverable developed could become a living document that is updated once/twice a year with input from one grad student, one postdoc, one undergrad, one staff, one faculty, and is circulated to new community members when they join the department
 - The department lacks some key resources prescribed by the resource map – such as code of conduct or lab expectations (some groups have these and others don't).
 - ACTION ITEMS:
 - (department leadership): Establish funding for professionally-led anti-racism and unconscious bias training
 - (DIB subgroup, with support from leadership): write a departmental statement of shared values for all to sign and adhere to, which is reviewed and re-signed annually
 - (department leadership): write and share departmental guidelines on honoraria and speaker fees
 - Outline opportunities, expectations, benefits, and/or compensation for mentoring new hires and/or students who wish to engage in belonging, accessibility, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts
 - (department leadership): provide community service credit for participation in DIB-related volunteer work.
 - (GSC): elaborate on expectations for graduate students in the graduate student handbook (e.g., detailed expectations for qualifying exams, graduation requirements, communication with advisors)
 - Major challenges:
 - Because each lab group operates as a separate entity, the expectations, requirements and managements of each group are completely different. This made it difficult when considering key work resources, conference access, access to work related materials (lab, computer costs etc), mentorship, etc.

Adapted from [URGE example template](#).