

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Northern Illinois
University

URGE Management Plan for Northern Illinois University
Geology and Environmental Geosciences

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	Department has no policy	Dr. Melissa Lenczewski	When developed, will be posted on website	Annually, but also after any major reported incidents	Yes
Demographic Data	Department has not made this data accessible outside of administration	Dr. Nicole LaDue	When developed, will be posted on website	Recommend every 2 years	HR directed training
Policies for Working with Communities of Color	No	Dr. Justin Dodd	Post on organization website	Recommend annually	Yes
Admissions and Hiring Policies	Yes	Dr. Melissa Lenczewski	Internal currently	No set interval	HR directed training
Safety Plan	Department has no posted resource	Dr. Megan Brown	When developed, will be posted on website	Annually, but also after any major reported incidents	Yes
Resource Map	Resource has not been established within the department	Dr. Nicole LaDue	When developed, will be posted on website	Additions on a rolling basis	HR directed training

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Northern Illinois
University

- **Agreement** – The primary objectives of the NIU Pod, in addition to URGE’s primary objectives, are and will continue to be:
 - Discuss and assess the racial justice, equity, and inclusivity of our organization
 - Develop an anti-racism Action Plan with actions specific to issues at NIU’s Geology Department including methods for measuring and reporting progress

Our agreement is between the NIU Geology Department Pod members, the chair, and faculty of the Geology and Environmental Geosciences at NIU. We hope to host monthly meetings in the future to discuss the progress and implementation of our Action Plan, which will incorporate points from every deliverable. We plan to have frequent meetings with university leadership, DEI committees, and HR about how to implement our Action Plan successfully.

- **Pod Guidelines** – The new goal of our Pod is to form a permanent committee within the department that stands to serve the student body, specifically minority groups. Membership/leadership rotation as well as potential bylaws of our new committee have yet to be discussed, however; hopefully by the fall of 2021 we will have a concrete plan. We hope to host monthly meetings in the future to discuss the progress and implementation of our Action Plan, which will incorporate points from every deliverable. We plan to have frequent meetings with university leadership, DEI committees, and HR about how to implement our Action Plan successfully.
- **Complaints and Reporting Policy** – The department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences currently uses the NIU policies and has no policies directly related to the department alone. The department seeks to establish yearly trainings (Sexual Harassment, Bystander, NIU CODE Training, DEI Training). The department is also striving to create policies that specifically address;
 - Student complaints about faculty
 - Peer to peer complaints
 - Creating non-punitive and meaningful feedback, while also having clear record keeping and guidelines for handling repeat offenders
 - Specific criteria and guidelines for TAs on what their responsibility is in reporting incidents and at what level the department will take over handling
 - Handling retaliatory responses or complaints based on DEI training or discussions

The overall goals are to provide a place where all policies and procedures (universal and departmental) can be accessed by all members of the department (faculty, staff, and students). To provide trainings for TAs and faculty to learn how to address bias and micro/macroaggressions as they occur in courses or outside of the classroom. To create yearly reviews of faculty to elucidate student interactions related to bias with the instructor. Also, to have at least one faculty member and one graduate student that can stand as the point person to help others find resources and/or support them through a complaint.

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Northern Illinois
University

- **Demographic Data** - The Department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences at NIU currently has no stated mission or goals with respect to increasing minority representation, however; in Fall 2020 the department submitted an AGI Bridge Program proposal to create forward momentum in regards to this issue. However, the URGE Pod has drafted several suggestions for policies the department may vote to implement including;
 - Guest speakers that represent diverse voices in geosciences to speak about their science: initial goal is 25% of speakers
 - Invite specific speakers to talk on issues of diversity in geosciences (social sciences research on diversity) and provide honorarium
 - DEI committee will nominate one speaker per year/semester for the regular speaker series
 - The department will post the data on invited speakers on the website for viewing
 - Fellowship opportunities for students
 - Allocating fellowships toward recruiting underrepresented graduate students, possibly funds to supplement moving expenses
 - Speaking with specific donors regarding allocation of existing fellowships for recruitment of underrepresented minority graduate students
 - Departmental Goals
 - Propose that the department develop goals for recruiting diverse students
 - Include statement about how the data will be collected, reported, tracked, and utilized in decision making
 - Pull comparison data from NCSES
 - Recruitment Plan
 - Create a plan for advertising to diverse graduate students (e.g., LSMCE, SACNAS, etc.)
 - Create a plan for recruiting community college students and high school students in the surrounding areas
 - NIU STEAM summer camps, science nights, libraries (collaboration with student organizations)
 - Promote research opportunities for undergraduates
 - Website
 - Outward facing department page that:
 - Reports data on speakers
 - Reports aggregated data on student diversity
 - Financial support for students (application fee waivers available to Illinois Veterans, McNair Scholars, scholarship funds, fellowships, etc.)
 - Administration
 - Meet with Graduate School about fees
 - Meet with college about recruitment barriers, data collection/reporting barriers

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Northern Illinois
University

- **Policies for Working with Communities of Color** – Work in progress, but these are a great place for our pod and department to start. Racial risk assessment on this deliverable is planned for August, then we will revise the deliverable if necessary. Training is needed for staff, both so they understand the importance of this new policy as well as for how to implement the policy itself. Approval process can be incorporated into travel approval, e.g. check if travel or work will involve communities of color and has this new policy been reviewed and followed in the plans for this trip; consequence of not following policy would be assigned readings and additional training.
- **Admissions and Hiring Policies** – These are some proposed modifications to the existing hiring policy. Currently these policies are not available to the public, but we hope to have our hiring/admission process evaluated by outside consultants to help combat bias. We recommend posting policies (as much information as possible) publicly on the jobs board for potential candidates. Anti-bias training may need to be part of this as the policies are reviewed and updated by staff to ensure bias does not impact the development of these policies, as well as afterward for implementing the policy itself. Approval process would be part of hiring staff (or admitting students), e.g., does your plan to hire a new position adhere to the updated policies. During the applicant/application evaluation the search committee does an initial screening that we hope to create a solid rubric for, one that acknowledges potential biases. Currently we work with the NIU diversity coordinators to aid in our screenings. Our search committee is composed of members of the hiring department that must include underrepresented groups in both race and gender.
- **Safety Plan** – Currently the Department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences to developing a safety plan specifically for field work as the department will be running two field camps this summer. Our code of conduct will be added to the safety plan:
 - Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. An appropriate learning environment is one where everyone feels safe, secure, seen, and accepted. We welcome individuals regardless of differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, ability, and nationality.
 - I ask that everyone treat all interactions with the assumption that everyone is coming from a place of good intentions. Please give your respect to your fellow classmates and their feelings and opinions. Remember that everyone has different life experiences, and everyone's input is of value because of those differences. I expect students to act in a respectful manner to one another and the professor.

Training resources for field work would include running an active bystander training session with specifics related to our circumstances. Possibly adding DEI and bias training to our pre-field course GEOL 375. We still need to create a standard questionnaire related to Site Racial Risk Assessment and complete the questionnaire for each field location.

Pre-Departure Checklist of Discussions:

URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Northern Illinois
University

- General Safety
- Bathroom and living arrangements
- Field location and previous experiences there
- Potential interaction during field work
- What to do if someone stops me in the field?

All Field Camps Will Require Students:

- Wear safety green/yellow vests with NIU regalia
- Carry ID- State issued and school
- Carry an explanation letter with them about the course
- Carry contact info for leaders and university
- Give feedback on safety at the end of the camp via a survey

Camp Out West:

- Contact local property owners/tenants
- Contact local law enforcement/agencies that may be contacted with questions about our work

Environmental Geosciences:

- Send letters to nearby properties outlining our presence
- Add signs to the field site labelling it as university property
- Install a gate to the site
- Run an open house at the field site for local community to let everyone know what we are doing

International Field Work

- Needs extra planning, training, and policies put into place

This is adding anti-racism specific policies to the Safety policies in the Employee Handbook. Training should be paired with the training for the deliverable on working with communities of color to emphasize the importance of these new policies, and then also on the details associated with implementing the safety plan policy. Approval process can be incorporated into travel approval, e.g. check if racial risk assessment has been done on this travel location; consequence of not following policy would be additional scrutiny on future travel requests, assigned readings, and additional training.

- **Resource Map** – The department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences at NIU currently has no resource map however our developing map has several areas of interest:
 - Mentoring plan for new hires/students that would connect them with resources that would be of most use to them
 - Schedule of initial calls/meetings to identify needs/interests

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Northern Illinois
University

- Current list of graduate students and contact information for individual lab groups
- Graduate students from other lab groups
- Information on where to live and about DeKalb, activities for days off
- Individual/group meeting expectations
- Evaluations
 - Rubric, frequency for advisor/committee evaluations, self-evaluation, long-term goals and how to achieve them
- Core Work Resources
 - Code-of-Conduct
 - University vs department vs lab
 - Reporting policy
 - Confidential vs non-confidential resources
 - Equipment
 - Lending library for hiking/field gear within department
 - Gear rental and purchase from NIU Recreation and Wellness Center
- Conference and workshop participation
 - Expectations for M.S. vs Ph.D. students to attend conferences and professional meetings
 - Internal department travel grants and College conference scholarships
- Community support and mental health resources
- Services and organizations at NIU
 - Diversity Center information
 - International Student Office
 - Counseling Services
 - Office of the Ombudsperson
 - Undocumented Student Support
 - Asian American Resource Center
 - Center for Black Studies
 - Gender and Sexuality Resource Center
 - Latino Resource Center
- Religious/Spiritual Resources
- Introductions for other people of color - fund membership fees for organizations like SACNAS, NABG, AISES, GeoLatinas, and others
- Professional Development Resources
- Outreach Resources

All of this could be part of onboarding and/or orientation and incorporated into the employee handbook. The approval can be incorporated along with the admissions and hiring policy, as part of a proposal to hire a staff member or admit a student then HR would check that the person they report to has a plan to

URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Northern Illinois
University

go through the resource map with them.