

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



URGE Management Plan for UAF

UAF POD: <https://urgeoscience.org/pods/uaf-pod/>

Deliverable	Existing Policy or Resource? / Impact of implementation	Initial Point of Contact(s)	Where It Is or Will Be Posted	Review/Update Interval	Racial Risk Assessment?	Training Recommended ?	Approval, Check, and/or Consequence
Complaints and Reporting Policy	Yes	UAF Department of Equity and Compliance or GI DEI Committee	On UAF Department of Equity & Compliance web page; recommend linking to GI/CNSM pages	Recommend annually	Recommended	Yes	None
Demographic Data	Yes	UAF Planning, Analysis and Institutional Research (PAIR)	Different data sets and visualizations (campus-wide) on PAIR web page, UAF Facts and Figures	UAF student demographic data <u>published</u> annually; no established interval for reviewing data collection, curation & sharing policies & procedures	Not scheduled	Recommended training for PAIR staff on best practices in data collection, curation, and sharing specifically with respect to AJEDI/racial justice	None

Policies for Working with Communities of Color	<p>Yes for Indigenous only - not for Black or other POC, and only for researchers working with human subjects (those working in the natural world not required to review the policies).</p>	<p>UAF Institutional Review Board (IRB) via IRBNet, Research Integrity Administrator, or Interim Vice Chancellor for Research</p>	<p>On UAF IRB website</p>	<p>Recommend annually</p>	<p>Recommended annually</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Possibly — similar to IRB requirements</p> <p>Possibly a course or training requirement for GI/CNSM grad students (and faculty!)</p>
Admissions and Hiring Policies	<p>Policies and boilerplate language exist, but resources and training for hiring committees (ex. to overcome implicit bias) should be improved.</p> <p>Admissions/academic barriers need to be removed: ex. application expense too high, online applications difficult for students with Internet connectivity issues, need to offer an alternative to Geoscience</p>	<p>Changes to hiring processes have to go through the Faculty Senate & HR</p> <p>Admissions Office</p> <p>Geosciences department</p>	<p>Training for hiring committees would be included in HR committee materials</p> <p>Admissions office provide a contact person to help students with Internet connectivity issues with online applications (include in print materials and at college recruitment events)</p> <p>Geoscience department website and degree</p>	<p>From UA HR: UA HR, (specifically the Talent Acquisition team): <i>regularly evaluate & implement process improvements</i>, often having project teams that consult with identified stakeholders and leadership members across the various campuses.</p> <p>Check annually how many students use seek online application assistance</p>	<p>Recommended - no known racial risk assessment/ third party examination has been conducted.</p>	<p>Required search committee & implicit bias training</p>	<p>Training for hiring committee members each time they serve on a committee</p> <p>Diversity requirement for hiring committees (i.e. no committees comprising all white males or all white females)</p>

	undergrad field course requirement.		requirement materials	Recommend annually			
Safety Plan	Yes, Student Code of Conduct , Notice of Nondiscrimination , IARC Field Code of Conduct , GI Student Field Safety Rights , and UAF Field Emergency Plan Guideline and Checklist (all of these are links to the documents from Deliverable 6)	Seems to depend on what department conducts the field work (IARC, GI etc.)	Also depends on which document is being used, and which department the field work is through. Recommendation is to have one UAF-wide coherent field code of conduct and safety plan, which can be posted on a web page that's easy to access and navigate.	Does not appear to have a review/update schedule.	Recommended racial and sexuality risk assessment of field locations (including travel to/from sites) and include explicit risk mitigation and safety plan for potential incidents related to identity (whether perpetrated by non-field-members or within field team)	In-person recurring training modules are likely more effective, allyship and bystander training are recommended, mandatory training on Alaska Indigenous culture or other basic cultural competency for the field location	Pre-departure checklist, mandatory documented conversation about respectful and safe work environments, renewed and improved UAF-wide reporting policies for incidents during field work, post-field work feedback form for all members to complete regarding sense of personal safety while in field (all recommended, none currently in place) Require documentation before approval of (field) work / travel

Resource Map	No Implementation would be hugely beneficial for BIPOC students, faculty and staff	GI-DEI Committee or URGE Pod	GI-DEI website is a natural fit; ideally Department of Equity and Compliance website ; additional link to on Geosciences department and CNSM website	Bi-annual updates aligned with semesters is recommended to ensure updated resources for newly arriving faculty, staff, students on academic calendar	N/A	No training recommended, but recommend dissemination of resource map each semester via Cornerstone and department/college email lists	N/A
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Additional considerations for each deliverable (use this space to elaborate on table entries, organize it as appropriate for your pod):

- [Agreement](#) - Revisit quarterly with leadership to assess progress, refine future steps
- [Pod Guidelines](#) - Reviewed on a bi-annual basis (in synch with semester starts) to ensure agreement among current participants
- [Complaints and Reporting Policy](#) - This is the most comprehensive resource on this available and should be widely advertised across GI/CNSM.
 1. “Seed” GI/CNSM external and internal websites with links to Department of Equity and Compliance discrimination complaints and reporting policy and procedures. Include information and/or links to Department of Equity and Compliance and external resources in new student, faculty and staff onboarding/orientation materials.
 2. Designate one or two people within the GI/CNSM to serve as liaisons between personnel/students and the Office of Equity and Compliance. This could be a collateral duty but should be compensated or workload should be adjusted to accommodate time for interacting with students. To best address the goals of URGE, ideally this person would identify as BIPOC, as the goal would be to provide an opportunity for students, staff or faculty to consult with someone who they would find approachable and safe. However it is important to consider the potential career/time/life-work balance/social-emotional impacts of expecting a BIPOC person to serve in equity-related roles. The person(s) in this role would need additional training in the EEO process, including privacy considerations, and would provide guidance for anyone considering filing an EEO complaint.
 - If designated AJEDI (Accessibility, Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) representatives are not established officially within the institutes/colleges, perhaps a training model such as the [“Safe Zone”](#) program for LGBTQ+ inclusivity could be a good first step. The people who complete the training would need to be identified and publicized in order for this to be useful.
 - It is possible that members of the GI DEI Committee (who would feel comfortable serving in this role) establish some guidance and spread the word that individuals with questions about discrimination reporting and investigation policies and practices could contact them (as a committee or as individuals) for informal consultation. They could also serve as a liaison with the DEC and that this could be implemented relatively soon without extensive external support. However, this responsibility would be an additional, uncompensated burden on participating personnel and students and therefore is not a viable long-term solution. Additionally, we would need to contact DEC and perhaps higher leadership at the university to check out potential liability or ethical issues with an informal arrangement of this type.

3. Conduct a racial risk assessment. The reporting and investigation procedures for non-gender-based discrimination complaints are not as detailed or as readily accessible as they are for gender-based discrimination complaints, which fall under Title IX. It could be beneficial to conduct a racial risk assessment, even though it would not be to inform development and adoption of a new policy.
 4. To the extent possible without breaching confidentiality, compile, analyze and publish data on race/ethnicity-based discrimination complaints, investigations and decisions/outcomes on the UAF website similarly to how Title IX and Affirmative Action are tracked, reported and addressed on the Department of Equity and Compliance's [Accountability](#) page. The responsibility for this would lie with the Department of Equity and Compliance.
 5. Potentially develop and institute mandatory annual anti-discrimination [training](#) for all UAF students and personnel. At a minimum, there could be a short online training similar to the required Title IX training that would increase awareness of UA policies, reporting procedures and resources related to discrimination.
 - If such a training cannot or will not be mandatory, an anti-discrimination training focusing on racial/ethnic discrimination could be developed and offered as an optional opportunity, similarly to the [ADA Basic Building Blocks](#) training. (To provide incentive for people to take voluntary training, perhaps the UAF Wellness Program would offer it as one option for earning a point toward the annual health/wellness rebate?)
 - More information is needed (from DEC Director Margo Griffith, members of UAF's strategic planning committee, or others TBD) regarding plans for and status of development of training/courses related to AJEDI and discrimination complaint and reporting policies and procedures in particular. Once an appropriate training is identified, any decision as to whether it would be mandatory for GI or CNSM would be made at the institute or college leadership level.
- [Demographic Data](#) - Proposed modifications to the existing demographic data policies and recommendations for improved representation of people from minoritized racial/ethnic groups:
 1. Require diversity statements from faculty candidates (proposed by GI DEI Committee), and create a rubric for how these will be evaluated and included in hiring decisions.
 2. Add a Diversity menu item to the UAF homepage to make AJEDI efforts and resources more visible right off the bat, demonstrate UAF leadership's commitment to advancing DEI, and potentially increase the institution's attractiveness to potential BIPOC students and employees.
 3. At the GI and/or CNSM level, create a speaker series explicitly to highlight the scientific work of BIPOC scholars. This could also serve as an outreach strategy to establish relationships with and cultivate a pool of potential future faculty hires. (According to Thursday's podlet's notes, GI Outreach office might be able to coordinate something like this?)
 4. Consult with [IDEA Task Force members](#) and/or Office of [Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Research](#) about how to improve data collection to inform reasons behind differential persistence and retention of BIPOC students.
 5. Include faculty diversity in publicly shared demographic information products (e.g. [Facts and Figures web page](#)).
 - [Policies for Working with Communities of Color](#) - Recommendations for policies for working with Communities of Color:
 1. Require some type of cultural competency course work, training, or orientation for all GI/CNSM graduate students. At the minimum, focus on working with Indigenous communities in AK.
 - Content should go beyond legal compliance and foster cultural competency.
 - Guidance on [Research with Indigenous Peoples](#) published on UAF IRB (Institutional Review Board) web pages includes good content that researchers who do not work with human subjects might not otherwise encounter (because they are not required to submit project information for IRB review and approval).
 - There has been some discussion about an AK Native/Indigenous Studies course being a requirement for GI graduate degrees. There needs to be follow-up on this.

- Could the [TEK Talk](#) series, if continued, be offered as a one-credit option for addressing cultural competency specific to AK Native peoples? (And how will this series be sustained? It was developed and is being coordinated and hosted by two graduate students through GIGSA.)
2. Letter from Andy Mahoney, Henry Huntington, and Margaret Rudolf to NSF re. policies that facilitate (or at least remove some barriers to) effectively working with AK Native communities, tribes, and individuals proposed changes to NSF funding structure, such as allowing more time to build relationships such that local people are (at least) equal partners in collaborative projects, providing sufficient funds to compensate local people appropriately, and more. Changes to funding mechanisms would make a huge difference in allowing for research project scope, timeline, and logistics to accommodate effective, respectful, and appropriate research collaborations with Indigenous peoples. (What can we do to push/support/follow up with NSF?)
 3. The IRB [Research with Indigenous Peoples](#) guidance mentions that “a memorandum of understanding (MOU) may be executed between the Tribe and UAF.” This is presented as optional but suggests that an MOU include a description of a “collaborative scope of work,” information/data/samples to be collected, description of how the research process will benefit the tribe, procedures for dissemination of research findings, confidentiality agreements, etc. This is some of the same types of information that is required for IRB approval of research with human subjects. Perhaps there could be a requirement that researchers submit a document containing this type of information to the Tribe, preferably drafting it in collaboration with the tribe, or if the tribe isn’t interested in/able to take on the extra work, sharing information with the tribe and allowing for review prior to initiating field work. This could potentially be a document that would be subject to official review and approval by the tribe (e.g. an actual MOU), or an internal requirement that at the very least forces researchers to think about certain considerations/answer targeted questions ahead of time. The issue here is capacity; any formal internal process would require significantly more staff than currently handle all UAF IRB reviews and approvals. (Perhaps this type of responsibility could be built into an internal GI/CNSM position or two?)
 4. UAF doesn’t have guidance similar to that found on the IRB website for working with Communities of Color other than Indigenous peoples. The vast majority of GI (and CSNM, I would guess) field-based research is in rural Alaska, situated in or (relatively) near communities whose residents are mostly Alaska Native. What type of training, orientation, documentation, etc. can equip researchers who might work in other areas of the U.S. and the world and interact with other Communities of Color to do so respectfully and appropriately?
 5. One avenue for “disseminating research results” and being of service to communities, including Alaska Native peoples (in Fairbanks and rural communities) could be for graduate students to mentor K-12 students (probably mostly middle school and high school students) state-wide (e.g. via Zoom) to develop authentic science fair projects and presentations using or spinning off of GI/CNSM research projects. Kids in turn could be sharing information with their families and potentially with their entire communities at science fairs and during specially organized community events in which UAF scientists/mentors also participate.
 6. Continue and grow the practice of including land acknowledgements in research posters, presentations, and publications. Reach out to experts and culture-bearers about how to incorporate this practice in a way that is meaningful and respectful (not an easy but hollow, performative gesture).
 7. Conduct a racial risk assessment, or at least a focus group or listening sessions, to inform best practices and policies going forward, especially with respect to Communities of Color other than Indigenous peoples.

- [Admissions and Hiring Policies](#) -
Hiring:

1. Currently each Department individually determines where jobs are posted. Moving forward, HR could pay or sponsor posts for advertisements on job boards for BIPOC to ensure a more inclusive reach. HR could also provide a list of job boards and other venues for job postings so each hiring committee has those resources available
2. UA HR has not been evaluated by an outside consultant, but is evaluated internally and is receptive to feedback. Currently, the hiring/admissions processes are said to be reviewed “regularly”, but it’s unclear if there are specific time increments in which these reviews (and revisions) take place.
3. Provide implicit bias training systematically to everyone, particularly if involved in hiring / admissions processes, decoupled from the new UAF HR hiring committee webinar (or potentially expand that section of the webinar).
4. Establish minimum requirements for diversity within hiring committees (e.g. no hiring committees comprising all white hetero, cis-gender males or all white, hetero, cis-gender females, at a minimum).
5. Conduct ongoing outreach as part of a long-term recruiting strategy (e.g. invite BIPOC scientists (post docs and faculty) from other institutions to speak, establishing relationships that could lead in time to faculty positions at UAF).
6. Review (or collect) demographic data related to hiring. Ensure that data collection includes disaggregated racial/ethnic demographic information about yield (proportion of candidates who are offered positions who accept them) and retention of new faculty and staff.
7. Require applicants for all faculty, staff, and post doc positions to submit a diversity statement and establish a framework for scoring/evaluating diversity statements.
8. Embed meaningful DEI-related competencies into position descriptions, including awareness and perspectives that BIPOC candidates might have gained through lived experience as well as training or education.
9. Review and revamp onboarding procedures with the aim of ensuring all new hires, especially those from marginalized groups, feel included and connected in the program and institution, understand the “hidden curriculum” and how institution- and program-level systems work.
10. Establish a formal/official or informal mentorship program for new hires to connect BIPOC faculty, staff, and post docs with more senior personnel who identify as BIPOC (ideally) or whom BIPOC personnel identify as allies.

Admissions:

1. Provide a contact person at institutions (in the admissions office?) to assist with online applications for students with Internet connectivity issues.
2. Reduce student application fees (or cover the cost for BIPOC applicants).
3. Geoscience Department:
 - Provide accessible alternatives to field school to fulfill the capstone requirement.
 - Participate in the AGU BRIDGE program.
 - Establish recruitment weekend for prospective graduate students.

Faculty Senate:

1. Eliminate GRE as graduate admissions requirement university-wide (Geoscience department currently does not require it).
2. Review and eliminate intrusive questions during the application process.

- **Safety Plan** - IARC is already working on this, so we could share resources to complete this for the GI (share information amongst different units). This is somewhat an existing policy, we just need to make it department-relevant and broaden it.
- **Resource Map** -
 - Challenges in implementation:
 - Maintenance of the resource map.

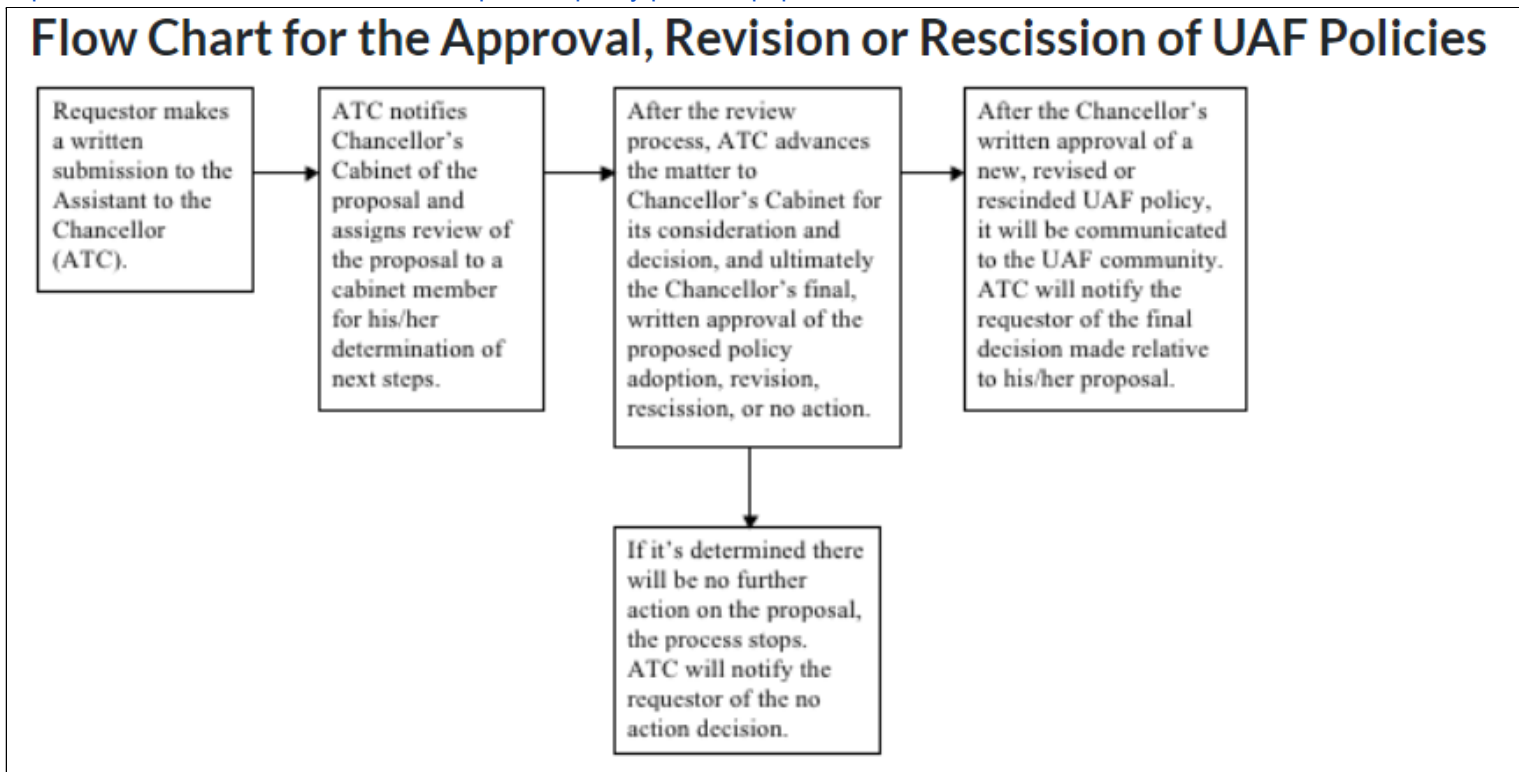
- Ensuring a single synchronized resource for the entire campus.
 - Dissemination of the plan.
- External feedback approval/implement immediately?
 - We have everything compiled, it just requires posting it to websites. This can be implemented immediately.
- No checks or balances required as it is a collection of resources rather than a policy.
- Recommendations:
 - Post link to the current document on the GI-DEI website. Request link to be added to Geoscience department website.
 - Disseminate the link to GI/geoscience mailing lists on a semester basis, and encourage PIs to share with their incoming and current graduate students.
 - Review the resource map on at least an annual basis, preferably semi-annually aligned with semesters. This can be done via the URGE group.
 - Our current resource map is geosciences-specific with an emphasis on resources for graduate students. However, many of the resources are broadly applicable. We would recommend the development of resource maps at UAF at several levels:
 - HR for prospective and current employees.
 - The Graduate School for prospective and current graduate students.
 - Colleges and Institutes.
 - Departments for discipline- and department-specific resources.
 - Labs with PI/group expectations, norms, and PI network resources.

Comprehensive answers to prompts:

- What challenges may exist in implementing each deliverable? Which ones will require external feedback / approval? Which can be implemented immediately?
 - Scope in which we want recommendations implemented; the wider we want to distribute, the more efforts we have to undergo.
 - The resource map can be completed and shared immediately. Changes to discrimination complaints and reporting policies and procedures would likely require discussion and approval by the UA Board of Regents(?).
 - Some of the proposed policy modifications align with the findings and recommendations of the IDEA Task Force and the UAF strategic plan. Meeting with the Chancellor and/or Vice Chancellors, members of the IDEA Task Force (no longer in existence), the strategic planning committees, Department of Equity and Compliance Director Margo Griffith, and/or others in leadership could help us to determine how many of our ideas might be folded in with UAF-wide or UA system-wide changes that might already be in progress.
 - Funding will likely be an issue for implementing many of the recommended changes, including providing training, hiring additional staff to handle e.g. expanded data collection/curation/publication efforts, DEI/cultural competency trainings and reviews, bringing in consultants to conduct racial risk analyses, to provide compensation for time spent on mentorship and liaison duties, and to appropriately compensate Indigenous peoples for their roles in collaborative research. Pod members, GI DEI committee members, or others might be able to look into external funding specifically for DEI capacity-building in educational institutions.
 - There might be some resistance from faculty, administration, or others who believe that allocating time, effort, and funds to DEI-related efforts is not necessary, is not consistent with a “hard” science program, requires more time than they wish to give to it, etc. In this sense, a university-wide approach to some policy changes could be helpful.
- What checks and balances / approval steps currently exist for ensuring that people adhere to policies that are already in place? (e.g., approval process for reimbursable travel) Are they effective? How are the existing policies enforced?
 - We believe that faculty who conduct field trips, field camps, or other off-campus academic and research activities are required

to submit for approval a risk management plan, but we need more information on this. It is not clear how comprehensive the plans need to be, who approves them, how adherence to the plan is enforced, and what consequences there may be for failure to adhere to the plan's guidelines.

- How are new policies introduced? What kinds of training or informational sessions are effective and why?
 - Policy changes can start via staff or faculty councils. "Policy Actions: Policy actions affecting faculty, staff, OR students require the Chancellor's approval. Policy actions affecting faculty, staff, AND students require consideration by the UAF Governance Coordinating Committee prior to the Chancellor's approval. Policy actions affecting UAF, UAS, and UAA require consideration by the System Governance Council prior to the President's and/or Board of Regents' approval." Page link: <https://www.uaf.edu/uafgov/>
 - Faculty and staff employed through the UAF system, students enrolled at UAF, UAF governance bodies, and standing or ad hoc UAF advisory committees (hereinafter referred to as "requestor") may propose the adoption, revision, or rescission of a UAF policy by writing or emailing: the UAF Chancellor's Office. Website link: <https://uaf.edu/chancellor/initiatives-and-policies/policy/process.php>



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- How will you ensure the policies and resources developed through URGE will be maintained and supported over the long term, e.g. through staff/student turnover?
 - GI DEI Committee could take some of the bandwidth.

- Current URGE members can join the GI DEI Committee.
- Helpful to have some staff/faculty in the group to move documentation forward to new committees.
- Host quarterly URGE meetings to support the GI DEI committee with specific URGE topics (and bring in the Geosciences department).
- Have a staff/faculty member in the Geosciences department dedicated to working on these topics as part of their job duties.
- Developing a similar anti-racism group for the Geoscience department
- Establish standard practices, written protocols, resource lists, etc. to establish systems that may be sustained into the future after individuals with accumulated institutional knowledge or involvement in URGE have moved on.