URGE Management Plan for USGS – SPCMSC and WARC

We have outlined below how we would like to incorporate deliverables into our organization, specifically at the Center level, as we continue to develop, assess, and finalize policies and resources. We have provided pod member leads for each subject to indicate URGE pod members that can act as resources for providing information and moving forward. The lists below include priority levels for the various deliverables, needs, and recommended next steps which may include tracking, development of materials, training suggestions, and ideas for ways to be more transparent from the top down.

- **Agreement** – We developed goals both for ourselves as a Pod, and for our respective science centers, SPCMSC and WARC. These goals are detailed in our Agreement document and are based on both feasibility and current needs. The Pod is not limited to these goals and may wish to edit or expand them going into the future, having undergone the URGE curriculum and met with Center leadership.

- **Pod Guidelines** - We established a set of ground rules for Pod discussions that include active listening, maintaining confidentiality, and respectful participation, and agreed to a group consensus decision making policy. If group consensus cannot be reached, the decision is made by a majority vote with dissenting opinions recorded additionally. All members agreed to co-lead at least one session.

- **Complaints and Reporting Policy** – We collected and reported on existing complaints and reporting policies. We did not develop recommendations for reporting.

  - Pod member lead(s): Emily Wei, Jennifer Miselis, Kathryn Smith, Laura D'Acunto
  - What are the needs: At the center level, easy to understand resources and employee advocates!
  - What are the next steps:
    - Create easy-to-understand resource flyer that provides information and contacts for PSWS, CADR, Ombudspersons, and URGE member representatives in community spaces, during onboarding, and on internal website.
    - Create a flow chart that aids employees on steps and contacts.
  - Center Priority level:
    - High: A resource flier that can be created by the URGE pod or by a separate volunteer group and PSWs.
    - Low: Bureau-level changes to the complaints and reporting process through EEO is low priority for the center and will require organization outside of the SPCMSC-WARC pod.

- **Demographic Data** – Available national FedScope data cannot be accurately extrapolated down to the center or even regional level though it is apparent our workforce does not look like the community or country we live in and work for. Therefore, we suggest the

following goals for increasing representation: 1) SPCMSC align together with WARC to assist each other in reaching diversity goals; 2) review measurable goals at regular intervals; 3) visit minority serving institutions each year; 4) create communication materials in Spanish and other languages; 5) recruit more student interns from underrepresented groups; 6) hire more individuals from underrepresented groups; 7) increase diversity of invited seminar speakers; 8) integrate diversity efforts into performance appraisals; 9) distribute resources to new hires to increase retention; 10) ask more specific, pertinent questions in center surveys

- Pod member lead(s): Alisha Ellis, Jessica Jacobs, Saira Haider
- Center Priority level: High
- What are the needs:
    - 1) Assess where we are so we can develop action plans to address specific issues but don't get bogged down in gathering and analyzing data since there is a known lack of diversity. See Estrada et al. (2017) for an Action Research Model on evaluating, diagnosing, planning, and taking action. When collecting data and information, remember that both quantitative and qualitative data are valid and reliable types of data to be collected in pursuit of this effort to better understand Center demographics and culture.
    - 2) Start taking other concrete actions per the list below while looking into and collecting data. We don't need to wait for data collection and analysis efforts to be finalized before taking action when we know recommendations outlined in other sections would increase justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI).
- What are the next steps:
    - SPCMSC align with WARC to assist each other in reaching diversity goals such as those listed below
    - Track diversity of invited seminar speakers, speakers that accept and present, and ask speakers to complete a post-presentation form (if comfortable) in order to collect diversity data and assess speakers' comfort, interactions, and impression of office culture in order to obtain outsider perspectives
    - Track number of employees that visit minority serving institutions annually and number of times employees visited minority serving institutions and minority serving conferences
    - Track the total number of communication materials such as pamphlets, flyers, and web page and keep track of how many and which types are available in languages other than English and prioritize translating documents that only exist in English. Track the diversity of people represented in communication materials and revise communication materials to include photography and visuals representing a diverse selection of people
    - Track and make available to all center employees how (what faculty or schools) and where (what job websites) positions are being broadcast and utilized for recruiting interns and employees. This information can be used 1) for future assessments and gap analyses for the development of recommendations on how to reach more historically underrepresented groups, 2) to encourage networking for all employees (not just upper management) by creating opportunities to share internship and job postings with colleagues, professional networking communities (e.g., SACNAS, AAPIiG, AISES, AWG, NABG, MAES, SASE), and 3) create an accountability network if certain entities (e.g., universities or professional affiliations) become engaged in sharing upcoming and existing opportunities

- ■ Integrate diversity and inclusion efforts (volunteer events, conference attendance, visits to minority serving universities, etc.) into performance appraisals so that efforts can be evaluated at regular intervals
- ■ Track improvements, gaps, and discomforts in the center through a center survey that asks more pertinent, specific questions related to center culture, diversity, and social issues (e.g., sense of community, handicap or disability access and language, needs like space to pump, etc.) rather than broad scope questions like "are you happy at work". Create a committee that comes up with appropriate questions, or works with a professional survey organization such as Gallup to develop the survey, rather than delegating this job to Admin. As an example, the Ecosystems Mission Area is trying to work on supplementing the FEVS data with a Gallup survey on internal culture.
- ■ Make the above demographic data available to the center (via internal website) once collected and every time it is updated/reassessed, at least annually, in order to maintain accountability and transparency. Names of individuals can be redacted for internal reports though involvement should be tracked at the individual level to ensure that there is not extra weight or burden on the same individuals year after year as is known to happen to BIPOC students and employees which can result in burnout, decreased time and energy spent on projects, and reduced retention rates.

- ∉ **Policies for Working with Communities of Color** - We would like to see 1) training developed to utilize existing community and government liaisons, 2) support (financial and physical) for scientists, centers, and the organization to sustain long-term relationships with communities, 3) funding and understanding on the importance of hiring local field personnel when applicable and recognizing and crediting local knowledge and expertise, and 4) develop a Code of Conduct for working with scientists, stakeholders, and local communities on scientific objectives, information and data gathering, sharing, dispute management, dissemination, and timeline development.

  - Pod member lead(s): Laura D'Acunto and RC Mickey
  - Center Priority level: High
  - What are the needs: Center and Natural Hazards Mission Area focuses on adopting policies and trainings to ensure projects account for social equity in regards to the disproportionate impacts of natural hazards to low income communities and communities of color. Ensure this becomes the norm at all levels we (support scientist, PIs, leadership) can directly address by implementing what is outlined in the steps below.
  - What are the next steps:

    - ■ Develop and implement a "Code of Conduct" for researchers, partners, contractors, and stakeholders to use when working with communities of color to establish ground rules for how a relationship or project will be conducted within or for the community
    - ■ Provide resources (time and funding) to help establish and maintain long-term relationships with communities of color.
    - ■ Mandate training to inform scientists on the existence of liaisons, collaborative NGOs, and community leaders to help researchers initiate relationships between scientist and minority communities.

- Establish and distribute guidelines and provide training for/on data sovereignty within the federal government and tribal communities.
- Develop a survey (could be third-party derived) to ask stakeholders and collaborators to evaluate the effectiveness of the project at various stages, the benefits of interactions throughout the projects, and value of the established relationship.
- Develop and require training/education for scientists on being more aware of how interactions are going with stakeholders/collaborators beyond what is being reported (identification of social cues, unconscious bias', recognition of whose ideas have been heard and echoed and not represented).

∉ **Admissions and Hiring Policies** – We have developed a set of recommendations built around a framework of 1) equipping the individual, 2) creating equal opportunities, 3) valuing difference, and 4) managing culture. Additionally, we provided recommendations for new ways to advertise positions and recruit new employees, changes to requirements in the application process, suggestions for removing bias from the evaluation process, and required trainings about various hiring resources

- Pod member lead(s): Emily Wei, Jessica Jacobs, Saira Haider
- Center Priority level: High. All of the recommendations contribute to a more diverse workforce and improving culture. Each of the recommendations can be easily implemented.
- What are the needs: A diverse workforce and improved culture for BIPOC individuals at the Center.
- What are the next steps:
    - Create a welcoming culture for all new employees by creating a PSWs or a volunteer welcome-committee part of the Center onboarding introduction process to get resources (internal and local) to new employees and provide opportunities, such as coworker interactions and social experiences, to new employees so that they can see themselves as a vital member of the Center.
    - Conduct outreach at community colleges and Minority Serving Institutions to facilitate recruitment of BIPOC students and employees. Building relationships with these institutions will allow for a strong flow of people and ideas in both directions.
    - Treat new hires as people and not fillable positions. Valuation of the experience (not just scientific/academic experience) including but not limited to willingness and ability to learn new tasks, ability to receive and improve following constructive feedback
    - Formation of Subject Matter Expert panels for hiring candidates. Panel members will evaluate candidates using rubrics and redact names and other information as necessary to reduce bias. Additionally, panel members will be required to take implicit bias training before the candidate search.
        - ∉ Criteria on rubrics could include the candidate's ability to contribute diverse perspectives and their service, outreach, and work to advance JEDI.
    - Encourage all employees (regardless of gender) to use available family-friendly policies which may be "underutilized because women and men feel that taking advantage of them would hurt them professionally (Finkel et al., 1994; Gardner, 2012)." and ensure access to this information is readily available

∉ **Safety Plan** – Require and encourage additional training on culture, diversity, unconscious bias, psychological health, bystander intervention, discrimination, harassment, and threat assessment and response. We have developed recommendations for a Code of Conduct, Racial Risk Assessment of field sites, Pre-departure checklist of discussions with team, and Documentation of incidents in the field.

- Pod member lead(s): Jen Miselis and Julie Richey, Kelly Guilbeau
- Center Priority level: High
- What are the needs: Create a culture of accountability, acceptance, and understanding that safety is more than physical field and laboratory safety but also psychological safety which unconscious bias', discrimination, and harassment play a part in. Acknowledge that human safety is more important than a project, a day's worth of field or lab work, and employees and their individual needs should be treated with respect. Recognize that safety is relative and two individuals may feel different levels of safety in the same situation due to personal experiences, affiliations, and how they self-identify (e.g., BIPOC, LGBTQ, disability, etc.).
- What are the next steps:
  - Develop a Racial Risk Assessment of field sites using existing data sources and update it annually or following a major incident
  - Document incidents or safety risks at field sites and ensure all staff members are knowledgeable on how to access that internally available data (e.g., Cabana)
  - Develop a Code of Conduct for all staff, at all levels, regardless of affiliation (e.g., researcher, contractor, stakeholder, partner, etc.), to abide by while conducting work regardless of location
  - Create a Pre-Departure Checklist of Discussions for all teams to engage in prior to field work in order to address needs that may arise due to cultural or religious differences and safety concerns
  - Mandate more and encourage more training on unconscious bias, bystander intervention, threat assessment and response, diversity, harassment, discrimination, cultural norms, and working with or on tribal lands

∉ **Resource Map** - We propose creating one that contains links and information about 1) USGS Programs (e.g., Ombudspersons, Peer Support Workers, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), Mentoring Program**),** 2**)** DOI Programs (e.g., Employee Counseling services, Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) guidance and training, 3) Center Programs (e.g., Early Career Group, Social Justice Group, Coffee Hours, etc.), 4) Local organizations and social groups, and 5) Professional Communities (SACNAS, MAES, ASAE, AISES, NABG, AAPIiG, Geolatinas, etc.). The resource map could be part of onboarding and/or orientation as well as available on the center website and in a community space. Other recommendations include developing an employee on-boarding routine that includes but is not limited to center introductions, staff highlights, a welcoming committee, and check-ins, and work to develop an improved workplace culture my creating a physical "community" space, providing center parties or get-togethers to celebrate milestones, coordinate lunchtime activities, and others as described in deliverable 7.

- Pod member lead(s): Kelly Guilbeau and RC Mickey

- Center Priority level: High
- What are the needs: Sense of community and inclusive culture among all Center employees
- What are the next steps:
    - Create Center onboarding committee as a means to get resources (internal and local) to new employees and provide opportunities, such as coworker interactions and social experiences, to new employees so that they can see themselves as a vital member of the Center
    - Create resource packet for new and existing employees with information on USGS Programs (e.g., Ombudspersons, Peer Support Workers, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), Mentoring Program**),** DOI Programs (e.g., Employee Counseling services, Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) guidance and training, Center Programs (e.g., Early Career Group, Social Justice Group, Coffee Hours, etc.), local organizations and social groups, and professional communities (SACNAS, MAES, ASAE, AISES, NABG, AAPIiG, Geolatinas, etc.), especially those with local chapters
    - Establish physical gathering/community spaces in Center (separate from conference rooms) intended for community discussion, stress relief, exercise, eating, and other basic needs
    - Offer more inclusive events (e.g., non-holiday specific) throughout the year to celebrate milestones and natural events (e.g., Center anniversary, promotions, retirements, end of hurricane season, Earth day, etc.)

Abbreviations and Acronyms:

AAPIiG- Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Geosciences

AISES- American Indian Society for Science and Engineering

BIPOC- Black, Indigenous and People Of Color

CADR- Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution

EEO- Equal Employment Opportunity

ERG- Employee Resource Groups

FEVS – Federal

JEDI- Justice Equity Diversity Inclusion

LGBTQ- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer or Questioning

MAES- Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists

NABG- National Association of Black Geologists and Geophysicists

PSWs- Peer Support Workers

SACNAS- Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science

SASE- Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers

SPCMSC- St. Petersburg Coastal and Marine Science Center

WARC- Wetland and Aquatic Research Center

Disclaimer: Any opinions or recommendations are those of the URGE pod members only and do not necessarily represent the view of the USGS or the United States Government. Deliverables and any recommendations therein will be presented to USGS leadership for consideration.

Pod Member Signatures:

Alisha Ellis

Kelly Guilbeau

Saira Haider

Jessica Jacobs

Emily Wei

Rangley Mickey

Julie Richey

Laura D'Acunto