

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for University of Nebraska - Lincoln - Deliverable

This is what was found by EAS URGE POD at University of Nebraska - Lincoln on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes. Some information was public and readily available online, specifically processes for reporting. However, many specific policies for how complaints are dealt with and the post-reporting chain of influence are less clear based on online resources. We have also proposed new policies and guidelines for EAS to consider in the future.

- **Links to existing reporting policies at our organization:**

- University Policies:
 - https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofNebraskaSystem&layout_id=116
 - <https://www.unl.edu/tips-incident-reporting-system/>
 - <https://care.unl.edu/welcome>
 - <https://www.unl.edu/equity/title-ix>
- Department Policies:
 - EAS has one or more departmental Ombudspersons who can receive complaints
 - Reporting policies are reviewed approximately every five years. Changes are made by the faculty and department chair.
- Rates of reported incidents are made publicly available (e.g., # of reports each year) by the university. Significant incidents that could affect others are reported to the university community immediately, and a report listing all incidents is released annually.

- **What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?**

- The designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents are the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (IEC), which is the UNL Title IX office
- Reports can be made online using the links below, including anonymous reports:
 - <https://www.unl.edu/tips-incident-reporting-system/>



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- https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofNebraskaSystem&layout_id=116
 - In-person and online reports go to a coordinator, compliance officer, or specialist in IEC, but the question of who has access to the reports is unclear
 - Police are only included in the process if there is an alleged criminal complaint. It is unclear whether individuals are accompanied by an advocate, but confidentiality is considered very important.
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- **What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?**
 - Consequences are variable depending on the issue and may include follow up by a supervisor, bias training, disciplinary action, or termination.
 - A coordinator, compliance officer, or specialist in IEC decides outcomes and consequences for reported individuals. Reports are handled confidentially by a member of the Title IX or Diversity and Equity office (as appropriate), rather than by the immediate supervisor. Sometimes disciplinary action is taken by those university officials.
 - Reports are tracked by the office handling a given case.
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- **What resources are available for individuals reporting?**
 - The university has multiple services for counseling, psychological consultation, and legal advice. Counselors or advocates are available of the same race, ethnicity, and gender.
 - If relevant to the report, potential impacts on grades or evaluations could be considered, depending on the case.
 - Retaliation is prohibited at UNL; instances of alleged retaliation are reported to IEC.
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- **What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?**
 - Petitions by members of the university have previously led to meetings with organizational leadership and discussion of policy changes.
 - Working groups or committees with power to change or propose changes to policy.
 - Cultural surveys, regular or only after wide-spread reports or high-profile incidents.
 - Leadership proactively asks students and/or staff for input on how to improve.



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- **What policies and procedures could be proposed to suggest changes in EAS?**
 - We will propose to amplify the existing within-department structure in EAS for handling complaints (presently an ombudsperson) by creating a committee of multiple people at multiple ranks (faculty and students) to handle complaints related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - We are still discussing this proposal and the best structure for this group; a new committee within EAS would require a proposal that would be voted upon at a faculty meeting.