Unlearning Racism in Geoscience (URGE; www.urgeoscience.org) is a community-wide journal-reading and policy-design curriculum to help Geoscientists unlearn racism and improve accessibility, justice, equity, and inclusion (AJEDI) in our discipline. URGE's primary objectives are to (1) deepen the community's knowledge of the effects of racism on the participation and retention of black, brown, and indigenous people in Geoscience[1], (2) use the existing literature, expert opinion, and personal experiences to develop anti-racist policies and strategies[2,3], and (3) share, discuss, and modify anti-racist policies and strategies within a dynamic community network and on a national stage. By meeting these objectives, we hope that Geoscience departments and societies will be able to implement a well-researched crowdsourced group of anti-racist policies.

CAWS Lab- University of Alberta Deliverable - Demographic Data

Education is essential but action is also imperative for achieving the objectives of URGE. Therefore, each URGE topic is paired with deliverables for individual pods to draft and share. This deliverable is locating, requesting, and/or analyzing demographic data (race, ethnicity, gender, etc) for admissions, hiring, invited speakers, and relevant roles within your organization.

Demographic data show current representation in an organization (especially important for leadership roles), can determine if an organization is reaching representation goals, and tracked over time to show if actions/changes made are having intended impact and for accountability. There are many opportunities to check on demographics, such as current staff or students, applicant pools and those accepted, leadership boards or committee membership, current and past presidents or department chairs, invited speakers, as well as awardees or recognitions.

Recall that when drafting agreements with leadership, you were advised to seek out this data ahead of time or identify contacts who may have access. Data can be sensitive to collect or distribute and requires ethical policies and consent. There can be statistical and anonymity issues with small numbers.[4] However, data can also enable accountability and drive change.

Suggested discussion questions:
● What demographic data are collected at your institution?

Publicly available demographic data for the University of Alberta include gender (male or female only), province of origin or international status, and Canadian Indigenous heritage. These data are collected for undergraduate and graduate students. However, a new DEI strategic plan started in 2019 set out to collect more demographic data (named the "Workforce Diversity Demographics") from the student body and faculty members with DEI goals in mind, however distinct goals of increasing populations traditionally marginalized groups are not explicitly stated in the document. These data are still being processed and are not available at this moment. When they are made available, only aggregated numbers will be presented to protect the identities of individuals who took the survey. We have emailed the workforce group to see what demographic data was collected during the surveys.

We also reached out to the head of the Renewable Resources department to see if department demographic data was collected separately from the university wide workforce survey. While the data is not presented in any public format they were willing to share what they have with us. The department similarly had data on gender (male or female only) and indigenous peoples. The data show a high percentage of female students at all stages (undergraduate, MSc, and PhD) and while these percentages are above 50% for all of the programs except for forestry, they steadily decline at each successive academic stage, suggesting the "leaky pipeline" is prominent within the department. No department wide data on post-doc or faculty positions were available.

We also noticed that in none of the surveys or data collected did the university or department allow for genders outside of the binary. We have reached out the newly formed faculty-level DEI group to suggest changing this for future surveys.

What do the numbers tell you? ● Are data public? If not, who has access? If the data are kept private, what reason is given? ● Are there stated and measurable goals for representation in your organization?

An example of demographic data: https://diversity.ucsd.edu/accountability/#Dashboards
An example of measurable goals: https://diversity.ldeo.columbia.edu/seminardiversity

Think about all the different ways to look at demographics across your organization. If data are not being collected or are not made public, find out why and propose changes going forward. Review data from similar organizations and consider how your organization compares.

Pods should upload links to publicly available demographic data to the URGE website as well as investigations or proposals/plans to collect data. We also encourage pods to post on their organization's website, and share over social media (#URGEoscience & tag @URGEoscience). Sharing deliverables will propagate ideas, foster discussion, and ensure accountability.

[1] R. E. Bernard, E. H. G. Cooperdock, No progress on diversity in 40 years. Nature Publishing Group. 11, 1–5 (2018).
[2] https://notimeforsilence.org/
[3] https://www.change.org/p/geoscientists-call-for-a-robust-anti-racisim-plan-for-the-geosciences
[4] B. Fernando, Student-led diversity audits: A strategy for change, Eos, 102, https://doi.org/10.1029/2021EO154085 (2021).