



URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

This is what was found by UNL Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Pod at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:**
 - Structural Geology -- research in Middle East and Indonesia
 - Paleocology/climatology -- research in Ecuador/Bolivia/Peru, South America
 - Hydrology – research in China, Jordan, and Oman
 - Tectonics and geochemistry – research with collaborators in Vietnam
 - Collaboration with teachers at a Native American school (summer field course)
 - Climate change research and workshops with collaborators in Latin America, Caribbean, and West Africa
 - Paleo outreach/stem education – museum horse evolution kit, virtual museum tours
 - Paleontology – research into removal of fossils from tribal lands, with permission to conduct paleontology survey on Santee Sioux Tribe reservation
 - To-date, these interactions and collaborations have arisen organically, with an openness to building on connections and opportunities across the department

- **What worked well in these interactions?**
 - Field work (internationally) has led to excellent friendships and collaborations, building on shared experiences
 - Some successful projects have led to sustained, ongoing collaborations

- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**
 - Access is not always available when working internationally. Researchers do not always have direct contacts with Indigenous peoples in other countries, and it can be logistically difficult and culturally sensitive to establish those contacts
 - Sometimes researchers have encountered language barriers and communication challenges that present barriers to engagement when working internationally.
 - Attempts have been made by at least two department researchers to contact Indigenous peoples in Wyoming for future collaboration and research, but neither received a response. This may mean those groups did not want to collaborate.

- **Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?**



Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

- Continuing to reach out and respectfully ask for collaborations with members of communities of color
 - Gathering more experience and knowledge about different communities (by informing ourselves, rather than expecting others to educate us)
 - Encouraging our collaborators take the lead on more research projects, such as local field studies
 - Engage with Indigenous social media accounts and reach out to researchers of color, e.g., through the SACNAS conference and social media account
 - Being open and flexible to feedback and different worldviews (e.g., asking a visiting Indigenous speaker if they are comfortable with a land acknowledgment, because they may in fact not prefer it)
 - Consider international and political issues when working with local and regional collaborators
 - Consider carefully when naming places in publications; for example, think sensitively about Indigenous vs. European place names
- **Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?**
 - The university already provides resources for navigating federal legal requirements for research projects in foreign countries and with international collaborators, such as export control restrictions. Researchers are required to consult those resources.
 - It would be helpful to establish institutional guidance for reaching out to and working with communities of color, particularly Native American groups. One possibility is establishing university contacts with local and regional reservations and first nations that could assist researchers in connecting with interested collaborators and establishing longer, trustworthy relationships.
 - Social media (e.g., Twitter) has facilitated contact (professional and personal) online across countries and communities. We should work harder to engage with these groups through our department, research group, and individual social media accounts.