

USGS-SPCMSC URGE Pod And Leadership Agreement

The USGS-SPCMSC URGE Pod is comprised of staff from two USGS field offices. When appropriate, separate goals and engagement policies are provided to meet the unique needs of each Center.

URGE Pod and Organizational Goals

Goals of the Pod

- Work to unlearn any of our own unconscious racist biases, build our anti-racist skills, and increase our confidence so we can be effective and active allies/advocates
- Build a community of knowledgeable anti-racist and anti-oppressive allies so that we can receive feedback for our individual unlearning processes
- Shift the conversation in our respective Centers toward more actively anti-racist applications and policies

Goals for the USGS Saint Petersburg Coastal and Marine Science Center (SPCMSC)

- Improve awareness so that we see anti-racist ideas actively shaping decision-making processes within the Center at all levels, not just at the level of Center administration
- Work with leadership to cultivate a Center culture in which
 - having misguided opinions/notions is ok,
 - speaking out is ok,
 - we collectively learn from transgressions (unintentional or otherwise),
 - and we work together to enact appropriate changesso that we can eliminate defensiveness when identifying and dismantling actions and activities that are not inclusive or equitable (e.g., the opposite of a culture of shame, which generally paralyzes action)
- Connect Center personnel to resources that address anti-racist ideas to lay the framework for meaningful action and change
- Engage with Center leadership to request transparency in how anti-racist ideas have been applied to decision-making processes
- Identify existing processes and/or policies that promote the status quo or those that may allow covertly racist practices to occur and suggest alternative policies that make progress toward increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Make engaging with underserved communities a (Center/Program/resource) priority in project life-cycles so that SPCMSC research and expertise reach those that need it most
- Facilitate the Center's efforts to form connections to minority-serving institutions and local organizations to diversify recruitment

Goals for the Wetland and Aquatic Research Center (WARC)

- Educate: connect Center personnel to resources that address anti-racist ideas to lay the framework for the subsequent goals.
 - Invite leadership to an URGE meeting
 - Ask leadership to join a deliverable meeting, as well as a discussion meeting if possible.

- Identify existing policies that promote the status quo or those that may allow covertly racist practices to occur and suggest alternative policies that make progress toward increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion
 - Example: creating outreach opportunities for engaging under-represented audiences, instead of relying on personal or professional networks of USGS employees and informing these contacts when student contractor positions will be advertised before the general public.

Pod-Leadership Engagement

WARC members of the USGS-SPCMSC Pod plan to invite the four Branch Chiefs from WARC to Session 5 on Accessibility. Members will ask the Branch Chiefs to participate in all elements on Session 5 (readings, interviews, discussion meeting, and deliverable meeting), but ask them to prioritize the deliverable meeting.

USGS-SPCMSC pod members from SPCMSC invite all of Center Management (e.g., Center Director, Deputy Center Director, Administrative Officer, IT Manager, DM Manager, Laboratory Manager, Operations Chief, Communications Liaison) to engage with our pod as frequently as they can, but with attendance and participation in at least one URGE-SPCMSC session at a minimum. We welcome the Management Team as a group -OR- participation can be targeted to sessions in which the deliverable clearly aligns with that manager's role (e.g., Week 6 when the deliverable is "Lab and Field Codes of Conduct" may be of interest to Laboratory and Operations Management staff). Attendance from the Management Team rather than Center Administration alone will ensure that all aspects of Center function are engaged with the URGE process resulting in increased awareness and application of more inclusive processes/policies across all Center operations.

SPCMSC members of the USGS-SPCMSC Pod suggest two-step participation for management: 1) reading of Session 1 materials and deliverables and 2) meaningful engagement with URGE sessions. First, Session 1 materials are foundational for URGE discussions, providing a common language we can all employ in our discussions. Second, the scope of session attendance and engagement would include all aspects of the two-week session ideally, demonstrating the commitment of Center Management staff to affect individual and Center growth toward a more just, equitable, and diverse workplace regardless of their position within the Center. Week 1 of each session entails independent readings of the materials assigned by the URGE organizers, generally 1-2 relatively short papers. Week 2 of each session is dedicated to: 1) a webinar (scheduled on the second Monday of the session, live from 530-630p but recordings are made available), 2) discussion of the reading materials, and 3) discussion and production of deliverables. The discussions are generally held over two meetings, scheduled by rotating session organizers (sharing the workload amongst pod members). If Center management is unable to engage in all aspects of a given session, we request that they (at a minimum) engage with the discussions surrounding the development of the session deliverable. Though this approach would not allow for much individual growth for management staff involved (a requirement for meaningful change), this level of participation would allow deliverables to reflect the ideas of both the pod and Center management possibly resulting in a more feasible application to Center processes/policies.

The session schedule and topics are presented in the table below. We welcome the participation of Center management in these sessions and are excited to engage on any/all of these topics!

Session #	Dates	Topic	Session Subtitle	Deliverable
1	1/18 - 1/29	Racism and Definitions	Defining the Words we Use	Group Norms
2	2/1 - 2/12	Racism and Individuals	What is my place in all of this?	Policy for Dealing with Complaints
3	2/15 - 2/26	Racism and History	Where are we as the geosciences?	Statistical Analyses of Program and it's History
4	3/1 - 3/12	Racism and Justice	The long-lasting impacts of racism in geoscience	Policies for Working with Communities of Color
5	3/15 - 3/26	Racism and Accessibility	Breaking down the barriers in our discipline	Admissions and Hiring Policies
6	3/29 - 4/9	Racism and Inclusivity	Building an Anti-racist and inclusive community	Lab and Field Code of Conduct
7	4/12 - 4/23	Racism and Self-care	Taking care of ourselves in the face of racism	Asset Map of Resources to Combat Racism
8	4/26 - 5/7	Racism and Accountability	How do we keep ourselves accountable to Anti-racist work?	Accountability Program

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.