



Policies for working with communities of color

Deliverable 4

Audit

Faculty in our department have worked in the African Rift zone, Colombian river basins, Greenland glaciers, and multiple locations along the length of the Rocky Mountains in the US. Information shared with our pod provided insight on some of these projects' interactions with nearby communities of color. Our department's most frequent interaction occurs with the Native American communities in Montana.

A faculty member in our department undertakes annual glaciology work in Greenland, accompanied by with graduate and undergraduate students. Interactions with the Greenlandic Inuit communities is primarily pre- and post-field campaign and focused around operations support issues for cargo and flight logistics. The faculty member submits annual research applications for approval to the Greenland government and has based their campaigns out of the same small communities for multiple years. Post-research outreach in these communities has included museum displays, a live production combining dance and science, as well as public lectures and high school outreach. Information on Greenlandic Inuit communities has been learned mostly through on-the-ground experience and is shared with any new members of the research team prior to travel.

Policies for Working with Communities of Color

In order to counteract the history of the geosciences as an extractive and colonial imposition on communities of color, our department needs to establish a culture of collaboration and openness surrounding field research.

One step towards developing this culture includes formalizing policies that emphasize the importance of respectful collaboration and inclusion of impacted communities of color at every stage of the research process. At the department level, we should seek to develop ongoing relationships with communities around Montana and the Northern Rockies to improve the likelihood of successful collaborations and reduce reliance on happenstance or individual prior connections.

Suggested policies include:

1. From the earliest stages, field research plans must include background information on communities surrounding potential research locations. Information such as local



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leadership structures, potential collaboration sources, potential for local student inclusion at all grade levels, as well as any previous research done in the area. Background on previous research in the area should include how results were communicated on the conclusion of the work.

2. As research plans develop, researchers should be actively encouraged to seek input from communities on their interests in your area of study. This process should be considered an ongoing conversation rather than an after-the-fact permission-seeking request.
 - a. Can be used to shape research questions and thereby improve the impact of your research results and opportunities for sharing the answers learned.
 - b. Can be the basis for deeper formal collaboration with community members (also known as co-production.)
3. Research budgets should emphasize the inclusion of local businesses and individuals. Examples are logistic and operations such as guide hires and supply purchases. Even more essential is paying student techs and other field assistants in order to diversify the participants.
4. Acknowledgement and inclusion of local communities in research results, especially any knowledge contributions members provided, or opportunities granted. We work to include all communities at all stages of scientific inquiry including proposal development, study site selection, data collection, as well as, sharing data to develop policies and procedures to benefit all Montana residents.

