URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for University/Organization

This is what was found by CSU Geosciences at Colorado State University 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:**

The CSU Geosciences department does not collect any data about interactions with communities of color related to research. We found it most useful to interview specific research groups in the department that are known to have these kinds of interactions, however there are only two groups who prioritize relationships with local communities of color in their research areas. Upon discussing this subject with the members of our URGE pod, we concluded that the department is largely lacking in interactions with affiliated communities of color. One example of a project that does include interactions with an impacted community is a project studying sediment transfer on deep-water slopes in Chile. The researchers have a long-standing relationship with the landowners and continue communication with them throughout the project.

● **What worked well in these interactions?**

First, the relationships with the community are strong because the community members were included in the project early on. The group has collaborators who are from the country the field site is in, so the collaborators began to establish relationships with the landowners early on in the research process. The group at CSU was then able to introduce themselves and continue to strengthen this relationship. Researchers continuously share results with the landowners, not just publications. The research group has also taken on a PhD student who is local to the area; his ability to communicate with the landowners well and understand nuances of the local culture has been valuable to the group, who wouldn't be able to understand regional customs without his input. Thus it seems that successful communication, in terms of regular interaction and a team member who speaks the local language, has been the most important factor for this group's successful interactions.

● **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**

There is a language barrier between the researchers and the community, which has recently been improved due to the addition of a local student to the group. Incorporating local students/researchers into research groups seems to be a very useful way to make sure the thoughts and needs of the community are heard and communication is successful. However, from both research groups that we interviewed, the language barrier seems to be the most significant problem to successful interaction. Our URGE pod strongly supports writing plain-language summaries of research findings and seeking a translation of this summary to the local language. This translation may be done in a number of ways, whether a local collaborator on the project completes the translation or if funds are allocated early on in the project to compensate a translator for their work. Although this doesn't necessarily address the language barrier in day-to-day communication, it would certainly help to overcome it when presenting findings to the

community. To improve the language barrier in continuous communication, the best practice is to have a member of the research team who is local to the area.

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

As mentioned above, we strongly recommend that researchers write plain-language summaries of findings and provide translation(s) to the local language(s). For projects already undertaken or even already completed, this is a relatively easy way to make the research more accessible to local communities, although ideally the communities would have been involved earlier on in the process. If there is a scientist on the team who is local to the area and speaks the native language, they may be the most qualified person to make sure the translation is accurate both scientifically and grammatically. Otherwise, compensating a community member to translate research results is a great way to complete this process. It is important to note that if there is someone in the department (unrelated to the project) who happens to speak the sought-out language, it is not their duty to do this work just because of their background. It is the duty of the research group to identify someone who is willing to complete the translation in exchange for fair compensation.
Including land acknowledgements in publications and presentations is also an important way to pay tribute to the communities affiliated with the field site. Whether or not the indigenous community still lives on those lands, it is important to recognize the history associated with the land and pay respects to the peoples native to the area.

- **Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?**

Our URGE pod has developed a "Best Practices for Working with Communities of Color" document to provide to our department. By interviewing researchers in our department, we found that some individuals have developed successful ways to interact with these communities, but other professors in the department are not necessarily aware of these practices; once the people affiliated with those projects are gone, their knowledge about how to build these relationships will be lost. To combat this, our "Best Practices" document seeks to compile their experiences to provide guidelines and suggestions to other department members.
One of the main suggestions we are making is to plan for relationships with local communities of color very early on in the project. These relationships and collaborations are best built over time so that mutual trust may be established; this necessitates that planning and contact be established as soon as a field site is identified. Foresight and allocation of funding to these efforts fit well within some project requirements, like NSF Broader Impacts criteria, so it's important to build in funding for these relationships during the proposal stage. Allocating funding to include and compensate a local student/researcher is especially important, since our findings clearly show that a local member of the team is one of the most important requirements for successful interactions.