

## W.O.W. Pod at WHOI Session 6 Deliverable

Our pod is composed of primarily WHOI-affiliated employees and students. Our work is done in laboratory/office spaces and in the field. Field work includes work on oceanographic research vessels, small boats, or work outdoors in other types of habitats; and we rely on this field work as a way to collect samples for our research. Below we outline safety considerations locally (Cape Cod area) and in the field (e.g., ships or other environments).

### 1. Field work

Field work is an important component to many of our research interests and goals. However, through discussion, we realize that field work is not necessarily inclusive, exciting, or comfortable for everyone and can be perceived as a barrier and influence retention of certain groups. We have come up with several actionable items to address each of these including required trainings and re-evaluating program curriculum requirements.

- a. Field work training should be required for all students and researchers within the department. The training should be relevant to all field work locations and experiences. An effective training course should be developed and required yearly. This training should address and break down stereotypes of white, excited-to-get-dirty men being the image of what a successful field worker looks like in order to enable all students to feel comfortable and as though they do belong. This training should also identify and address potential barriers that may not be evident to leaders and organizers of field work. A good example of this is the shampoo example that was given during the URGE interview. This should set the stage for creating a more inclusive environment and reduce the number of microaggressions towards marginalized students. A good foundation for points to be made within this training can be found here: <http://fieldworkinitiative.org/the-fisst-training/>. Another resource on training for field work can be found here: [https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/field\\_work.html](https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/field_work.html)
- b. A confidential liaison should be established within the department for students and even faculty and staff to turn to for voicing concerns. This eliminates any fear or awkwardness of needing to bring this up to someone yourself if you are not comfortable. Two power-holding individuals should be designated as confidential liaisons during each field experience, so that students can go to either of these people with any issues or concerns that may arise during a trip.
- c. The department needs to assess the necessity of field work and determine if it is essential or if an alternative experience that matches student comfort levels is possible. In some cases, field work is more of a tradition perhaps and is not essential to the

specific learning experience that a student may need depending on their interests. Rather than requiring all students to participate in fieldwork, each students' level of desire and comfort should be gauged before "enrolling" in field experiences that they may not want or feel comfortable participating in. If a student is not comfortable participating in a certain field experience, then alternative activities should be provided instead so that these students can still experience a learning and career-advancing opportunity that meets their needs and comfort level. Another option is to expand our definition of field work, as a student may be able to play an important role in participating in planning or supporting field efforts without being there 'in person'.

## **2. Campus Safety**

An important distinction to be made is how safe a campus *is* versus how safe it *feels*. While WHOI might be located in a 'safer' area of the world, it may not feel safe to all of its members, especially marginalized groups. To promote safety and the feeling of safety on campus, several precautions can be put into place.

- a. Cameras or card access should be added to building entrances to add a level of accountability and safety for people working within buildings. This will help promote the feeling of safety and will help in scenarios such as theft, for example.
- b. Blue lights should be installed around campus to provide another sense of safety for community members on campus.
- c. WHOI does currently have a safety officer often stationed within Clark during the evening. A system should be worked out such that each building can have a safety officer present during hours that members are in the lab during the evening at an individual's request.
- d. Safety measures around town (Woods Hole / Falmouth) or where students reside should also be considered if this would help students feel more safe during commutes.

## **3. Creating a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment**

Another factor important in creating a safe environment is the people. Through discussion, we learned that very often, institutions have a "black list" of advisors that current and incoming students are encouraged to avoid. In many cases, these people have been flagged as being insensitive to marginalized groups, uninclusive, and a poor mentor. Frequent training in cultural awareness, how to create safe and inclusive work spaces, and how to promote diversity in our field should be required for all members of the institution. Such training would be considered a professional development activity and include the following:

- a. Training should be offered on how to be a good and inclusive mentor. Mentoring happens at all levels (supervisor to mentee, peer to peer, etc.). The training should be done for all levels. Developing a set of mentoring guidelines could serve as a shared resource to refer to.
- b. Trainings should encourage learning and the constant process of growing, learning, and becoming better. These trainings should focus on helping people become better versed in cultural awareness and building a safe environment for all. Discussion groups (e.g. in

the form of a journal club) should be encouraged. Promoting diversity in geosciences will be an ongoing process with “best practices” changing over time. The URGE readings have been very powerful, and should continue to be shared and talked about beyond URGE.

- c. Training should also focus on how to promote other good people around you. Most of us are or will be in the position to support coworkers/mentees through writing letters of recommendation and nominations. Receiving training in how to write effective letters of support; i.e. use of gender neutral, racially sensitive, and unbiased expressions. Such efforts should be recognized and encouraged at the department level.