

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



URGE Management Plan for Minnesota State University

Context Statement: Our deliverables were developed from a multi-institutional Pod, but were largely based on a policy analysis at Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSUM). The MSUM Geology Program is small (four faculty), and is housed within a larger Department of Biochemistry, Chemistry, and Geology. Our department is housed in a College of Science, Engineering, and Technology.

In the summer of 2021, our Pod deliverables will be modified into a draft policy booklet that will be presented to a new Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board that is being formed by our college. Because the processes for changing policies and posting resources will differ from program, to department, to college (and university), the management plan for each deliverable will vary depending on the organizational unit it will be presented to. It is hoped that many of these deliverables will be incorporated into new **college** guidelines. The potential paths forward for each deliverable will be discussed in further detail below.

A brief outline of procedures for implementing policy changes follows:

- Geology Program – we have no formal policies or process for establishing them. We will discuss among ourselves the feasibility of establishing more formal policy processes.

URGE

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- Department of Biochemistry, Chemistry, and Geology – Department policy is established by a majority vote of faculty members. Because Geology is a minority voting block in the Department, it will be necessary to cultivate support among Biochemistry and Chemistry faculty for policy changes. This may be feasible for some processes, and more difficult for others that are perceived as controversial or threatening to senior Chemistry faculty.
- College of Science, Engineering, and Technology – College policies are established by the Dean, with feedback from faculty members where institutional procedures are concerned. A shared governance process is established by the faculty union contract for major processes. Others may be implemented through the authority of the Dean, though campus culture tends to favor shared governance processes over executive action. Identifying which processes proposed policies must be vetted through will represent ongoing work for the college Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board.
- University – Policies are changed through a formal process involving a committee with representatives from multiple bargaining units (<http://www.mnsu.edu/policies/>). Additional policy and procedure is shaped through the shared governance process which involves numerous university-level committees. A more formal Diversity and Inclusion Committee at the university level is expected to be formed soon.

Information and guidance for Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIA) can be found here:
https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/RacialJusticeImpactAssessment_v5.pdf

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Deliverables Summary Table

Deliverable	Existing Policy or Resource?	Initial Point of Contact(s)	Where It Is or Will Be Posted	Review/Update Interval	Racial Risk Assessment?	Training Recommended?	Approval, Check, and/or Consequence
Complaints and Reporting Policy	No	Pod Leader	Internal currently	Recommend annually	Not planned	Not planned	Not relevant to our pod
Demographic Data	No	Pod Leader	Internal currently	Recommend every 2 years	Recommended	Not planned	Not relevant to our pod
Policies for Working with Communities of Color	No	Pod Leader	Internal currently	Recommend annually	Recommended	Maybe	External Feedback
Admissions and Hiring Policies	Yes	Pod Leader	Internal currently	No set interval, recommend annually	Recommended	Yes	HR
Safety Plan	Yes	Pod Leader	Internal currently	Annually, but also after any major reported incidents	Recommended	Yes	Department Chair, Dean, Provost

URGE

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Resource Map	No	Pod Leader	Internal currently	Additions on a rolling basis	Not planned	No	External Feedback
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Additional considerations for each deliverable:

- **Agreement** – Our administration has been responsive and open to participating in Pod discussions. Both our Dean and Associate Dean separately joined Pod meetings. Our Dean has been receptive to suggestions, and we hope to continue this constructive relationship going forward.
- **Pod Guidelines** - We hope to adapt our guidelines form for use with the college Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board. We also intend to include explicit acknowledgement of power imbalances between tenured vs. non-tenured faculty and how to best address them in meetings (e.g. “Untenured/non tenure track pod members will not be expected to initiate discussions with individuals outside of the pod who can influence decisions about promotion, tenure, and contract renewal.” – from Appalachian State Pod Guidelines).
- **Complaints and Reporting Policy** – The MNSU Complaints and Reporting processes changed between submission of this deliverable and the end of the URGE Sessions (May 2021). The new policies are reflected in the Resource Map; these documents will need to be brought into alignment.
- **Demographic Data** – We noted several gaps in our demographics deliverable including a lack of clearly stated goals for representation among invited speakers and university administration. We have a new incoming university President, and will

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



actively monitor on-campus discussions to identify opportunities for improving these processes.

- **Policies for Working with Communities of Color** – This deliverable should be vetted by community members, and evaluated through an REIA process. We will encourage our administration to consider this discussion at the university level, as no clear policy exists. Our university works with several communities of color (including Black and Indigenous), and resides in a city with a troubling history of violence against Indigenous communities (the Dakota War and 1862 mass execution). To facilitate ongoing healing and reconciliation, the university needs to be held to a very high standard with regard to these policies.
 - Additional suggested actions from URGE:
 - “Training is needed for staff, both so they understand the importance of this new policy as well as for how to implement the policy itself.”
 - “Approval process can be incorporated into travel approval, e.g. check if travel or work will involve communities of color and has this new policy been reviewed and followed in the plans for this trip; consequence of not following policy would be assigned readings and additional training.”
- **Admissions and Hiring Policies** – Hiring policies are governed by Human Resources and State of Minnesota Processes. These may be difficult policies to impact, but our Pod noted strategies incorporated elsewhere (e.g. searches not allowed to advance until a suitably diverse pool is established) that could be incorporated into university policy. Additional training is also recommended as existing training provided by HR is fairly rudimentary and focused primarily on adhering to procedures. An additional component of bias and diversity training will be advocated for.

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



- **Safety Plan** – We are not aware of any formal safety plan of this nature in our department or college. We will share the document with the college Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board and discuss strategies for implementing broader university policies in this area. As the university is revisiting many travel policies in the wake of the COVID pandemic, an opportunity may exist to implement more clear guidance of this nature. The department chair and/or dean can also require evidence of a safety plan or training prior to approving out-of-state travel.
 - Additional suggested actions from URGE:
 - “Training should be paired with the training for the deliverable on working with communities of color to emphasize the importance of these new policies, and then also on the details associated with implementing the safety plan policy.”
 - “Approval process can be incorporated into travel approval, e.g. check if racial risk assessment has been done on this travel location; consequence of not following policy would be additional scrutiny on future travel requests, assigned readings, and additional training.”
- **Resource Map** – We are not aware of a resource map of this nature on our campus. We will share it with relevant parties (college Dean, Diversity Office), and solicit feedback regarding the possibility of incorporating it into an official orientation, policy manual, or employee handbook.
 - Additional suggested actions from URGE:
 - “The approval can be incorporated along with the admissions and hiring policy, as part of a proposal to hire a staff member or admit a student then HR would check that the person they report to has a plan to go through

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Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



the resource map with them.”