

URGE Massachusetts Pod Pod Agreement

One of the benefits of our multi-institution URGE Pod is the ability to share experiences and learn from each schools' current strengths and areas for improvement. As we share ideas and perspectives, pod members from each institution plan to bring what we have learned back to their own departments for modification (as appropriate) and consideration for implementation.

At Boston College, we are planning for actions to improve DEI in our department of Earth and Environmental Sciences. As part of that effort, two faculty, and three graduate students including members of our DEI faculty and JEDI student committees are participating in URGE in multiple pods to bring back ideas for consideration by the full department. The department chair is also in this URGE pod. With reports back to the DEI and JEDI committees, the department will be better informed and positioned to decide what actions to take this semester and into the coming year. We plan to take URGE deliverables from this multi-institution pod and consider tailoring them for implementation in our department. One possible outcome could be full department engagement in a new URGE experience this summer or Fall.

At Tufts, we are working to improve DEI in the Earth & Ocean Sciences Department. Our department is relatively small and only offers undergraduate degrees. Our department has a newly created DEI committee, which consists of three faculty members (out of total of six). Two committee members plus our only postdoc are participating in URGE. We plan to take URGE deliverables from this multi-institution pod and tailor them for implementation in our department. The first draft of our departmental DEI plan is due to the administration in late April and will be informed by URGE activities.

At Lesley we have recently hired a cabinet level administrator who is in charge of improving issues related to DEI and a staff person in charge of DEI education. We are a small university that is under-resourced, so most of the efforts and education tend to be at the University level, rather than at the department level. I am the only 'geosciences' faculty in my department. My department is 'Natural Sciences and Mathematics', with about 8 core faculty members that span the included disciplines between math, biology, ecology, chemistry and earth and environmental sciences. Our University has devoted quite a lot of time over the past 5 years in conversations related to the DEI space, but each department is supposed to be creating a DEI plan this spring, so my hope is that these URGE sessions can help inform those department-level plans with some ideas and approaches that may be specifically relevant to engaging a broader community of learners in the STEM fields.