

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Unlearning Racism in Geoscience (URGE; www.urgeoscience.org) is a community-wide journal-reading and policy-design curriculum to help Geoscientists unlearn racism and improve accessibility, justice, equity, and inclusion (AJEDI) in our discipline. URGE's primary objectives are to (1) deepen the community's knowledge of the effects of racism on the participation and retention of black, brown, and indigenous people in Geoscience¹, (2) use the existing literature, expert opinion, and personal experiences to develop anti-racist policies and strategies^{2,3}, and (3) share, discuss, and modify anti-racist policies and strategies within a dynamic community network and on a national stage. By meeting these objectives, we hope that Geoscience departments and societies will be able to implement a well-researched crowdsourced group of anti-racist policies.

JMU - Pod Guidelines

Education is essential but action is also imperative for achieving the objectives of URGE. Therefore, each URGE topic is paired with deliverables for individual pods to draft and share. *This deliverable is a set of agreed upon guidelines and group norms for your pod.*

Before you begin your work as a pod, it is critical to lay a strong foundation as a group so that all members of the pod can participate and learn. As a group, discuss what you need to ensure a safe, inclusive environment to discuss difficult and potentially controversial issues.

1. Ground Rules⁴

1. Listen actively -- respect others when they are talking.
2. Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing ("I" instead of "they," "we," "you").
3. Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas and problems rather than people.
4. Participate to the fullest of your ability -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
5. Instead of invalidating somebody else's story with your own spin on their experience, share your own story and experience.
6. The goal is not to always agree -- it is to gain a deeper understanding.
7. Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses -- they can be as disrespectful as words (even over Zoom!)
8. Assume everyone's good intentions but also acknowledge the impact of saying something that hurts someone else, even if it is unintended.
9. Maintain confidentiality. All stories shared in this space stay in this space unless explicit permission is given by the person sharing the story that it can be shared in another setting.
10. Ensure that all voices are heard on each topic. Actively invite/encourage all contributions.

¹ R. E. Bernard, E. H. G. Cooperdock, No progress on diversity in 40 years. Nature Publishing Group. 11, 1–5 (2018).

² <https://notimeforsilence.org/>

³ <https://www.change.org/p/geoscientists-call-for-a-robust-anti-racism-plan-for-the-geosciences>

⁴ Adapted from <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/groundrules.html> and https://www.mnys.org/assets/1/6/ground_rules_-_arc_discussion.pdf



2. Making decisions as a group

We will decide through consensus with the ability to have anonymous dissent, especially in written documents. We will use Google Docs for this.

3. Pod member roles and responsibilities

1. Schedule meetings: **We used Doodle and decided weekly meeting shall be Friday, 8:00-9:00 AM**
2. Take attendance (important for accountability- **Weekly Pod Leader**)
3. Take notes as needed, especially in discussions of deliverables (**Weekly Pod Leader**)
4. Upload deliverables to the URGE website (**Leslie**)
5. Schedule meetings with organization/institution leadership (**Leslie invites Dean and Associate Dean Davis**)
6. Read supplemental articles / materials for deliverables as needed (for example, the asset mapping deliverable will be accompanied by a short paper about the purpose of creating community asset maps and how to generate your own.)
7. Draft deliverables and share with pod for review/edits/discussion at the pod meetings (**Weekly Pod Leader**)

Pods should upload their pod's guidelines, including your decision making method and plan for division of work, to the URGE website. We also encourage pods to post these guidelines on the organization's website and share over social media (use #URGE and tag @URGEoscience). Sharing deliverables will propagate ideas, foster discussion, and ensure accountability.