

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.

Deliverable - Demographic Data

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 locating, requesting, and/or analyzing demographic data (race, ethnicity, gender, etc) for admissions, hiring, invited speakers, and relevant roles within your organization.

Demographic data show current representation in an organization (especially important for leadership roles), can determine if an organization is reaching representation goals, and tracked over time to show if actions/changes made are having intended impact and for accountability. There are many opportunities to check on demographics, such as current staff or students, applicant pools and those accepted, leadership boards or committee membership, current and past presidents or department chairs, invited speakers, as well as awardees or recognitions.

Recall that when drafting agreements with leadership, you were advised to seek out this data ahead of time or identify contacts who may have access. Data can be sensitive to collect or distribute and requires ethical policies and consent. There can be statistical and anonymity issues with small numbers.⁴ However, data can also enable accountability and drive change.

Suggested discussion questions:

- What demographic data are collected at your institution? What do the numbers tell you?
- Are data public? If not, who has access? If the data are kept private, what reason is given?
- Are there stated and measurable goals for representation in your organization?

An example of demographic data: <https://diversity.ucsd.edu/accountability/#Dashboards>

An example of measurable goals: <https://diversity.ldeo.columbia.edu/seminardiversity>

Think about all the different ways to look at demographics across your organization. If data are not being collected or are not made public, find out why and propose changes going forward. Review data from similar organizations and consider how your organization compares.

Pods should upload links to publicly available demographic data to the URGE website as well as investigations or proposals/plans to collect data. We also encourage pods to post on their organization's website, and share over social media (#URGEoscience & tag @URGEoscience). Sharing deliverables will propagate ideas, foster discussion, and ensure accountability.

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 B. Fernando, Student-led diversity audits: A strategy for change, Eos, 102, <https://doi.org/10.1029/2021EO154085> (2021).

This Deliverable from the USGS Hazards Pod is organized as follows. First, we provide links to the online resources we found that describe the demographics of our organization from several viewpoints, noting which items are publicly available, as well as how up-to-date they are. We then provide a few takeaways from this information, including comparisons with demographics of university faculty. Next, we provide links to EEOC guidance, Executive Orders, and USGS programs that specify the statutory framework and organizational efforts related to diversity and equity in the USGS workforce. After that is a list of recommendations, and finally there is an example of another federal agency's online presence with respect to diversity.

This is what was found by GHSC/ESC/VSC pod at USGS on demographic data (public and internal facing) as well as stated goals for representation, and/or proposals to collect and report demographic data.

- **The link(s) to demographic data at our organization are here:**

- Demographic data for US Government employees can be found here: <https://www.fedscope.opm.gov/>. One can drill down to individual agencies including USGS, and data includes race and ethnicity, gender, occupational category, and pay grade, among other things.
- Summary demographic data for the USGS is also publicly available here: <https://bestplacestowork.org/rankings/detail/IN08>
- Detailed demographic data for the USGS are available internally (available to all USGS employees, through the internal website of the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity: <https://internal.usgs.gov/ops/eeo/diversitystats.html>) through the beginning of 2017. Data are broken down by race, gender, and disability as a function of job classification and pay grade, among other things. (*Questions: What is the reason for not making this public? What is the reason for stopping in 2017?*)
- We are unaware of any demographic data collected on the (relatively small number of) people who come to work at the USGS other than as formal federal hires, such as Interagency Personnel Agreements or contracts. Apparently the DEO Office collects information on the demographics of applicants for USGS job opportunities – how does the applicant pool differ from existing staff demographics?
- The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM)--<https://www.opm.gov/fevs/>--includes demographic results by agency, publicly for DOI and internally for USGS ([here](#)). There is also a FEVS—Temporary, Term, Seasonal, and Intermittent (FEVS-TTSI).

- **What do the demographic data tell us?**

Eleanour Snow created graphics based on the FedScope data; see document at

https://teams.microsoft.com/file/65EDF318-883D-4687-ADE4-D23B7B06A31D?tenantId=0693b5ba-4b18-4d7b-9341-f32f400a5494&fileType=pdf&objectUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fdoimsp.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FHazardsUrge%2FShared%20Documents%2FSession%203%20deliverables%2FUSGS_STEMdata.pdf&baseurl=https%3A%2F%2Fdoimsp.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FHazardsUrge&serviceName=teams&threadId=19:fbdb8458f2df84ffab5e66ef00b0fa9fb@thread.tacv2&groupId=d80a5e67-c37d-450c-84b5-b1a93d55edda

Qualitative takeaways are that among USGS STEM employees, the percentage of under-represented minorities: has increased from about 5% to about 7% during the past ~13 years; decreases as grade levels increase; and is highest in the 35-49-year-old age range. The percentage of underrepresented minorities is markedly higher in engineering (11%) and IT/math (17%) job series than in the physical sciences (6%) or natural resources/life sciences (5%); however engineering and IT/math represent <20% of all USGS STEM employees.

- **How does your organization compare to others, or to the field as a whole?**

- The USGS workforce (as of 2017) is approximately 87% white, 4% Black, 4% Latinx, 4% Asian, 1% Native American, <1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and <1% multi-racial. It is approximately 63% male and 37% female. Approximately 7% are people with disabilities.
- Of those with jobs classified as “Geology” or “Geophysicist”, approximately 6% are minority, 34% are female, and 4% are people with disabilities.
- For those with GS13-15 positions, which are most closely comparable to university faculty

positions, 4% are under-represented minority and 26% are female. The representation of minorities at these GS levels is similar to geoscience faculty positions (~4%, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41561-019-0519-z>).

- **Public goals on demographics or increasing representation:**

- Are there general goals stated at your organization for achieving representation?
- "Management Directive 715 (MD-715) is the policy guidance which the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) provides to federal agencies for their use in establishing and maintaining effective programs of equal employment opportunity under Section 717 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 [*and subsequent legislation*]"; see <https://www.eeoc.gov/federal-sector/management-directive/frequently-asked-questions-about-management-directive-715> for a fairly clear explanation. Some takeaways:
 - Participation in the workforce by ethnicity, gender, and disability status is compared with the demographics of the Civilian Labor Force (compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics); under-representation constitutes a "trigger" which mandates an effort to identify barriers; triggers and barriers are to be reported in the agency's MD-715 report, due annually on February 28 of the year following the year that is being reported.
 - Similarly, "If there is a situation where the participation rate for a group occupying a higher level position is lower than the corresponding participation rate in the lower level feeder pool for that position, the agency should review its merit promotion processes and may also need to review related processes, such as career development programs, appraisal systems and/or awards programs, for barriers affecting the group's advancement to the next level."
 - The most recent MD-715 report we found that covers the USGS is the FY2018 Dept. of Interior report, at https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/final-fy-2018-doi-md-715-signed_1.pdf
 - The USGS is a second-level reporting agency, but its reporting for FY2018 is not broken out in the FY2018 DOI overall report.
- Executive Order 13583-- Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce was issued August 18, 2011. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/18/executive-order-13583-establishing-coordinated-government-wide-initiative>

This executive order directs federal agencies to "develop and implement a more comprehensive, integrated, and strategic focus on diversity and inclusion as a key component of their human resources strategies", and includes specific planning and reporting requirements.

- Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government was issued January 20, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>

This executive order states: "executive departments and agencies (agencies) must recognize and work to redress inequities in their policies and programs that serve as barriers to equal opportunity."

- "The [USGS] Diversity Council strives to achieve a USGS workforce that reflects the demographics of our Nation..." (<https://www.usgs.gov/about/organization/science-support/human-capital/diversity-council>).
 - The USGS has a "Diversity Statement" that dates to 2010 (<https://prd-wret.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets/palladium/production/atoms/files/DiversityStatement.pdf>). It does not lay out any specific demographic goals, instead stating that "...the USGS.. affirms our commitment to 'employing the best people to do the best job possible and recognize the importance of reflecting the diversity of our customers and our Nation.' "
 - The USGS has a "Diversity and Inclusion Plan" that dates to 2010 (<https://prd-wret.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets/palladium/production/atoms/files/DiversityInclusionImplementationPlanSept172010edited.pdf>). The plan does not lay out specific goals or targets for increasing representation; instead, it states that "Our goal is to increase workforce

diversity at the USGS while retaining the talent we need today and in the future.” It lays out three strategic goals for increasing workforce diversity:

1. “Retain and Recruit”,
 2. “Be Accountable and Responsible”
 3. “Understand, Engage, Include, and Share”
- Are there measurable goals stated at your organization for achieving representation?
 - Federal agencies do not have wide latitude for setting measurable goals for achieving representation. The points below are from <https://www.eeoc.gov/federal-sector/management-directive/frequently-asked-questions-about-management-directive-715>:
 - “Neither EEOC policy nor MD-715 requires agencies to establish racial or ethnic preferences or quotas. Indeed, federal anti-discrimination laws and EEOC's policies require that agencies prohibit discrimination, including "reverse" discrimination.”
 - “Before a federal agency uses ethnicity or race as a basis for an employment decision, the agency must satisfy strict scrutiny to ensure that the decision promotes "compelling" government interests and that it is "narrowly tailored" to serve those interests. Again, the agency's General Counsel should carefully review the DoJ Memorandum before establishing any preferences.”
 - The DoJ Memorandum refers to ““Post-Adarand Guidance on Affirmative Action in Federal Employment" (July, 1995)
 - It is not clear to what extent it would be consistent with law to ensure that a certain number of people on an internal USGS committee would be from underrepresented/underserved groups
- **Policy or proposed policy for collecting demographic data at your organization:**

The following recommendations will be presented to USGS leadership for consideration:

1. The USGS Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (DEO) has in the past provided detailed demographics of the USGS workforce, available on the internal USGS intranet. These reports end in 2017. We recommend that USGS leadership request the DEO office to resume producing these reports, and provide whatever support DEO needs to do so. We also recommend that these reports be made publicly available on the internet.
2. Demographic data on job applicants is collected and sent to DEO, although these data are not currently made available even within USGS. We recommend that USGS leadership request the DEO office to track applicant data and make reports on applicant demographics available. This information could help evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to increase representation in job applicant pools.
3. We recommend USGS leadership request the DEO office to perform data-quality analysis on the available demographic data, particularly to understand how non-response to questions about race and ethnicity may be skewing reported demographics.
4. We recommend USGS leadership request the DEO office to provide center-level reports on workforce as well as applicant demographics to centers.
5. We recommend that USGS leadership ensure that the budget and staff of the DEO office is sufficient, to make sure that this office has the staff and other resources to provide the recommended and required demographic reports, as well as adequate resources for all of its functions. In particular, the DEO office should have the necessary resources to comply in a timely way with annual reporting requirements under MD-715.
6. We recommend that demographics for USGS-wide awards be tracked and published openly.

The following recommendations are for centers and other units within USGS:

1. We recommend that centers track demographics (through optional self-identification) and set representation goals for: invited seminar and workshop speakers, student interns, internal award recipients, and any other opportunities or recognition being given at the center level.

We recommend that centers also track how many of their student interns continue in STEM fields.

2. We recommend that centers track CEO activities targeting underrepresented minority communities, develop measurable goals and deliverables for these activities, and track the impact of these activities when possible.
3. We recommend that campuses/Centers and other entities consider implementing Open Houses, perhaps focusing on inviting school groups from disadvantaged areas.

The following recommendations will be presented to USGS leadership for consideration. Although they are off the topic of demographics, they were inspired by reading Dr. Tamara Pico's paper on John Wesley Powell:

1. We recommend USGS leadership develop guidelines for including relevant information on historic racial injustice in current USGS-produced education and information materials including informational signs, plaques, brochures, fact sheets, teaching modules, and webpages.
2. We recommend USGS leadership, centers, and other units within USGS revisit their existing education and information materials and update them as necessary. As one specific example, we recommend USGS leadership invite Dr. Pico to edit John Wesley Powell's "staff profile" on the USGS website to accurately reflect the racism in some of Powell's work.
3. We recommend that the USGS leadership encourage the practice of including indigenous land acknowledgments in presentations and published products.

- **What did you learn about other organizations (or in general) while investigating demographic data?**

- The US Forest Service (Dept. Of Agriculture) Civil Rights web page at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/civil-rights> is clearly organized and includes a link to the USFS FY2019 MD-715 report. That report is very detailed and gives clear examples of actions the USFS took when particular groups were found to be under-represented in certain job categories.

How can we make this sustainable at the Survey? What do we do when politics don't support DEI mission?