



Policies for Working with Communities of Color

The GSA staff URGE pod found the following information on policies for working with Communities of Color. This information includes notes on possible areas of future growth and suggested plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

Our pod reflected on policies and practices for working with Communities of Color where staff are involved in carrying out activities that serve the broader geoscience community.

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:**

- *Governance and Organizational Leadership*
 - Staff assist with implementing directives from organizational leadership and member governance. GSA is guided by two position statements: 1) [Diversity in the Geosciences Community](#); and 2) [Removing Barriers to Career Progression for Women in the Geosciences](#).
 - Strategic priorities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are highlighted in the [Decadal Strategic Plan](#).
 - GSA's current governance structure includes a standing committee that addresses Diversity in the Geosciences.
 - GSA is also currently addressing DEI through GSA Council-implemented ad hoc committees and working groups in place to assess [four key areas](#) of governance and planning: 1) Review of nominations and awards recruitment, selection, and processes; 2) Review of criteria and processes for election to Fellowship; 3) Measuring DEI priorities, strategies, and action in GSA and realigning these with the Decadal Strategic Plan; and 4) Revising the GSA Diversity Position Statement to more strongly articulate GSA's DEI priorities.
 - The GSA Diversity Working Group invited the URGE staff pod to provide input.
 - *Discussion: Expanding pathways to increase student representation across governance and organizational leadership could increase voices and advocacy for Communities of Color. Staff could have a role in helping with outreach activities to build student engagement in GSA governance and leadership. It seems important to orient incoming leadership from all career stages towards best practices for keeping leadership activities with justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion for marginalized groups in the geosciences.*

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- *Funding Opportunities and Awards*
 - Staff provide administrative support for available funding opportunities and award programs at GSA. The following award programs strive to celebrate achievements and serve individuals with diverse backgrounds, including individuals from Communities of Color.
 - [Randolph W. "Bill" and Cecile T. Bromery Award \(Bromery Award\)](#)
 - [Scholarship for Expanding Representation in the Geosciences \(ERG Scholarship\)](#)
 - [On To the Future \(OTF\) Program](#)
 - *Discussion: These funding opportunities and award programs are also creating space for communities of geoscientists to be seen, recognized, supported, and celebrated in their professional communities. Fundraising priorities for program staff and development could reaffirm investments in Communities of Color within the geosciences and help indicate to Communities of Color how well organizations in our scientific discipline support people of color through their career pursuits. We noticed that these opportunities are for individuals and started thinking about what funding opportunities and awards could look like for supporting communities of color and their priorities.*
- *Educational Outreach and Engagement*
 - Staff support students and members from diverse backgrounds with navigating options for sharing their stories and building awareness of their experiences, so they may impact the geosciences and allow others to feel seen, recognized, and celebrated in the broader geoscience community.
 - GSA's guest blog, [Speaking of Geoscience](#)
 - [GSA Foundation's News & Events page](#)
 - Staff provided administrative support for On To the Future (OTF) Community Hour events in 2020, which was a community-driven idea from students.
 - GSA's GeoCareers programs provide events, activities, workshops, and exploratory career resources aimed at helping support student and early career professional development (staff supported).
 - GSA staff representatives (1-3 people) attend meetings & gatherings for programs and professional societies that center scientists from Communities of Color to meet students, see their work, share student and early career professional opportunities, and contribute support for pursuing a geoscience career (i.e., On To the Future, Graduate and Undergraduate Research Grants, Scientists in Parks, GeoCorps America). Examples of previously attended meetings appear below:
 - American Indian Science and Engineering Society (most recently attended meeting was AISES 2020)

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- Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (most recently attended meeting was SACNAS 2018)
- National Association of Black Geoscientists (most recently attended meeting was NABG 2020)
- Staff meet with students working through internship opportunities/research experiences (i.e., [UNAVCO](#), [GeoFORCE](#))
- Some staff reported attending local and community-based DEI workshops & summits in the Denver and Boulder area to build knowledge and competency for working with BIPOC individuals and communities.
 - “Building the Foundation: Exploring Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” course from [the Center for Diversity and the Environment](#) (staff member attended in Broomfield, CO November 2018)
 - Tri-state Shifting Towards Equity Summit sponsored by NAAEE (staff member attended virtually in July 2020)
 - [Summit for Action](#) (staff member attended virtually in August 2020)
 - [ADVANCEGeo](#) Implicit Bias Training (multiple staff members attended virtually in January 2020)
 - All Hands Equity Training with Nita Mosby Taylor (all staff members will attend in May 2021)
- Staff help maintain GSA as an active member of the Institute for Broadening Participation (IBP)
- *Discussion: Educational and outreach activities for working/serving Communities of Color tend to concentrate on student and early career programming. Current approaches might be strengthened by broadening how the staff community infuses DEI practices into their ongoing work, which could open new opportunities for building trust and relationships with Communities of Color through business practices.*
- **GSA Annual Meeting**
 - Staff traveling to meeting events abide by GSA’s [Events Code of Conduct](#) and train to help support [Respectful Inclusive Scientific Events](#) (RISE), which are safe, professional, inclusive events where participants with diverse backgrounds and points of view feel welcome and can count on being treated with dignity and respect.
 - The [On To the Future](#) (OTF) program is coordinated by GSA’s Diversity and Career Officer and supports students from diverse communities to attend the Annual Meeting by offering partial travel funding, full meeting registration, one-year membership, mentorship, and special sessions with leadership while at the meeting.
 - Staff have worked on strategies to help highlight and clarify DEI activities and resources for Annual Meetings, examples follow:
 - [Ethics, Diversity and Inclusion at GSA 2020 Connects Online](#)

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- GSA Connects 2020 guidance on [how to make a land acknowledgement](#)
- Local organizing committees for annual meeting activities could weave in local community engagement into meeting activities.
 - 2019 GSA Annual Meeting Icebreaker Program in Phoenix, AZ
- *Discussion: Our organization has meetings staff that work with a local organizing committee, it does seek local collaborators and can strengthen and leverage local collaborations with Communities of Color. These types of activities are planned and completed over multiple years with administrative support from staff, which could be an asset for long-term relationship building in the planning process. In practice local collaborators could be added anywhere from early development and/or proposal of the meetings or added at a later stage. Local collaborators can be included as oral or poster presenters and/or provided space as part of the meeting events. Staff attendees involved with technical and non-technical events might be helpful in leveraging local community members and businesses. The Annual Meeting website freely shares resources on how to complete land acknowledgements when presenting research results at GSA meetings.*
- **Additional Notes on GSA's Societal Policy Roles**
 - GSA's staff includes a Director of Geoscience Policy who actively works with GSA Committees, GSA Divisions, a Congressional Science Fellow, and a Science Policy Fellow on partnerships, events & briefings, articles, and letters & testimony that support GSA's policy roles and advocacy of critical issues relevant to the geoscience discipline.
 - [GSA joined 49 organizations](#) to support Congressional resolutions to denounce anti-Asian discrimination as related to COVID-19 (April 2020)
 - GSA joined a coalition of 80 scientific organizations to [send a letter](#) supporting a study to assess the influence of systemic racism in academia and identify strategies for change (Sept 2020)
 - GSA joined as an active partner of the [Society Civic Science Initiative](#) (Fall 2019)
 - *Discussion: Typically staff outside of the policy group engage with GSA's policy roles in terms of their broader disciplinary, organizational, and programmatic impacts, and engage to a lesser extent on the level where local Communities of Color exist.*
- **What worked well in these interactions?**
 - Staff are mindful in creating spaces for sharing and elevating the stories and experiences from individuals recognized and celebrated within GSA programs.
 - It has been valuable to have staff pursue relationship-building collaborations with community groups in the sciences who are actively engaged in DEI work and/or

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- centering Communities of Color. Staff members like our Diversity and Career Officer and Ethics and Compliance Officer have positively contributed to organizational relationships with groups explicitly thinking about DEI, intersectionality, and the BIPOC communities within our discipline. Broader staff engagement with this work would be crucial and could help build trust, create partnerships, increase organizational contributions that support DEI, and culturally support BIPOC community members in pursuing a fulfilling geoscience career.
- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**
 - Items that could be better addressed: Staff work typically centers around serving the broader geoscience community or other GSA staff, where the focus can be on the disciplinary, organizational, and programmatic impacts of our work. As staff we are likely missing opportunities to think about the priorities of local Communities of Color in a broader societal context that could intersect with headquarter operations and geoscience. To address this in the future, we want to build a staff framework for infusing DEI into staff work practices and strengthening collaboration with Communities of Color. We want to encourage staff to actively think about local community opportunities as part of our organizational work and consider asking community member(s) of color as collaborators in the early stages of projects.
 - **Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?**
 - Ongoing projects can explore possible pathways for strengthening local community engagement and improving accessibility of existing programs/events within the local/regional community where they operate, based on the priorities of the local Communities of Color.
 - **Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with Communities of Color?**
 - A framework staff can use to think about their work through a DEI lens, with the goal of strengthening collaboration with Communities of Color (provide examples of modeling the way to approach building partnerships based on removing barriers).
 - Could include staff resources to help make land acknowledgments a standard practice among GSA business activities.
 - Model how to approach crafting and sharing a land acknowledgment, and provide resources (i.e., written guidance, a template presentation slide) for people to use.
 - Make a recommendation to provide land acknowledgements at committee meetings and staff business meetings. Helpful link: <https://native-land.ca/>.
 - Additional planning for community outreach and partnerships related to GSA meeting activities.

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- Joint meetings with groups that center Communities of Color in the sciences or otherwise to strengthen the perspectives advancing the geosciences.
- Identify local organizations we could develop partnerships with that also center and serve Communities of Color in their work.
- Explore the possibility of how we could acknowledge and invest in Communities of Color where we are using occupied land to host meeting activities.
- Options for developing and sharing culturally relevant geoscience-related programming from meetings based on local community priorities.
- Point to businesses near Annual Meeting locations that are BIPOC-owned for meeting attendees.
- Coordinate with meetings staff to explore the possibility of proactively guiding more balanced representation among vendors at the Annual Meeting that could help us support community building with Communities of Color (i.e., those who use/sell ethically sourced resources, local BIPOC business owners, etc.)