

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for University/Organization - Deliverable

Pods may have members from a range of career stages and involvement in the development and execution of research projects, and pod members may have different experiences or different perspectives when responding to these questions. Consider this in the summary document and focus on capturing responses that are representative of the range in your pod.

THURSDAY PODLET (Structure and agenda with Tuesday's group in mind)

- **Previous work with communities of color at our organization:**
 - *There have been no official JIRP efforts (for recruitment or projects) specifically designed for communities of color nor any long term lasting "official" relationships with the Tlingit Tribe and greater Alaskan Native community.*

- *Certain scholarships are reserved for Alaskan residents, but not specifically for prospective students of color.*

- **What are some challenges JIRP has with creating projects and engagement with communities of color?**
 - *We don't have any local relationship that is ongoing/long-term (i.e. no year-round Juneau operative) with local communities. Long term outlooks are crucial for this work.*
 - *The traditional focus of the JIRP curriculum may limit the reach to potential students groups. We are currently expanding and clarifying our curriculum goals and range to include more interdisciplinary and expansive topics.*
 - *Storytelling, art, and history work will be more intentionally introduced. This offers opportunities for more collaboration outside of "traditional" earth science departments*
 - *We will be focusing on recruiting from general STEM fields such as chemistry and physics rather than just Earth Science.*
 - *This will help us tap into some subjects/fields that have a wider range of representation on average than the Earth Sciences.*
 - *Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Computer Science, Art, History, Math, etc.*

- **What are some solutions and ways to improve JIRP's current projects and research efforts?**
 - 1. Respect & Representation
 - Developing relationship with indigenous people/communities
 - Takes multiple years to start/establish relationship
 - Long-term outlook important
 - *Specific solution idea: Juneau-based representative*
 - *Potential reachout collaboration with <https://www.sealaskaheritage.org/>*
 - *Asking Tlingit people what interests they may have regarding the icefield and its watershed that JIRP students could potentially use our personnel and resources to monitor or research yearly.*
 - Data Sovereignty: new to some people in this group
 - Who owns/has most access to data of research done on these lands?
 - What kind of power/autonomy extended to tribes?
 - Shadow of autonomy given to native communities versus actual autonomy given. We want to make sure any data we produce for and with tribes are primarily for that tribe and under the autonomy and authority of that tribe. Essentially, in this scenario, our operation could serve as working power to carry out the efforts and data interests of the Tlingit tribe.
 - Ask indigenous community what they would like or find useful for JIRP to research

- Data sharing
 - Can we be producing data for the tribes to have sovereignty over?
- Difficulty of native retention in STEM
 - *Specific solution idea: We already have scholarships specific to Alaskan residents -- could this same effort be done for native applicants (perhaps, especially, native Alaskans and Tlingit applicants)?*
 - *More funding is needed for many such solutions! Increasing funding is an overarching goal.*
- *Research topics: JIRP has a long-term focus on the physical science of the icefield. We've had less focus (though not zero) on downstream impacts of the icefield, and its changes, that may be especially relevant and useful to local communities.*
 - *There is potential for long-term collaboration with other groups whose research and interests may benefit from JIRP-maintained data sets. E.g. impacts of glacier run off on inlet water chemistry, local fisheries, etc. This would likely be off-season work, but which could be incorporated into on-season motivation, curriculum, and form a basis of student interaction with local communities.*
- 2. Community engagement diversification
 - We have advantage of being recurring (constant monitoring)
 - However, JIRP student group is temporary every year
 - *Specific solution idea: Create a storytelling tradition in JIRP. Also introduce a better year to year record of the research that happens. At this point, the main thing that students learn about last year's projects is just seeing them when designing our own Atlin or AGU presentations. Could each year's work be put into the next year's curriculum? The temporary nature of the rotating population is another strong reason to have a long term Juneau representative*
 - Importance of engaging the community using other ways
 - Different forms of telling / different venues (other than Mendenhall Center and Atlin; could we go to any outdoor activity or educational venues? Art venues?
 - Gallery opening at the end of JIRP of student work could be another form of community engagement.
 - Difference between superficial engagement versus community-immersed event
 - Research and think of existing Juneau traditions that JIRP could create a presence and involvement with.
 - Create a community-involved event with ongoing engagement
 - *Specific solution: Could we have some relationship with the local public libraries?*
- 3. Importance of history and connectivity

- Data needs to be accessible
 - Most folks will not be scientists
 - Emphasis on diverse and clear forms of scientific communication
 - Zines, storytelling, art, publications, etc.
 - More reason to perhaps develop relationships with something like a local library where community members could peruse and interact with archives and yearly contributions of scientific reports, art, zines, etc.
 - Broaden JIRP's academic connectivity to community
 - History of land
 - Place names for students
 - Key that we learn all of the place names of our environment and their meanings (As well as the significance of place names)
 - Have JIRP focus on educating students about native places and names
 - "Without place names our ability to distinguish, distill, and describe elements of physical and metaphysical is severely limited"
 - Establish a stronger "history" aspect in the JIRP curriculum.
 - Could include local historians
 - More than just "JIRP lore" which does exist currently, but a deeper history of the entire region and land emphasizing native history.
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- **Are there things we need to help us with this process?**
 - **Funding is key!** Whether it be to establish more money to distribute to applicants that are people of color, to expand the curriculum (pay the faculty who come, introduce new topics, etc.), establish local relationships, or create meaningful local traditions and community relationships, funding is a foundational step that will help us achieve these goals.
 - JEDI Steering Committee is currently working on various fundraising and grant seeking efforts.
 - Potentially will use the "volunteer corps" of JIRP in the future to help with filling out applications for grants and funding
 - Long term local JIRP involvement
 - JIRP representative who lives in Juneau long-term is key to establishing a meaningful and lasting relationship with our local community.

URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for University/Organization -
Example Deliverable

This is what was found by the Juneau Icefield Research Program's URGE Pod on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

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- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:**
 - *To our knowledge, there have been no JIRP projects specifically targeted at communities of color*
 - *There are currently outreach efforts in the works with Upward Bound & ANSEP*

- **What worked well in these interactions?**
 - *Following baseline principles and best practices of:*
 - *Mutual benefit*
 - *Appropriate remuneration*
 - *Exchange over extraction*
 - *Willingness for JIRP members/leadership to lean into discomfort / awkwardness / newness of engaging with new people.*
 - *Striving to find humanity in ourselves and others*

- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**
 - *Short-term, discontinuous engagement*

- **Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?**
 - *We don't take into account local questions into driving JIRP research, and we should.*
 - *JIRPers give presentations in the Atlin community center and the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center at the end of each field season. Normally, they talk about the work they did last year, but they don't have the data from that year to show, nor the context of previous years to put it in. JIRP should support the students to present data from previous years, instead of just focusing on the questions that year's students are asking and the methods they are undertaking.*
 - *Incorporate (even) more storytelling approaches & artist in residence to widen the ways that we talk about JIRP and engage in conversations.*
 - *In curriculum / assessment - make sure to have space to have and demonstrate this non-quantitative learning. Make sure that it is set out at beginning of the summer.*

- Can JIRP be the connector between local communities (i.e. Juneau & Atlin) & the broader cryospheric / Arctic systems science research community? Can JIRP enforce that multi-returning-researchers / faculty have to demonstrate these principles that we want to be a part of JIRP science? Think about providing incentives and resources to particular experts that exemplify these approaches.
- Paid internships to dig more into the history of (JIRP) sciences with these local connections and 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?**
 - *Tlingit Oral History & Local history, place names - background reading & curriculum*
 - *The JEDI committee is engaged in, especially for EVC (& Atlin?)*
 - *Provide suggested/assigned readings, as well as physical copies*
 - *Action for all: SEND SUGGESTIONS TO MOLLY*
 - *Can share other parts of culture: music, arts, and more*
 - *Slow-down, approach thoughtfully*
 - *Start by learning from [SHI in Juneau](#)*
 - *Bring JIRPers to the SHI Tlingit work, rather than bringing tokenized Tlingit representatives into the JIRP space for a limited time.*
 - *Long-term local connections, which would also be remunerated*
 - *Engage more than one person, for resilience in the relationship*
 - *Acknowledge that it may take a long time to build a meaningful relationship with the Tlingit community, and that we should be willing to give/volunteer/support as requested and as necessary, without expecting any immediate involvement in our organization from the Tlingit community. We need to build shared trust first before moving too quickly.*
 - *Provide the suggestions in this doc to JEDI committee / other JIRP committees*