

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



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

This is what was found by Kansas Geology at the Kansas Geological Survey and KU Department of Geology on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:**
 - The primary community of color that KU Geology and KGS have interacted with is the Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU). However, we recognize that while the KGS and KU Geology Department have not directly worked with Haskell, some faculty and/or staff are involved in associated programs:
 - [HERS program](#), which provides paid summer 8-week internships for Haskell students aimed at preparing Native undergraduates for graduate study in STEM fields. Students work with Haskell and KU faculty. It is affiliated with an NSF EPSCoR project and run by Jay Johnson.
 - Haskell [Bridge program](#), which provides research experiences for Haskell students to facilitate transitions to four-year universities. This program is focused more on biomedical research and run by Amy Burgin.
 - KGS and KU Geology do engage in international research projects, and groups have worked abroad with other communities. Specifically, KGS scientists in the geoarchaeology and soil science subfields have investigated prehistoric archaeological deposits within the US as well as overseas including Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Spain.
 - Individual faculty members have been involved in organization that focus on underrepresented groups such as SACNAS.

- **What worked well in these interactions?**
 - Relationships built with individual personal trusted contacts.
 - Forming relationships with the local communities, including the local authorities (i.e. fire station, police, local government).
 - When local communities allow you to come into these areas, conduct the research, and are willing to assist.

- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**
 - Lots of programs and interactions are very person specific. This has benefits of sustained personal engagement but means that programs can fall apart if one person



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leaves. For example, given demands of tenure process, sustainable collaborations are less likely to occur with pre-tenure faculty.

- Instead, it'd be better to have programs be formed independent of personal connections and instead built into the foundation of the program.
- Not having the technology or ability to maintain contact with the local communities, and your relationships with them stagnate and you lose the connections.
 - This can be better addressed in future plans by maintaining contact with the local communities, and keeping record of who your contacts are, and what was spoken of and what was discussed and agreed upon, etc.
- We have heard rumors of some unfortunate history around KU-HINU interactions that we don't know specifics of (tokenization).

- **Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?**
 - Increased levels of community engagement
 - Recognized minoritized groups involved. Sometimes these communities may not be communities of color, but rather other minoritized groups (first-generation, etc.).
 - Make results accessible to local communities:
 - Probably will be individual-based - based on individual existing trusted contacts.
 - Putting results in layman's terms, non-jargon writing that is digestible by non-science persons.
 - Go back and tell the communities the meaning of your research, and effectively communicate your results. This can be an opportunity for outreach as well. Participating in the local events. Think outside of the box, local conferences outside of AGU, GSA, AEG, etc.
 - Focused outreach → ask communities what they might be interested in and branch out to communities that are not usually contacted. Thinking outside of the bubble!
 - How do we figure out if our projects impact or might address communities of color?
 - Keep track of numbers, statistics, reports, local surveys, etc.
 - Professional involvement and mentoring
 - Sam Zipper and Erin Seybold at KGS will be involved in HERS program in future years as mentors through ongoing NSF project.
 - Hiring field techs and interns focused on community members (advertise at Haskell, other universities, and reservations or high school students, places outside of higher education)
 - Student outreach
 - Add Haskell and Baker universities to AWG email list and other email lists like geology, AEG, Paleontology, etc. We can make sure students of color are included and students can see the variety of options they can get involved in.



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- Identify KU and KGS scientists that could participate in KU TRIO Program that works with students in the KCK public school system.

- **Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?**
 - Guidelines on how to contact local communities for research or fieldwork. Ideally, local communities would also be involved in the work or informed of the results of the research. These guidelines should include topics like reaching out first, making first contact, starting the planning process early, contacting multiple people and leaders in the community, and making it obvious that we are willing to work with local communities.
 - Having a map or resource listing local grassroots environmental justice organizations would be helpful, like the map shown in the Bullard paper.