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

This is what was found by the Kimbell School of Geosciences Pod at Midwestern State University 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:**

- *Dalquest Desert Research Station:* The University's research station in West Texas is on ancestral Jumano land, which is described on the station's webpage: <https://msutexas.edu/academics/scienceandmath/ddrs/history.php>
- *Dr. Price: Research and field trips in Southern Oklahoma:* Trips occur on Native land without interactions with the community.
- *Dr. Katumwehe: Research in Uganda:* Dr. Katumwehe is Ugandan, and has included Ugandan organizations and researchers as collaborators throughout the proposal process.
- *Dr. Weiss: Research in Belize:* Dr. Weiss has included Belizean collaborators, regulatory agencies, and NGOs throughout the proposal and research process, as well as when planning broader impacts.
- *Biology Department Field Trip to Panama:* BIOL 4693/5693 Tropical Rainforest Ecology takes undergraduate classes to Panama every other year. The trip is run through travel organization ANCON with minimal interaction with local communities beyond tourism.
- *Biology Department Research in Dominica:* This research is conducted by a faculty member in collaboration with students from Dominica and under an MOU from local NGO, Operation Wallacea ([www.opwall.com](http://www.opwall.com)) . Students from Dominica are included as collaborators in the research.
- *Engineering and Physics:* Provides tours and other outreach to Cafe con Leche, a community education organization focused on Hispanic student success and college readiness
- *Study abroad:* MSU has several study abroad experiences, one of which is for HSHS 1023 Global Health and Wellness (taught in another college but taken by many students in STEM for the core curriculum). The trip gives students an understanding of how the global community is affected by changes in economic, political, and social factors, and students conduct independent research projects as part of the course, which brings them interactions with the local community.
- *Araneology:* The BIOL 5743 Araneology course is taught every other year and involves a field trip to Lake Tawakoni State Park, which is named after a Southern Plains Native American tribe. The field trip collects data on spiders of the park and supplies the data to the state park system, but does not involve local people or reference the park's history.



## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

- **What worked well in these interactions?**
  - *MOUs with local organizations provide clear expectations.*
  - *Inclusion of local researchers and organizations in proposal process and planning of broader impacts.*
- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**
  - *In 2019 the HSHS 1013 Global Health & Wellness class presented a course project that involved highly xenophobic and uninformed studies of the local populations, and the projects were later presented at a campus forum. Many of these issues should have been prevented by the course instructor. In the past, IRB review and approval has not been necessary for all undergraduate research, such as when it is course-based. The IRB process has been tightened up on campus, and have been adapted to create guidelines and approval processes for ethical undergrad research.*
- **Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?**
  - *In general:* Include background and history of lands to guidebooks, and add traditional names for features. On trips including students, cultural context should be discussed, including normalizing cultures pre-trip and going over respectful, non-intrusive interactions. When traveling abroad, local-owned travel companies should be prioritized when possible.
  - *Dalquest Desert Research Station:* Better citations regarding the history of the land and its relationship to tribal cultures need to be found and added online. This information should also be included in course materials and field research manuals that involve the research station.
  - *Research and field trips in Southern Oklahoma:* Work with and compensate an indigenous person with connection to the site to discuss the history of land with students?
  - *Research in Belize:* Implement broader impacts developed with communities, develop code of conduct for lab when doing fieldwork, include socio-political and cultural history of Belize when teaching about the geology and marine biology.
  - *Biology Department Field Trip to Panama:* Include cultural and political history of the country in course materials, as well as more opportunities for cultural experiences. This can be done by better planning through the tourism organization that the university works with in Panama.



## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

- **Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?**
  - *A better understanding is needed of how data generated in the Araneology class is handled and stored, and how students are taught about the Tawakoni.*
  - *The newly-implemented field research guidelines and planning documents need to include planning related to the locations and people of the region, to include land acknowledgement, involvement of local populations and cultural sensitivity.*