

# URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



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## URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for IUPUI

This is what was found by the Midwest Equity in Geosciences Alliance at IUPUI 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:**

- *Project SEED*
  - *Description: Project SEED is a program supported by the American Chemical Society to create opportunities for high school students from low-income families to have authentic research experiences in research labs. Dr. Lixin Wang has been working with the program since 2014 and Dr. Bill Gilhooly has been working with them since 2015. Each summer there labs host one to two high school students for two months. They design experiments that fit the student's interests and knowledge levels. So far, all the students who have participated are from minority groups, and many are first generation American.*
- *Felege Hiywot Center (FHC) Youth Farm Initiative*
  - *CEES works together with FHC on the Youth Farm Initiative project. Description: The youth farmers learn all aspects of the farming process (preparing the raised beds, planting, weeding, harvesting, selling the produce). Additionally, FHC is a field trip destination for summer camps, day care centers, etc., and the youth farmers conduct tours of the farm for visiting groups. In recent years, Aster Bekele (the founder of FHC) has incorporated more opportunities for the youth farmers to be exposed to scientists of various types, as well as other professionals, so that the youth farmers learn about a variety of career possibilities (and are encouraged to envision that for themselves).*
- *Kenya Project through CEES*
  - *CEES worked with elementary schools in Indianapolis and Kenya. Description: The goal of this project was to set up links between schools in the Indianapolis area and schools in Kenya (in Eldoret). Each Indianapolis school had a sister school in Kenya, and the students would Skype to discuss science (and*

*just talk and build relationships). The students on both continents were also taking part in After School Science Clubs, where they were to be engaging in experiential learning by doing student-led projects that would improve the environment and benefit their school and/or local community.*

- *Work with 5 community partners through courses (from Lixin)*
- Safe Urban Gardening Initiative
  - The Center for Urban Health launched a public science project to help communities fight against widespread lead contamination. The program aims at promoting safe urban gardening practices and enhancing food access in lower income communities of color in Indianapolis and beyond. To date, over 2,800 soil samples have been analyzed, with results and recommendations provided back to the gardener. This is a collaboration with KHEPRW, GroundWork Indy, and Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, and was funded by the Indianapolis Foundation and the EPA through their Environmental Justice Small Grants Program.
- BookWorms Initiative
  - Filippelli, Druschel and Shukle are launching a program in partnership with the Indianapolis Public Schools to engage students in a deeper understanding of the environment around them, and to understand and fight against Environmental Racism. This project is funded through an IU Racial Justice grant, and involves children collecting earthworks, which are extremely effective biomonitors of soil contamination, which we will then analyze and provide results back to the students. IN return, students will earn vouchers for a free book through a partnership with Barnes & Nobles bookstores.
- Lead Safe Homes program
  - Filippelli is partnering with researchers from the University of Notre Dame, the Marion County Public Health Department, the Indianapolis Public School system, and the Indianapolis Library to help families with a child diagnosed with lead poisoning to determine the discrete source(s) of lead in their home environment. This program is funded by a Lead Technical Studies grant from the Housing and Urban Development Agency.
- GeoPaths
  - This program, funded by the NSF, aims to enhance the diversity of geoscience programs by incorporating genuine community-based experiences into the curriculum. These are shaped as short modules that have been adopted in five different courses in the Earth Sciences Department, and has engaged a total of 12 community partners over three years.

**What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**

*The overall impression from the results of this survey seem to be that a majority of the members of our pod did not know of or know much about the projects that our department is involved in with respect to communities of color.*

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## URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color

This is what was found by the MEGA pod at Purdue EAPS on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

Our small sub-pod within the MEGA pod has not worked much with communities of color, especially given our specific sub-field of planetary science, but are working on finding ways to more broadly disseminate results to communities of color, interact with local students, and build meaningful relationships. One item we identified is in the organization of planetary analog field trips for students. So far the trips focused on sites of state and national parks and publicly available sites. We will work to include the history of the land and its peoples into these trips and seek out local liaisons and guides when appropriate, as well as work to identify local communities of color and institutions with which we can build relationships. Another item we identified is locally acknowledging indigenous tribes and the land on which our campus lies, given this is where our research is conducted. The DEIA Committee in our department has recently written a land acknowledgement statement which is now posted publicly to our department's website. Where we need resources and improved processes is to teach members of our department about the indigenous people whose homelands we now occupy and the history of colonialism in our area. Additionally, there are parallels between space exploration and colonialism, so we must broadly educate ourselves about colonialism and its effects, and ensure we avoid making similar mistakes, and that people of color are included in this exploration. Our department is working to increase engagement with local students and to disseminate our results to the public within the Lafayette area. Our department offers Passport Day, a one-day event for kids in Lafayette with demos about Earth, atmospheric, and planetary sciences. Several hundred children from the local community attend. The Imagination Station also has some permanent exhibits created by department members. Our EAPS department also employs a full time K-12 Outreach Coordinator, Steven Smith, who is very active in working with the local community to expand our education and public outreach portfolio. He works regularly with kids in school districts that serve communities with lower socioeconomic status. We could leverage these connections and build more meaningful relationships between our department and local communities of color.