

PlatyPod Pod Agreement

Geoscience is undeniably an important scholarship for modern society that attempts to learn about the intricacies and resources of our planet. The discipline explores the history of earth as well as how humans have and are affected by the planet. In more recent times more complex problems have come to influence society like that of climate change and scarcer natural resources¹. The challenges faced today require an infinitely wide set of experience and backgrounds². Unfortunately, geoscience has not achieved the same increase in diversity as other Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields¹.

In order to address this shortcoming, Unlearning Racism in Geoscience (URGE) was created by a group in the United States of America. The program's curriculum is designed to assist in improving accessibility, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (AJEDI) in the discipline. Groups, or "Pods", from across the community will work towards the objectives of URGE. URGE's primary objectives are to (1) deepen the community's knowledge of the effects of racism on the participation and retention of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people in Geoscience, (2) draw on existing literature, expert opinions, and personal experiences to develop anti-racist policies and strategies, and (3) share, discuss, and modify anti-racist policies and strategies within a dynamic community network and on a national stage.

The PlatyPod objectives are to discuss and evaluate racial justice, equity, and inclusivity at the School of Earth and Environmental Science (SEES) at the University of Queensland. Through discussion and evaluation, the Pod will endeavour to highlight areas for improvement at SEES, and work to suggest policy changes to the school.

To help guide and achieve the objectives PlatyPod is implementing the following guidelines to facilitate a safe and inclusive environment for URGE discussions.

1. Ground Rules

The following ground rules are effective for group interactions

1. Group members should be allowed the opportunity to contribute to discussion and are encouraged to speak.
2. Listen actively -- respect others when they are talking.
3. Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing ("I" instead of "they," "we," "you").
4. Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas and problems rather than people.
5. Instead of invalidating somebody else's story with your own spin on their experience, share your own story and experience.
6. The goal is not to always agree -- it is to gain a deeper understanding.
7. Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses -- they can be as disrespectful as words (even over Zoom!)

8. Assume everyone has good intentions but also acknowledge the impact of saying something that hurts someone else, even if it is unintended.
9. Maintain confidentiality unless explicitly permitted.

2. Making decisions as a group

There will be times when group decisions will have to be made on actions, and roles to fill. By each member fulfilling the ground rules from above the pod may only act with group consensus.

The group defines consensus as when all significant concerns are resolved, and a solution is reached where all member's needs and concerns are addressed.

3. Pod member roles and responsibilities

The Pod leader will be the main points of contact with URGE as well as submit files (deliverables, pod membership, etc.) to the URGE website.

The Pod will rotate and distribute tasks at the end of each meeting according to the next lesson material. The pod will meet once weekly where the following three roles will be rotated:

1. Moderator: set agenda for the meeting and move the pod through topics.
2. Timekeeper: keep the pod on track by monitoring and keeping time according to the agenda
3. Note taker: Take pertinent notes to be shared to everyone.

References:

1. Bernard, R. E. & Cooperdock, E. H. G. No progress on diversity in 40 years. *Nat. Geosci.* **11**, 292–295 (2018).
2. Medin, D. L. & Lee, C. D. Diversity makes better science. *Association for Psychological Science.* (2012).