

URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for Purdue University

This is what was found by Purdue EAPS Pod at Purdue 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:**
 - Work in East Africa (Ethiopia). Involved >20 East African PhD students (50 women). Professor co-advises PhD students at the local university for years.
 - Arequipa Nexus Institute, Peru, EAPS (4 postdocs, 1 Masters student, 2 Professors) plus 20+ collaborators from the Universidad Nacional de San Agustin. Project started in summer of 2018.
 - British Columbia, first nations
 - India, Deccan Traps research
 - Working with different native american nations
 - Various other research/fieldwork experiences also mentioned during discussion

- **What worked well in these interactions?**
 - Best interactions involve working with people at local universities, sharing resources, engaging with the local community
 - Personal interactions
 - Building friendships, mentorships
 - Having prior established relationships in Ethiopia (members on the project were from Ethiopia)
 - Provided funding/salary for fieldwork, had access to world class experts that were local to the region. Addressed the needs of the community (food/water/energy security).
 - Forming friendships between faculty and students through the scientific collaborations, especially working together in the field and lab. This was extremely apparent on multi-week field trip with 5 Purdue and 5 local UNSA undergraduate to sample and learn about soil biogeochemistry.
 - Engaging with (in this example, native communities) early, treat them as equal partners in research.
 - What are they interested in learning? Get their input, involve their students in the research (K-12, and active participants on the project)
 - Keep them informed (where will you be collecting samples?)
 - Follow a sample protocol: will samples be destroyed? Will they be returned? If you're making thin sections, how are they archived?
 - Ceremonies take precedence over fieldwork, be respectful that these might occur.
 - When there is continued participation from both parties, the students from the local community are involved in publishing/get the opportunity to visit with your University

- PI's are committee members to the students in these communities of color, they get the chance to visit with their lab in the US and vice versa, co-authors from these communities tend to be the first authors on the papers
- It's important to communicate w/ communities early
 - Also important to be aware of things that are going on with communities politically, socially, etc...
- Involving people whose lives have been dedicated to the area you're conducting fieldwork
 - Deccan: collaborators have relationships with local PI's, inherited relationships
 - Consciously developing relationships with collaborators in India
- Meet with resource managers of the tribal lands, ask what their needs are from an Earth science perspective
- When you incorporate how you're involving the local community, looks great for NSF review panels.
 - When it's not mentioned at all, bring it up in your review of the proposal
- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**
 - Language/cultural barriers
 - Can hire people on cultural etiquette, consulting projects. Get professional help/advice.
 - Ensuring that prior to starting research, the communities contribute to selection of critical questions and scientific objectives
 - Sometimes the local community is exploited: don't involve them in publishing/planning
 - Do differently: cause less disruption to the local points-of-contacts lives (give them adequate time to plan for field excursions, involve them in the science after the fieldwork).
 - Sometimes not a lot of advanced notice is possible
 - Returning to field sites, not taking into account how political climate changes over longer times
 - Opposition to project protocols later
 - Had to fundamentally change the design of the projects
 - If they had been more aware of larger interactions in the region between first nations people, they may have been able to do that project in a way that was more satisfactory both the local community and the scientists.
 - Sample collection/restoration
 - Need to discuss beforehand what will happen with the samples (oftentimes, community members will want their samples back, but as geologists we may need to do destructive analyses).
 - Scheduling conflicts with spiritual leaders
 - Need to be respectful of unplanned events like this, where you won't be able to access the land.

- Having a clear methodology on how samples will be handled, returned, condition of samples upon being returned
 - Researchers need to be aware of culturally sensitive information that they will not want published. Data sovereignty!
- **Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?**
 - Having resources to make the project more wide-spread
 - Translate results into simple terms or the local language, disseminate in workshops or field days
 - Collaborators have very good local knowledge, but they don't have the resources to carry out the research they want to do
 - If it didn't align with our own research goals, it wasn't pursued
 - This would be an easy way to strengthen the relationship, being more engaged with what the local scientists are interested in.
- **Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?**
 - One faculty member said they included (explicitly) in their proposal stages:
 - Compensation for a scientist at a local university for their help in identifying suitable collection sites, travel guidance, etc.
 - Funds for this scientist to travel to the US to attend conferences (i.e., AGU)
 - This could be something that should be emphasized in EAPS lab/field code of conduct (not sure if this exists yet? Will also be discussed in session 6).
 - One barrier discussed: cultural/language barriers
 - A faculty member mentioned that (at a different University), if you wanted to learn about how to be respectful in a different community/culture, that was something you had to learn on your own time.
 - This could also be something addressed within lab groups prior to starting lab/field work that engages with communities of color (i.e., meetings with a point of contact from within that community, and compensation for their guidance/help).
 - Consolidating critical questions to consider prior to starting work with communities of color (with input from these communities)
 - Hard to have a uniform policy for things like this, because communities are very different
 - Understanding the geography of a place is important, more than just borders
 - With Native communities, we've drawn arbitrary borders
 - Even if a space is on public land, it may be a sacred place to a community
 - Important to do your homework to understand the space you're conducting fieldwork

- E.g.: be aware of where you are, could be trespassing (could turn into really negative experiences)
- **Guidelines maybe better than policy, to be more flexible**
- Ensure students are tolerant
- Checklists for PI's, make everyone on the team think about how they can tailor things to their specific research
 - Contacting elders in the area, or leaders in other communities
 - How will sample collection be employed, archiving samples?
 - Publications and manuscripts, how will they be handled?
 - Have you discussed with the partners how the data will be published?
 - Educate students, go through a checklist. Think about if I've introduced students to the cultures/people they will be interacting with.
 - Include something like this in code of conduct?
- Make sure resource centers get copy of theses, publications
 - I.e., having public dissemination of data via workshops at the community center
- Having a policy for field trips, how we handle those, even day field trips
 - Taking tension out of going out into the field for the first time
- **Field gear**
 - Gets expensive, have resources for students in the department who don't necessarily already have these things.
 - Take these points to the "Field Committee"
- Important to not impose things you see in the media on the communities you're working with.
- Navigating language barriers, cultural/political sentiments
- Collaborations evolve over many years
 - Reach out to someone, ask if they want to work together
 - Be open to opportunities (students visiting the partner universities)
- Q: What are the policies in place for acknowledging the work/guidance/continued help throughout multi-year projects from external community partners?
 - There (doesn't seem to be) any formal policy
 - Because communities are very different, would be better to have guidelines rather than strict policy.
 - If you're dealing with humans in experimental work, then there's a standardized process that has to go through IRB/Purdue things
 - Not a lot of people working with communities of color on the Purdue campus

*Action items:

- Condensed the proposed guidelines for researchers conducting fieldwork with communities of color into a short list, submitted to members on the code of conduct committee to implement under the field work section. Will further discuss more concrete guidelines that encompass broader problems (i.e., day field trips/general field trips within the department, and the accessibility of geology to undergrads/grads during these trips).

