

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



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

This is what was found by UAF POD at University of Alaska Fairbanks on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

UAF works with a number of Native peoples on their lands here in Alaska, so much so that the UAF Institutional Review Board (IRB) has a fairly comprehensive statement regarding working with Indigenous peoples and on sovereign tribal lands: <https://www.uaf.edu/irb/indigenous>

It is worth noting two things:

- 1) this only addresses AK Natives / Indigenous communities and
- 2) IRBs are concerned with interactions with community members, and it is entirely possible (if not likely) that a researcher concerned solely with the natural world would not have had any professional reason to read the document.

If you are involved in research with communities of color, in the US or abroad, have you...

- **Actively sought out local collaborators / liaisons / guides? Why or why not?**
 - Were they included in the early development and/or proposal of the research or project itself, or added at a later stage?
 - TEK (Traditional Ecological Knowledge) Talks provide some good examples <https://sites.google.com/view/tektalks/home>
 - U.S. Array project: Beginning to get permits to put seismic stations across state; position created to reach out to Native communities, help create place-based association with people, to explain *why* are these stations being involved?
 - Gave people sense of ownership over or tie to project
 - Booths at Alaska Federation of Natives annual conference
 - Minto Flats seismic deployment
 - Working with Toghoththele Corporation
 - Local knowledge was instrumental; special acknowledgements routinely given

URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



- Collaboration with Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation (UIC), an Alaska Native Corporation
(<https://uicalaska.com/our-companies/uic-commercial-services/uic-science-llc/>) for logistics support for field work in Utqiagvik.

- **Actively sought to include local students in your research? Why or why not?**
 - Alaska Volcano Observatory has ambassador scholarship (opportunity to participate in UAF's International Volcanological Field School) - training opportunity, not active research

 - It appears as if it is often easier to train somebody at a research institution so that time can be saved in the field, resulting in potentially less local involvement.

- **Sought to build trust and form long-term connections and collaborations with local institutions if your project is multi-year / ongoing? Why or why not?**
 - Long term observation networks often rely on observations by locals and access to their resources (Internet, etc), building relationships is essential
 - For permitting a lot of communities request outreach as compensation

- Guiding Principles: Authentic Relationships <https://uaf.edu/irb/indigenous/index.php#4>
 - Build relationships that are sincere, enduring, and based upon mutual trust and respect. Genuine relationships are the cornerstone of mutually beneficial collaborations and equal partnerships.
 - Relationship-based research will emerge and survive through challenges with positive transformations on all sides of the partnership.
 - Enter into partnerships with the community and community members with the intention of building and sustaining a long-term commitment to the community.

- **Shared data and findings with the local/regional community in a way that is more accessible? (i.e., translating into different languages). Why or why not?**
 - Unaware of translations into different languages;
 - Data and findings are generally shared through local presentations, outreach to schools.

URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



- Attitude towards these efforts has changed for the better over recent career; significant increase in outreach efforts and local community involvement
- **Educated yourself and your group/team about local politics, culture, customs, and knowledge, including the history of colonialism / settler colonialism in the region? Why or why not?**
 - Happens on an individual level, currently no formal cultural competency training
 - Want ability to give what we do a little more meaning — affects people locally, need to integrate outreach component seriously
 - Working on federal lands can have really negative resonance based on history of how the federal lands were established without compensation or acknowledgement; should be aware of/trained about this before experiencing pushback
 - TEK Talk series provides some education <https://sites.google.com/view/tektalks/home>
- **Was sufficient time allocated to the process of working within the community's governance, customs, and priorities?**
 - For permitting and other related activities the research cannot commence until completed, so the timing requirements are built in.
 - A lot of this work is based on long-term trust building between individuals and institutions
 - IRB Guiding Principles establish time frame guidelines: <https://uaf.edu/irb/indigenous/index.php#5>
 - Concepts of time differ among various cultures. Tribal community timelines may be influenced by seasonal cycles, traditional events, and governmental functions. As one Native community member phrased it, “spiritual time” is the ultimate clock by which all events take place and goals or projects are accomplished.
 - Research culture sometimes creates pressure to “get things done quickly” without consideration for the communities’ time frame. At other times, the research process may move so slowly that Native community members question whether the original purpose of the project will meet community needs in a timely fashion.
 - Many Native people value time to process information. This time may be used to reflect on new concepts or translate the concepts into Native thought. Provide time for moments of thoughtful silence.

URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



● **Is respecting culture and customs included as part of your code of conduct? This will be addressed in Session 6 as well.**

IRB's "Guiding Principles" Speak on Respect: <https://uaf.edu/irb/indigenous/index.php#2>

- Treat all individuals and communities participating in research with respect. Remember, it is an honor to work with Alaska Native peoples in research.
- Purposefully seek understanding of the community and their reasons for collaborating in research. This understanding will guide the researcher in showing regard for the community.
- Respect and honor tribal sovereignty, cultural traditions, and diversity among and within Alaska Native communities.
- Be aware and respectful of existing community protocols. Many communities have specific protocols of who to go to and how to go about garnering approvals for all research activities.

● **Acknowledged local communities / Indigenous tribes in your research results?**

One specific study added a land acknowledgement to their AGU poster, acknowledging the land utilized for fieldwork in Utqiagvik, as well as the Fairbanks campus location, and furthermore acknowledging UIC Science and two more heavily involved UIC Science collaborators for their logistical support (e.g. providing snowmachines, warehouse space, weather forecasts)

<https://agu2020fallmeeting-agu.ipostersessions.com/default.aspx?s=63-3D-57-0B-03-A3-E7-A5-D1-78-DF-1C-68-26-FD-72&questview=true>

URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Acknowledgements

We acknowledge that our field sites are located on the traditional lands of the Iñupiat and that the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Troth Yeddha' campus is in the traditional homelands of the Lower Tanana Dene.

This project is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy's Atmospheric System Research, an Office of Science Biological and Environmental Research program, under contract DE-SC0019107. Support for this project was also provided by NASA Award 80NSSC19K1035.

We would like to thank UIC Science for their logistical support and especially Walter Brower and Jimmy Ivanoff of the DOE ARM research facility who helped make 2019 a successful and safe field season.

• Included local communities in your broader impacts in a meaningful way that builds on the community's identified needs and concerns?

- Is a general goal for PIs
- IRB Guiding Principles state Community Relevance:
<https://uaf.edu/irb/indigenous/index.php#11>
 - Be mindful that historical experiences directly relate to Native communities' present situations and impact the relevance of any research project.
 - Develop research projects that have meaning and purpose within the Native community's way of being and knowing.
 - Ensure that research findings are useful and accessible to participating communities by providing information that contributes to tribal-specific solutions, greater well being, and positive policy impact."

• Did these efforts leverage community members, and was that work compensated appropriately?

There are several collaborative projects which work closely with community members including the Alaska Arctic Observatory and Knowledge Hub, Fresh Eyes on Ice, UIC involvement mentioned above, etc. This is a goal for us.

URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



- **Considered and prioritized research questions and research locations based on needs of local communities, in addition to how impactful they are seen within academia?**
See "Community relevance" above