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URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for University/Organization - Example Deliverable

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

Pods may have members from a range of career stages and involvement in the development and execution of research projects, and pod members may have different experiences or different perspectives when responding to these questions. Consider this in the summary document and focus on capturing responses that are representative of the range in your pod.

I. Research Related Work and Collaborations with Communities of Color **D’Arcy, Gavin, Others**

I.a. Overview of Previous Interactions

The pod participants have conducted U.S.-based and international research and/or outreach projects which have directly involved, or taken place in countries with, communities of color in at least 6 locations. Research by one professor has been conducted in Turkey, the Philippines, and at Yellowstone National Park (USA); another professor has conducted research in Haiti and southeast Alaska; another works on STEM educational research focused on issues of environmental racism with public high school students and their chemistry teachers from communities of color throughout Chicago, and two others have partnered with public high school students serving underrepresented students in Chicago as part of a Geopaths project. The projects in Turkey, the Philippines, Haiti and Chicago all involved meaningful interaction with communities of color while projects in southeast Alaska and Yellowstone are examples where interactions were limited.

Other members in the department have also participated in past projects to the Northwest Passage through the Artic Ocean along the northern coast of North America.

I.b. Reflecting on specific work and Collaborations

Haiti and The Philippines: The research in **Haiti** provides a clear example of collaboration and engagement with communities of color in a country that has suffered from racial and environmental injustice both before and after its independence in 1804. The project centered on a direct collaboration with a Haitian non-governmental research and development organization (NGO) that provides a sanitation service to residents in Cap-Haitien. The NGO

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employees are majority Haitian and additional paid field assistants were hired from a pool of agronomy students enrolled at a local University. The project aimed to estimate the climate change mitigation potential of the sanitation service, relative to status quo. The beneficial climate effects of the service were highly plausible based upon prior knowledge, and could potentially help the NGO grow by enabling it to benefit from selling carbon offset credits. Generally, the NGO aims to use a social business enterprise model to serve local Haitian communities that lack access to improved sanitation. The research project therefore directly benefited from, and built upon, the mission, infrastructure, local knowledge and experience gained by over a decade of community engagement by the NGO, helped by the fact that many of the directors live locally in the city of Cap-Haitian. One of the field assistants hired for the project who distinguished themselves as a natural leader became the supervisor of the other interns throughout the project and joined as a coauthor on the main scientific publication arising from the research. The project conducted in **The Philippines** was built from day one in collaboration from faculty at the University of the Philippines who are members of the native population. The field work conducted there was done so under guidance related to social interactions and included direct interaction with local/municipal leadership, direct mentorship of Filipino undergraduate and graduate students, the production of educational materials to share with the public near sampling locations, the hiring of local guides/help, the incorporation of gift exchange with both Filipino team members, local governing bodies, and citizens, and use of best practices in sampling to protect site integrity. Local place names are always used to describe sample locations in publications and presentations. The success of the project may also be reflected in the successful application of a participating Filipino graduate student to a NASA summer internship program that allowed the student to spend time at UIC learning new laboratory methods.

Yellowstone National Park: In contrast, the examples from Yellowstone and southeast Alaska had less successful levels of engagement with communities of color. There are at least 27 tribes with historic/modern connection to the land that is now Yellowstone National Park (est. 1872). The land was surveyed for opportunistic reasons by multiple U.S. government led expeditions which ignored the expertise of native peoples. Field work in Yellowstone requires vigilant and rigorous methodologies to protect the natural landscape, but no partner efforts to protect and respect the cultural relevance of native peoples who have been forced from the area. No interaction with native peoples or other persons of color is inherently part of the experience of working in the National Park.

Southeast Alaska: Southeast Alaska was the land of the indigenous Tlingit and Haida communities and, since the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, much of the land is managed by the SEALASKA Native Corporation. The research project was an effort to map soil

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properties across southeast Alaska, using data collected by mostly, if not all, non-native scientists. Although the project was concerned with forests and landscapes familiar to and still managed by SEALASKA, there was limited engagement throughout the duration of the project with these communities.

Northwest Passage: Project members had a chance to interact with the local Inuit community in Pond Inlet, Nunavut, Canada. It is a small community in the northern Baffin Island with a very young demographic (nearly 35% of the population are under the age of 15). Participants had snacks with the locals (the expedition team prepared snacks for the whole community), discussed local economy and their way of life, played with the kids, visited some of the local stores, and invited a group of students to the icebreaker to chat about the 'science' that is happening throughout the cruise. Project members learned that though most still have a traditional, subsistence way of living (hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering), some are also surviving on a wage-based living (mining, arts and crafts). A lot have adapted modern technologies too (smart-phones, satellite tvs) and rely on basic imported goods. The project also had local Inuit guides: Mia Otokiak and Gibson Porter during the whole cruise. They participated in all the science activities, shared the sleeping cabin with participants, and were always ready whenever there were questions related to the indigenous communities.

I.c. What worked well in these interactions?

Working with existing, local actors: Working with an established organization in Haiti that was already deeply connected to the local community helped the new researchers quickly learn local culture, plan around the organizations existing logistical frameworks, and facilitate communication between. Establishing relationships with local researchers, government officials, local governing boards, and business people in The Philippines was key to both the successful completion of the project and the ability to participate in research there in a non-opportunistic way.

Providing a service first: The Haitian organization also offers its service as a business, allowing communities, families and individuals to self-identify their need for it voluntarily.

Language: The Haitian organization uses local Haitian creole to advertise and the new researchers and participants were encouraged to learn as much as they could, to enable communication across the entire operation and with locals.

Credit: Filipino collaborators were involved in paper publication and conference presentations and are co-authors on all work.

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

In the National Park setting, there was no connection with Indigenous/Native peoples that the land was taken from and historically very few BIPOC visitors in the park or surrounding communities. Future work should acknowledge this discrepancy.

A general plan for future work would be to amend 'best practices' training and documentation to include land acknowledgment + education in working with and towards incorporation of people of color in the areas being researched.

Logistics / expectations: Working within the operational norms of the sanitation organization in Haiti meant that sometimes employees were asked to stay late, or special access needed to be granted to the researchers. Although the organization was accommodating, it may be possible to avoid this by planning carefully and factoring in extra days for all tasks.

I.e. Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?

A land acknowledgement can easily be added to future publications/talks, as well as clear statements of appreciation to the acknowledgement sections.

Co-authorship on research products can be considered and offered to the community at the inception of the project, with clear attribution of contributions. Contributions that do not amount to co-authorship can be acknowledged in presentations, posters, reports and blog posts.

Reports and presentations can be produced, ideally in compensated collaboration with community members to ensure that the outcome of their efforts is understood and disseminated to the local communities.

II. Resources, Policies, Guidelines for Working with Communities of Color

Kathy, Andrew, Stefany, All

- Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?
- For Research and Collaboration?
- For Visiting and taking Field Trips ?
 - *E.g., Additional support/funding for early planning process of projects to include forming productive and mutually beneficial connections with communities, establish a*

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point of contact for interfacing with communities so as not to overwhelm with individual requests from researchers and collaborators

There are, at present, no obvious policies listed on the websites of our University's Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research. Consequently, our Department is in the initial stages of crafting a statement to be appended to our [and acknowledgement statement](#), affirming that we are committed to working with local communities of color (both in Chicago and around the world) in our field research and education efforts.

There are resources available, both at our institution and elsewhere, to help us craft this statement. The School of Public Health at UIC has [guidelines](#), which also link to this [guidebook](#). These resources are aimed at social scientists, but many guidelines have relevance for those doing urban geoscience research. In addition, the UIC Great Cities Institute shares [guidelines for participatory planning](#) with local communities, some of which might be adapted for STEM research.

Beyond UIC, the Alaska Native Science Commission's [Code of Research Ethics](#) provides a clear example of the views of Alaskan indigenous communities in working with outside researchers. Notably, the section on Obligations of the Partners has direct relevance to the statement we would craft, such as, "To do no harm to the community" and "To involve the community in active participation rather than passive acceptance."

III. Chicago, its People, its Land, and its Name

Joey, Judy, Paolo, Ellyn, Elena, Dan

- **What is Chicago's connection with Indigenous people?**

[State of Racial Justice in Chicago](#)

- Website that contains reports on the state of racial justice in Chicago.
- In a news report by [UIC today](#) in 2019, one of the reports for [American Indian Chicagoans](#) found six key areas that affect American Indians: population, housing, misrepresentation of American Indians in popular culture, education, economics and justice.

[Indigenous Tribes of Chicago](#)

- Historical information on indigenous people of Chicago. There are additional resources at the bottom of the page.

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["We're Still Here": Chicago's Native American Community](#)

- I am still reading this article. There is a section on the article (at the very end) on some of the recent educational outreach projects of the [American Indian Center of Chicago](#) to non-natives.
 - o Renovation of the Field Museum's Native American Hall to better represent the Native Peoples of the area.

Land Acknowledgment Ceremonies/Statements

- Several institutions in Chicagoland have held land acknowledgment ceremonies in the past, and/or have land acknowledgment statements on their websites.
 - o Northwestern University
 - o The Art Institute of Chicago
 - o [The Field Museum](#)
 - o [University of Illinois System](#)
 - UIC – [College of Medicine](#), [College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs](#)

[4000N](#)

- formerly known as Northwest Portage Walking Museum. 4000N is a community-led project by AIC in partnership with Chicago Public Art Group (CPAG) and Portage Park Neighborhood Association (PPNA). It aims to create an eleven-mile long walking museum between Chicago River and Des Plaines River along Irving Park, to showcase the history of the communities between these two rivers.

["A Racial Healing and Reckoning Project"](#)

- Aims to review monuments in Chicago for several issues (check the link).

[Mitchell Museum of the American Indian](#)

- technically in Evanston