

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for the University of Michigan
Department of Climate and Space Sciences and Engineering

This is what was found by UM-CLaSP URGE pod at the University of Michigan on Policies for Working with Communities of Color, and plans for improved processes or needed resources.

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization**

| Categories | Recruitment/Hiring | Retention/Climate/Culture |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Undergraduate | PICASSO REU, 100-level courses | MGU |
| Graduate | AGU Bridge, 2018 Booth at National Conventions such as National Society of Black Engineers and Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers | GREAT Workshop, Diversity Ally, MGU, CRLT Players, DEI Discussions, DEI Tea Time |
| Postdoctoral Fellows | UM Presidential Postdoctoral Fellows | Monthly Postdoc Discussions |
| Staff | | Staff representatives on JEDI committee |
| Faculty | DEI Committee members on the pre-search committee | CRLT Players, DEI Committee, JEDI, CRLT Inclusive Teaching Circle, Launch Committees, Dual Career Office |
| Research Initiatives | Greenland Climate REU, RELAMPAGO, Great Lakes Integrated Sciences + Assessment Programs | |
| Community Outreach | Great Lakes Tribal engagement (Marsik) | |
| Courses | | Climate Practicum 1 (applied climate projects) |
| University/CoE/Rackham | | CoE Day of Silence Ally Stickers, CoE ENGIN Talks, Rackham MORE, CoE Change it up, ADVANCE (RISE, STRIDE, and LIFT workshops) |



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- **What worked well in these interactions?**
 - *For the past several years, the PICASSO REU has successfully engaged a diverse cohort of undergraduate students in publishable research projects and developed students' self-efficacy with respect to participation and persistence in STEM education and careers.*
 - *2019 Greenland Undergraduate Research Expedition successfully recruited a diverse group of undergraduate students from different backgrounds and universities (University of Michigan, University of Albany, Virginia Tech University, and University of Greenland). The program taught students about science and policy associated with polar climate change and facilitated interaction with indigenous Greenlanders to better understand how climate change affects local communities.*
 - *In general, we have noticed greater success with our initiatives when there is large buy-in with faculty.*
- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**
 - *Sometimes indigenous communities are bombarded with proposals from PIs at the last minute or minority serving institutions are bombarded with REU recruitments, leading to frustration and damaging the potential for future collaboration. Communication and transparency are key target areas for improvement. This includes trying to establish more meaningful relationships and reaching out to all parties early on in the proposal process to create a more inclusive experience for everyone involved. For instance, the Greenland Undergraduate Research expedition team would like to make sure that future proposals for this expedition continue to focus on an experience that benefits all parties involved from the United States and Greenland. The team believes they can create a more inclusive experience for everyone by reaching out to all parties early on in the proposal process.*
 - *Lack of transparency of DEI initiatives within the department. Several initiatives are announced and advertised only by email. This method of communication is ineffective as emails easily get discarded or buried.*
 - *Burdens from department initiatives often fall heavily on a single person. These initiatives may be successful, but they disappear or fail in the absence of the person.*
 - *The university has ongoing initiatives and resources for faculty, but there is no mechanism to document or incentivize participation.*



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- Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?

Broad Recommendations

- *The creation of a department calendar for streamlining the transparency and effective communication of events*
- *Cohesion behind department strategic plans and DEI activities (communication and shared reports).*
 - *Follow up on outreach initiatives to foster trust and a sustainable climate within the department.*
 - *Avoid decentralization and design initiatives that complement one another.*
 - *Create evaluative metrics for initiatives to ensure that we maximize initiatives' effectiveness and they address department needs.*
- *The department should actively incentivize involvement in DEI initiatives from everyone (especially faculty support for undergraduate research -- capstone project)*
- *Increase the public face of the department.*
 - *Formalized mechanisms for outreach, which could also be included in the DEI handbook so that events are not forgotten.*
 - *Activity worksheets (such as a bank of lesson plans) for outreach to local schools.*
 - *Outreach initiatives should focus on building trust between communities. The communities we are targeting should be actively engaged in the planning process from the beginning.*
- *The department should get involved in community/university/college-wide initiatives, such as Xplore Engineering, Tech Day, Career Fairs, EEE day, DAPCEP, Elementary Exploring Engineering Day, Girls Who Code, CoE First Robotics in Detroit.*
- *The course curriculum should include broader societal awareness components (such as the Intersection of Race, Climate, and Poverty course in development) that connect our science to societal impacts.*
- *Students and staff should have formally recognized roles and input in the faculty hiring process. This includes opportunities to participate in the interview process and review application materials (such as Diversity Statements).*
- *With research outreach, the department should be open to virtual platforms to increase outreach to non-traditional groups.*

Proposed Events

- *Drink with a Physicist (public outreach events)*

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- *Greenland Climate REU proposal (submitted in partnership with Albany and Hampton)*
 - *PICASSO REU renewal proposal (continued collaboration with Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College, California State University - Los Angeles, Inter-American University - Bayamon, PR; UM CoE Center for Engineering Diversity and Outreach and MENGIN/MSTEM Academies)*
 - *DEI Committee members on pre-search committee (2020)*
 - *New course: Intersection of Race, Climate, and Poverty*
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- **Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?**
 - *We can consult with university resources such as the Dean of Students and ADVANCE in the development of our outreach efforts.*
 - *Additionally, CLaSP currently does not maintain an audit of DEI initiatives. This leads to the existence of unknown initiatives and decentralizes their execution. **We propose that CLaSP develops a “living” DEI Handbook to document previous and ongoing initiatives within the department.***
 - *This handbook would contain an audit of all previous, active, and planned DEI initiatives within the department and updated access to applicable College/University-wide initiatives.*
 - *Each initiative should be supplemented with documentation that includes the name(s) of the organizer(s), guidelines, and post-initiative assessments.*
 - *This document should be easily accessible and updated regularly with the ultimate goal of identifying critical DEI-related needs to be addressed.*