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

This is what was found by the (Bio)geochemistry Pod at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities 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:**

Because of the large number of researchers at our institution, we have focused on our department, and particularly the 3 URGE pods, in which students, postdocs, staff, researchers, and faculty all participate together. The leaders of the URGE pods developed a survey of the members to answer the questions in this session. Of those surveyed, very few members had any previous interactions with communities of color through education or research opportunities. And meaningful interactions (of which the communities benefited) were limited with a few exceptions.

Of note, The University of MInnesota Office of Public Engagement has started an interactive map to track community-engaged scholarship (not limited to communities of color) as additionally tracks some metrics with this scholarly work throughout the university.

- **What worked well in these interactions?**

Some common themes around successful interactions were:

- *activement collaboration with communities of color, from co-production of the research proposal al the way through to co-authorship of publications*
- *engagement with local students,*
- *training in cultural competency*
- *trust building*
- *sharing the results in a meaningful and accessible accessible way, either through consultations, making data publicly available, or sharing of non-technical reports.*

- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**

There were some themes that emerged through our survey results. One common issue people described was either the lack of training in local culture, customs, knowledge, etc. There is

either no focus on this in the project or their isn't enough time dedicated to doing so. Also, it was noted in discussions that this training does not exist for most people in geoscience education. There is little formal training around cultural competency, different knowledge systems, or environmental justice in the geosciences. A second theme was not engaging local communities in co-development of the research (communities were not consulted in the proposal stage) and not committing to true co-production of knowledge. There was also some sentiment that this work was just too risky to be undertaken by junior researchers because it takes a long time to develop trust and networks and cultural competency, and that type of progress to building a successful collaboration is not valued under the current systems of credit and reward (e.g., promotion and tenure) in academia.

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

One way that was discussed was to take the time to educate one's self or team on local cultures, knowledges, etc. Additionally, reaching out to others doing research in this area to develop local contacts could be a way forward, but it could be difficult if the networking doesn't seem sincere. Acknowledging past harms, showing up consistently to build relationships, and proving accountability will be necessary for moving forward. If attempts were not taken or were not successful in sharing knowledge in an accessible way, figuring out how to do this could still be feasible and valuable.

- **Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?**

There are many aspects to education (throughout one's career and project specific) that could be improved, as well as sharing of resources (for example on our department website) and recommendations for building research collaboration as described below.

- ***Recommendations on education**: E.g., course recommendation for department*
  Courses can be found at the Department of American Indian Studies Courses page
  - *Guidelines for working with indigenous communities*
  - *Educate student/researchers working on projects/research with indigenous communities about ethics and appropriate protocols before starting the work*
  - Ethics and Protocols:
    - http://nativescience.org/communities/code.htm

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

- ❏ http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/publications/knowledge.html
- ❏ https://www.nsf.gov/geo/opp/arctic/conduct.jsp#implementation
- ❏ *http://www.indigenousgeography.net/ethics.shtm*
- ❏ *https://en.unesco.org/indigenous-peoples/policy*

- ***Resources already available to share with others*** *(website, etc - working list)*
  - Native Land Map (North America)
  - Conferences
    - SACNAS: Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science
    - ANSEP: Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program
    - AISES: American Indian Science and Engineering Society
    - ATCEM: Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management
  - Centers/Networks
    - National Tribal Water Center
    - The Local Environmental Observer (LEO) Network
    - Alaska Native Knowledge Network / Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
    - Traditional Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Healing
    - Indigenous Foods Knowledges Network
    - Exchange for Local Observations and Knowledge of the Arctic
    - Facilitating Indigenous Research, Science, and Technology (FIRST) Network
    - Global Indigenous Data Alliance (GIDA)
    - American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)
    -
  - Resources
    - Native Nations Institute Resources List - University of Arizona
    - UNESCO Indigenous Peoples Knowledge Societies Resources
    - National Park Service List of Resources
    - Geoscience Alliance
    - US Fisheries & Wildlife Service - Traditional Ecological Knowledge
  - Literature/Articles:
    - Indigenous scientists seek inclusion for their knowledge and for themselves
    - Indigenous frameworks for observing and responding to climate change in Alaska
    - Keeping Indigenous Science Knowledge out of a Colonial Mold

    - Towards reconciliation: 10 Calls to Action to natural scientists working in Canada

- ***Research recommendations***
    - In general, it seems that projects involving local communities are welcomed and encouraged, and these projects can seek support from normal programs of major funding agencies. Several highly relevant funding opportunities exist to engage local communities, and some examples are listed below:
        - *NSF: Several programs in EHR*
        - *NASA: Indigenous people pilot*
        - *NOAA: species recovery grants to tribes*
        - *ACS: Community Recognition Grants*
        - *University of Oregon - Tribal climate change guide (a useful website listing a wide range of funding opportunities related to climate change and tribes)*
    - Communities to work with
        - Science Museum of Minnesota hosts a series of Science Fusion events, and the museum can be a useful gateway to reach out to a variety of local communities
        - Several faculty members in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences have extensive and successful experiences of working with local tribes and communities. These colleagues are the best resources for advice on local communities and on how to collaborate with these communities
    - Early Career Scientists and Tenure-track Faculty
        - Before initiating a major project involving local communities, always consult colleagues with prior experiences, mentors, and unit heads to seek institutional support, identify possible resources, and map out strategic plans
        - Be prepared for a long-term project because building relationships require a considerable amount of time and effort, and good relationships with the community are the key to success for the collaboration
        - For institutions that would like to promote research collaboration with local communities, it is critical that efforts devoted to initiating and developing research collaboration with communities can be formally valued in annual review and tenure evaluation processes for junior faculty members. It should be recognized that such a collaboration requires considerable

efforts from junior faculty, but it may not immediately produce conventional “track-record” products like publications. In such a case, supporting letters from the community should be properly considered to carry the same weight as letters from people in more conventional academic settings.