Policies for working with communities of color

URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for UNC Marine Sciences

This is what was found by the Marine Sciences URGE pod at UNC 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:**

  The majority of interactions with communities of color occurred in outreach activities rather than for research projects - the interactions considered were undertaken exclusively by members of the pod and therefore interactions that occurred within the Marine Sciences Department by non-pod members were not included.

  o Growing Equity in Science and Technology (GEST) at the Institute of Marine Sciences - partnership with Duke Marine Lab, targeted predominantly low-income schools with a focus on high schools.
  o SciRen Coast - making lessons plans more equitable with a specific focus on cost and equipment
  o Morehead planetarium - after school outreach opportunities with local schools that have a large percentage of URM students
  o underserved communities (schools that are predominately URM)

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

  o Asking and listening to students' interests and being adaptable to meet those interests
  o Have a diverse group interacting with those students- ideally individuals with similar economic backgrounds, gender identities, race, and at various stages of their career

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

  o Advertising can be improved by increasing the number of methods/platforms used. Using a single method may not reach the intended audience. An approach to improve this would be taking time to build relationships with specific organizations we intend to work with rather than simply sending emails or dropping off fliers.
  o Communicating exclusively with organizers/heads of institutions rather than individuals at each level.
  o Consider the language that is being used. For example, in certain meetings language was appropriated from native american ceremonies (powwow).

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

- o In regard to research projects in general, include an acknowledgement of the people / land on which the research was performed. However, this issue is complicated as land acknowledgements can function to lift responsibility from researchers without actually helping / giving credit to the people impacted. Building authentic trust and relationships with the communities on that land as well as putting value in their opinions should be a necessary step in this process.
- o Include indigineous people and URM people in seminars and compensate them for their time.
- o Incorporate scientists of color in lecture courses. Also consider non-western knowledge and research efforts when discussing science history. Include discussions about non academic careers to increase the chances of attracting diverse students to work in the field.
  - Ex: professors focused on environmental justice, Impact Award recipients working with NC native communities
- o Consider the language that is being used. For example, in certain meetings language was appropriated from native american ceremonies (powwow).
- o Discuss with and teach new students how to work with communities of color early in graduate education - this will increase the inclusion of groups of color / groups impacted by the research in project planning when these students begin their research.

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

  - o Additional guidelines for how to work with and include the voice of local communities in research projects should be included in curriculum for early career graduate students (prior to beginning field work).
    - This could take the form of a course (possibly in collaboration with the anthropology department) or a seminar series.
  - o Some resources that are already available at unc can be found here:
    - Research Centers at UNC
    - UNC American Indian Center
    - Native Land Map
  - o Follow the example of the Conference on Great Lakes, which includes sessions on indigenous knowledge. An action along these lines that does more than just acknowledge, but honors and shares the knowledge of these groups would be a huge step forward.

Other Notes on working with communities of color:
- Our department hasn't created a land acknowledgment yet, however two professors within the department are in the process of doing so.
- Since one article said it's really difficult for pre-tenure faculty to work with these communities because of the time it takes to establish trust and go through the tribal policies -- how do we approach this problem? Can only senior faculty approach these studies?