URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color

UNCW Plans for an Improved Process:
When carrying out geoscience research, each project and location is unique. The process through with engagement with communities of color is developed will depend on the type of project and the communities involved. When UNCW researchers embark on a new research project, they should consider the location where the data will be gathered and identify the communities who live there. This should result in a careful consideration of how the research relates to these communities and how best to engage with them. This conversation should occur at the very outset of the project planning process.

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?

- SN – Yes. For example, in past work in Malawi, Tanzania, and Bangladesh that I have engaged in, local collaborators and scientists have been crucial.
- AH – Yes. Indonesia, Malaysia, and Pacific Northwest North American for local intel and knowledge/history and scientific collaborations
- DWG – Yes, I have active collaborations with communities in Jamaica, Bahamas, and US virgin Islands.
- TL – No. I typically work on public lands in the western US and do not "need: local assistance, guidance, etc."
- JNH: I have had a variety of different types of involvement with communities of color. For example, in my shelter evacuation modeling work for coastal NC, I have presented work to various community groups, including representatives of the NAACP and then we had follow-up conversations with various stakeholders. In field work, we have not explicitly directed efforts to engage with communities of color, but have designed structured random sampling to make sure all communities are represented/sampled. Additionally, current field work testing UAS instruments to map wetlands have sampled many locations, and we work directly with all property owners, but it has not specifically targeted communities of color. However, in this same project, we have visited elementary schools to demo equipment to school children and this has predominantly been in lower income areas.
- AS – Yes. My experience from New Zealand agencies dictate that engagement with Maori research is a requirement for research funding. These experiences have been terrific personal enrichment and growth into areas of scientific research I would not have previously considered.
- QL – No. My research about coastal water quality frequently engages stakeholders in the research. I have relied on our social science collaborator on the stakeholder engagement.
- PB – Yes, some of my research is through collaborations with local nonprofit organizations. We typically work extensively with leadership at those organizations who are the point-people for interactions with community members.

○ Were they included in the early development and/or proposal of the research or project itself, or added at a later stage?

- SN – Local collaborators were established from the beginning, even before the funding for the projects were secured.
- DWG—Yes, collaborators were involved in all aspects of project development and execution.
- AH – Yes, to both. When we knew where we were going we could establish early collabs but this is harder when the site needs finding first.
- JNH – not in the current projects, but I have had a Sea Grant Community Collaborative grant where we did work with local government agencies and I gave presentations at public planning meetings. Even though the groups were involved from the beginning, the groups themselves are not specifically communities of color but a broad array of stakeholders.
- AS – From the perspective of the physical oceanography investigator, yes. However, I am not sure I would confidently say that there was equal engagement between all aspects of our science. Although oceanography, chemistry, and genetics had individual contributions, "indegenous science" was a separate thread instead of woven through each sub-discipline.
- PB – Both. We've worked with nonprofit leadership early in the process and also in a "drop-in" way. The former is more productive and enjoyable.

○ Were any local collaborators included as authors on presentations and/or papers?

- SN – Yes, local collaborators have been included on all presentations and papers resulting from this work.
- AH- Yes, all local collaborators were on papers and presentations.
- JNH – Yes, when involvement is more than simply tangential or a few communications.
- AS – Not yet. Publications are still in-progress.
- PB – Leaders included in publications, additional participants not directly involved in research but still engaged in process were included in acknowledgments.

○ Actively sought to include local students in your research? Why or why not?

- SN – Local students were included in work in Bangladesh and Tanzania. Not really in Malawi, as we weren't able to find any in the right field.
- DWG—Yes, local students worked as paid RAs on project.
- AH – Yes in some research studies in Malaysia and Indonesia because of local university involvement.
- AS – Local community members and employees of the aquaculture farm are included, but not as students.

○ 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?

- SN – Yes, we have spent more than a decade working with the same institutions and collaborators.
- AH – Yes, over a decade for one project
- JNH – Most recently my research has focused on the UNCW region and always involves UNCW students.

- AS – I have to rely on local collaborators as I was never based in the community where this research occurs. I virtually attend the meetings and hope that this long-term collaboration will be sustained.
- QL – No. But for the proposal I am currently developing, I am trying to involve local students in my research.

○ Were previous negative interactions, whether from inside or outside of your organization, addressed in the plans for building these connections and trust?

- No previous negative interactions were reported.

○ 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?

- SN – We have not done this to a large extent.
- AH – To my knowledge this was not done
- JNH – Have given presentations and created websites.
- DWG -- Yes, we have held workshops with local farmers and fisherman in Jamaica. Without there involvement the research would not be meaningful.
- AS – This is work in progress. There is a larger effort NZ-wide to use local names of ocean features. However, scientific articles for the most part are not translated to Maori. We try to produce visuals such as maps and videos in addition to the science articles.
- QL – Yes. For my research about Lake Erie water quality, we have published the tool we build on NOAA's website, which is accessible to the public.
- PB – We have worked to improve distilled analyses and their dissemination via blogs and online web posts.

○ 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?

- SN – Yes, to some degree. I could have done more in this regard. With several projects in different locations I guess I felt pulled in too many directions.
- AH- Yes, was necessary for project success
- DG—Yes, necessary for project success and not look like an outside interloper.
- JNH – Yes, this was critical when I did work in areas I was not familiar with and epecially important to get knowledge before travelling to the location. I paid more attention to the culture and conditions (e.g. socio-economics, ethnics, etc.) rather than politics.
- AS – To some degree. This is a challenge when there are pressures to produce scientific results and have the burden of scientific background in addition to local culture.
- PB – Increasingly, yes, but to an insufficient degree.

○ Was sufficient time allocated to the process of working within the community's governance, customs, and priorities?

- SN – Not really. More funds and time would be useful.
- AH – yes, I believe so but I could not participate bc of the customs.
- JNH – this is especially difficult these days when we don't have time given all of the other demands on our workload.
- AS – Absolutely not. These are sensitive and extensive areas where there is no substitute for years of engagement. Efforts often felt like tokenism.
- PB – No, in one example, working in the Pacific Islands, community sharing (especially meals) seems to be a big part of the culture. More time ought to have been spent around the table getting to know one another prior to/along with the teaching/research mission.

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

- SN – Yes. Definitely. We made significant efforts to respect culture and customs.
- AH – Yes
- JNH – Absolutely, but I do not rely on my own research and knowledge. I get assistance from local contacts.
- AS – Personally, yes. Professionally, I do not know.
- QL – Yes
- PB – Yes

○ Acknowledged local communities / Indigenous tribes in your research results?

- SN – We did, but could have been more explicit about it.
- AH- Have and have not....WIll do better!
- JNH- this used to be more important when I published maps and atlases, but in academia, publishing papers, I rely on stating acknowledgements. It's critical to give proper credit and I have paid particular attention to this for online resources such as data visualization tools. Witth journal articles the journal formatting usually has a standard approach with little flexibility.
- AS – Have to in the NZ context.

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

- SN – Not sufficiently.
- AS – I hope so, but this is not straightforward. Communities want economic sustainability and marine conservation. Scientific publications on ocean current variability is not their primary concern.
- QL – Yes. We collaborated with social scientists for the community engagement research. The interviews and engagement are included in related publications.
- PB – Have tried to do so, yes, but certainly not enough.

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

- SN – We did hire local community members for a lot of the work that was done in these locations. In fact, we relied heavily on local paid support.
- AS – Yes, local community members who assisted with the research were compensated.
- QL – Yes. We collaborated with social scientists, who are also funded by grants.

○ Considered and prioritized research questions and research locations based on needs of local communities, in addition to how impactful they are seen within academia?

- SN – Not really, except for local earthquake hazards.
- AH – Yes in earthquake and tsunami work, often a priority for site selection
- SK – Research I have been a part of on the west coast of the US has involved studying the peopling of the Americas. As part of various projects, tribal leaders have been contacted and made aware of this research. I believe that approval has been gained for some of the larger projects. Projects have included different levels of tribal involvement, including money for an indigenous intern to be a part of the entire project, tribal participant on some of the cruises, and data sharing meetings where collected data is shown and discussed or having tribal presence when sediment cores were opened to show contents. My archeology collaborators have long standing relationships with the tribes related to our research and I have deferred to them on what is best practice in terms of tribal involvement and when to contact in the proposal/project process, depending on the specific project and what the goals were. Indigenous authors have not been included on any of the publications or presentations that I have been a coauthor on. However, these have all been pure marine geology and paleoenvironmental, not archaeology-focused. I personally have not addressed a lot these questions because of working with archaeologists, but this has made me want to be more involved in this aspect for future projects and to make sure that indigenous tribes are fully integrated into project planning from the start of the proposal stage. I also want to spend more time educating myself about these communities that are descendants of the First Americans and building relationships instead of solely relying on those of collaborators.
- AS – This is difficult. I have not seen Academia make any meaningful steps towards this priority. Academia requests quick, good publications, student training, and a follow-up grant proposal. These are not the same priorities of local communities.
- QL – Yes for my research focused on the Great Lakes water quality when I worked for NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory. It is important that NOAA's product can benefit local/national communities. So they have a social science team to include local communities/end users. However, for my own research, it is difficult to do that without a professional social science team interviewing/surveying local groups.
- PB – Increasingly striving to do this. It has so far seemed to be harder to find funding where the needs of communities rather than the interests of academia are prioritized, but am trying to find a way to do so.