

URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



This is what was found by the UW ESS Grad student and Postdoc Pod at the University of Washington, Department of Earth and Space Sciences 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:**

- K-12 outreach in the Seattle public school system.
 - Seattle MESA outreach through rockin' out volunteer program by graduate students (classroom visits free of charge).
 - The Discoveries in Geosciences (DIG) Field School is an outreach program for K–12 teachers and students created by University of Washington Burke Museum paleontologists.
- The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee has been partnering with the [Brotherhood initiative](#) to improve mentoring and opportunities for underrepresented men of color at UW.
 - ESS and Ed. departments in collaboration with the brotherhood initiative discussed difficulties of capacity constrained majors.
- Worked with Juan-Carlos Chavez for the Washington NASA Space Grant consortium that provides outreach opportunities for pre-college and college level students to pursue careers in STEM.
- Previous relationships and agreements with indigenous tribes.
 - Several pod members had previous experience (prior to coming to the University of Washington). Person 1 worked with an advisor who had built up relations with the Lakota nation to work in the badlands on reservation land. Person 2 was part of a cultural agency that held tribal consultations, sharing information and strategies for how cultural research would proceed. What worked well in these examples: Work included intentional conversations and discussions about the history of land use and indigenous knowledge. Protocols were in place and the relationships were built longer-term. Suggestion for improvement: In the first case, research results were maybe not sufficiently disseminated back in the community.
 - The Pacific Northwest Seismic Network (PNSN)
 - Recent faculty search in seismology recognized the importance of working with indigenous tribes.



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- Discussion of putting land acknowledgement in publications
- International Collaborators
 - Field work experiences with collaborators from other countries like Mexico, Chile and Singapore. What was observed to not work well: Treating local academics as secondary “assistants” to the projects. Suggestion for improvement: Work to create opportunities, e.g. exchange program for local graduate students.

★ Improving resources and policies for working with communities of color

- K-12 / local outreach
 - Track the schools that rockin’ out and other outreach programs have visited. Improve participation at minority serving schools. Potentially form partnerships with initiatives that already serve these schools.
 - Initiate more opportunities for students and faculty to commit to public communication of local science.
- Research with local communities of color
 - Research results should be disseminated with local community members, especially those that were involved in the project, e.g. by granting land access.
 - Indigenous communities have their own protocols for how people work on their land. These should be respected.
 - Fieldwork and safety policy form that recognizes local communities where we work.
 - Start with upcoming sessions about lab and pre-field code of conduct and field debrief.
 - Work with PNSN to formalize policies in how they interact with landowners and controllers.
 - Create documentation on tips and suggestions for creating indigenous land acknowledgment.
 - Map of native lands with links: <https://native-land.ca/>
 - Burke museum has someone dedicated to work as tribal liaison
- Acknowledgment of efforts and individuals
 - Create an awards committee that will recognize the efforts of individuals or groups in our department that have done local community engagement
 - Communicate efforts that are going on throughout the unit/college (so that people can vouch for them and recommend the experiences).



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- Initiate a discussion at the Department of the potential conflicts of putting graduate students or short-term contract researchers on projects that require field work on native land or in local communities or color, and the time and effort it takes to build mutual relationships with these communities