

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

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

This is what was found by Wetland Soils and Greenhouse Gas Exchange Lab Pod at University of Waterloo on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

Pods may have members from a range of career stages and involvement in the development and execution of research projects, and pod members may have different experiences or different perspectives when responding to these questions. Consider this in the summary document and focus on capturing responses that are representative of the range in your pod.

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:**
 - *E.g. How many research projects were undertaken in countries or regions with communities of color, how many of those included meaningful interactions with those communities of color? Briefly describe one or more example projects to provide context for the following questions.*
 - Nearly all research projects are located within regions that are linked to indigenous communities. Members of our pod had limited interactions with communities of color at our organization. Some members expressed being discouraged from interacting with the Indigenous communities from collaborators on their projects.
 - Many of the members conduct fieldwork on Indigenous lands and acknowledge that, but are unsure of how to practically establish relationships with Indigenous communities.
 - Some members were in the early stages of their research and have begun undertaking training and readings on the cultural history of their study sites.

- **What worked well in these interactions?**
 - *E.g. Using local names for landmarks or features, adhering to restrictions and customs such as not scheduling outreach meetings/events during hunting season*
 - Asking permission from the local governments/First Nation group to conduct fieldwork on their traditional territories and/or applying for the necessary permits.
 - We do not have many examples to work from so we did not discuss interactions that worked well.

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



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- *E.g., We did not include priorities of local communities of color when developing our proposal, and to address this in the future we will include community member(s) in the early stages of proposal planning and writing as collaborators*
- A few members in the group talk about being told to not talk or have communication with Indigenous groups due to privacy agreements with the industry partner they were working with. This can create confusion and feelings of discomfort for the researcher/student who feels an obligation to consult and disseminate their research to the local community.
- We all acknowledge that it is not a good strategy to only present results to Indigenous communities after the research has been conducted but to involve Indigenous peoples in every step of the research process.

- **Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?**
 - *E.g., Work with and compensate community members to translate research results and outreach materials into local language, include acknowledgements in forthcoming publications and presentations*
 - Many members from the pod already include land acknowledgements in their publications and presentations and will continue to do this.
 - Another way to improve the outcome of the project is properly communicating the research back to the community, through schools, at community meetings etc.
 - Improve upon use of Indigenous centre at the University to help build connections and working relationships.
 - Hiring local Indigenous people for field positions and begin to build capacity within the community to continue the research, i.e maintain weather stations, collect water samples.

- **Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?**
 - *E.g., Additional support/funding for early planning process of projects to include forming productive and mutually beneficial connections with communities, establish a point of contact for interfacing with communities so as not to overwhelm with individual requests from researchers and collaborators*
 - Grad students have a high turnover rate of 2-5 years and therefore it can be difficult to establish the long term relationship necessary to maintain meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships. We identified the importance of a static person who



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can maintain and contribute to the relationship building on a continuous basis such as the supervisor.

- Another barrier within academia is the timelines associated with proposal deadlines that do not allow sufficient time to properly consult and engage Indigenous communities. It takes time to establish relationships and is limited when funding is such an essential component to conduct graduate research projects.
- Point of contact for specific regions of Canada, many of us do not live where we study. This would give a clearer direction on where to start with building those relationships or learning from others experiences.
- We identified that in order to have longevity of relationships, then there should be a consistent person at the institution level to keep the relationships going
- We identified several websites in Canada that have First Nation, Metis and Inuit land acknowledgements publicly available:
 - <https://native-land.ca/>
 - https://sidait-atris.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/atris_online/home-accueil.aspx -
 - <http://albertametis.com/governance/mna-regions/>