URGE
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for WHOI PO(d)

This is what was found by the PO(d) at WHOI 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 WHOI:**
  - WHOI researchers have been working with Alaska Native communities (article in first link below) to identify local issues for which use of an AUV may be beneficial. Some example applications given are tracking oil spills and marine mammal monitoring.
  - There are ongoing ONR-funded monsoon projects in India. Some folks are engaging with people and providing outreach, while others are focused on science. History matters, especially because of colonialism - people are suspicious of outsiders because there is a history of extractive science and taking away data. There is much diversity within India itself. Working on capacity-building.
  - Some researchers are involved in the Moana Project in New Zealand, which focuses on coastal oceanography to support the local seafood industry. The project is in partnership with the Whakatōhea iwi.
  - There was a collaboration with scientists in Saudi Arabia. Patience and humility were important values to bring to this research. In their culture, one-on-one interactions begin with an elaborate exchange of checking in on each other. Eventually, the partnership ended as Saudi Arabian colleagues wanted to run things their own way.
  - The Beaufort Gyre Observing System is beginning to build more connections with local communities in Alaska.
  - The WHOI Ask A Scientist program partners with a local charter school that focuses on students of color to answer student questions and encourage participation in oceanography.
  - WHOI participates in the Partnership Education Program (PEP), which brings students from communities of color to Woods Hole for a summer program.

- **What worked well in these interactions?**
  - In all projects discussed: coming to interactions with humility, respect, and patience has been critical.
  - In the Moana Project, using words from local languages to name aspects of the project has been a successful way to connect to the community.
  - Avoiding the "savior" attitude when conducting research in foreign communities leads to more successful interactions.
  - In the article (linked below) about working with Alaska Native communities, the researchers emphasize the importance of asking communities about their needs instead of making assumptions of how the AUV should be used.

- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**
    - Could the Saudi Arabian collaboration have been continued if policies had been different?

- **Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?**
    - Prioritize WHOI's investment in improving and maintaining the Partnership Education Program.
    - Past WHOI research that is relevant to communities of color, but behind a paywall, could be distilled into outreach materials and made available to those communities. (See discussion in next section as well.)
    - Can we increase presence at conferences centered around communities of color?
    - WHOI can develop interaction with local Wampanoag communities. This could include supporting the Mashpee's Native Youth in Science summer program.

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

    Based on our conversations within our pod, we propose two avenues of guidance:

    Before embarking on research projects
    - Provide (institutional) support for relationship-building with local communities
        - It takes time to develop relationships with the local communities in regions that WHOI scientists are working in. Particularly in communities that are suspicious of US research interests (e.g. those with colonial history), it will likely take longer to build trust. This time may be undervalued or underacknowledged, especially if it doesn't immediately result in research/fieldwork and can't be measured in scientific metrics like publications.
        - Additionally, the pace of relationship-building may be at odds with expectations of graduate students and early career researchers, who often face a publish or perish mentality.
        - One step we suggest the institution take is to normalize time spent on DEI efforts and relationship-building, to recognize their importance, and to incorporate it in places where it matters, like hiring and job performance.
        - Additionally, provide support for research projects involving the local community -- such as building time for developing relationships into the project proposal and planning schedule, making financial support available for these efforts (including funding for local community members), and sharing resources for WHOI scientists to educate themselves on traditional knowledge concepts and other ways of knowing.
        - On the individual level, acknowledge that local communities may be skeptical of outside researchers. Come to new environments with humility and patience. Consider using self-introductions (share your background, where you're coming from), check in with your fellow project partners on a personal level, and educate yourself about the community.

- ○ Seek out and incorporate local and/or indigenous knowledge
  - ■ Traditional knowledge is often perceived as anecdotal or different from "modern scientific" practices. Given the wealth of traditional knowledge available, this perception essentially ignores large amounts of data, which hinders effective science (e.g. ignoring signs of climate change in the Arctic). In addition, local or community knowledge is a valuable resource in most projects, even if it is outside the realm of what we think about as "traditional knowledge". For example, a WHOI partnership with local fishermen led to new insights about fish behavior.
  - ■ One recommendation is to prioritize collecting and using local/indigenous knowledge when planning projects if communities are comfortable with sharing that knowledge. Co-development (and Co-PIship) of research plans and objectives with the community can help address issues surrounding partnership power dynamics and relevance of work. While some of this will likely happen through relationship building, it's important to do research beforehand and gather pre-existing information. (See the LEO Network link below).

During or after completing projects:
- ○ Prioritize data accessibility, and recognize that "public" data doesn't always mean "accessible" data
  - ■ Large, technical, or obscure datasets may be inaccessible to the interested layperson even if they're publicly hosted. Is it still fair to call them public?
  - ■ A data librarian could be responsible for helping outside individuals find the dataset they're looking for or give advice on how to use them or understand their significance.
- ○ Scientific communication to local communities involved
  - ■ Post-publication, should have a plan to disseminate research findings to communities involved (including translation to different languages if necessary).
  - ■ One example: WHOI Oceanus Magazine does a good job of distilling scientific reports into more digestible information (i.e. pop-sci), including with student involvement. How else can we target scientific communication to local communities?
  - ■ Make sure we follow up to distribute this information via targeted outreach so that it reaches the widest audience.
- ○ Make sure credit is given to community members either via co-authorship or acknowledgments

Links
- ● WHOI builds bridges with Arctic Indigenous communities (WHOI news article): https://www.whoi.edu/news-insights/content/arctic-indigenous-aid/
- ● History of Woods Hole land. "The earliest known historical records for Woods Hole, Massachusetts, concern purchase of land from the Wampanoag Indian Job Notantico by

fourteen settlers on December 30, 1679.”
https://www.whoi.edu/what-we-do/educate/student-life/student-life-cape-cod/history/
- Scientist-Fisherman Partnership:
https://www.whoi.edu/oceanus/feature/scientistfisherman-partnership/
- Alaska Native Science Commission Code of Research Ethics:
http://www.nativescience.org/communities/code.htm
- Local Environmental Observer (LEO) Network: https://www.leonetwork.org/en