URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

WOMEN IN COASTAL GEOSCIENCE & ENGINEERING

URGE Policies for Working with Communities of Color for University/Organization

This is what was found by Women in Coastal Geoscience and Engineering (WICGE) 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. **Pods should upload a summary document of previous interactions with communities of color as well as plans for an improved process to the URGE website by 3/19/2021**

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at our organization:**
  - WICGE is a fairly new professional organization with international members spread across multiple organizations and locations but the members have collective individual experiences of working with communities of color.
  - Some previous interactions individual WICGE members have had with communities of color include:
    - A project in the Mangroves of Tamil Nadu in India
    - A Peru project to collect data on mining
    - Examining marsh soil shear strength on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation
    - Collecting water samples along the Colorado River
    - Coring and GPR in the Maldives, Marshall Islands, and on the coast of Ghana
    - Sediment coring in Turks and Caicos
    - Coastal Surveying (for research) on First Nationals land (Quinault, Shoalwater Bay & Elwha Tribes),
    - Flood and erosion vulnerability assessment with indigenous communities in rural Alaska
    - Geophysical work in Southern African Countries including South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Malawi
    - Tsunami inundation research in CA & Hispanic community

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

- ○ Within these interactions, it was found by some members that involving communities of color as early in the planning stages of the research project as possible worked well. Furthermore, some WICGE members found that hiring locals, giving gifts such as hats or shirts, and leaving equipment with communities were positive interactions. Equitably paying people for their time and effort as well as providing the necessary resources for projects were also found to work well. This included a willingness to explore topics local communities were interested in and work outside of doing things that can be published for mutually beneficial data exchange.
  - ○ Additionally, asking permission for acknowledgement worked well in interactions that some WICGE members had. This included asking if it was okay to conduct work ahead of doing so and asking how involved the community wanted to be with the research and publication process.
  - ○ Sharing results that were intended for the general public worked well for some WICGE members. This included partnering with local research institutions to share results, working with local libraries, disseminating data via local news, and conducting a follow-up seminar.

- **What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?**
  - ○ Data output was sometimes found to provoke a feeling of frustration in communities because the peer review process can take so long and the benefits of research were always not visible to the community right away. Data dissemination could be better addressed by sharing results that are intended for the community in a timely manner. This may be accomplished by partnering with local institutions, working with local libraries, disseminating data via local news, and conducting follow-up seminars.
  - ○ Language barriers were also an issue for some WICGE members. While translators were used in some instances, the translations were not always well done. Finding a local translator that speaks the same dialect of the community could be a better way to address language barriers in the future. Additionally, it was found that permission for conducting research could be confusing to community members if the whole community did not know about the research. This may be better addressed by making sure that permission is obtained from *everyone* who you may interact with in your research prior to arrival.

- **How can WICGE draw from our individual experiences to advance the development of specific resources or guidelines needed to collectively improve the process of working with communities of color in coastal research?**

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- WICGE can advertise resources (included those listed during the URGE Session 4 interviews such as LEO) on the WICGE website.
- Since WICGE has international members, WICGE could leverage the power of networking as a way to connect researchers and partners in an effective way. WICGE could help to partner interested researchers with members who possess experience working with BIPOC coastal communities to facilitate knowledge exchange. This may include creating a community list of local collaborators or institutions that WICGE members have worked with. These efforts may help to build collaborations between scientists and communities that might not have otherwise connected early in the planning process. Additionally, a list could be generated of regionally-focused and interdisciplinary conferences where research can be presented beyond the typical national and international conferences.
- WICGE could work toward designing a generic document (template) for information gathering to facilitate appropriate acknowledgements and fast-tracking preliminary research results to the local community. Furthermore, WICGE could develop research practice guidance for research in coastal communities, this may include preferred acknowledgements.
- WICGE recognizes that a large portion of research in coastal communities today is focused on property and infrastructure in highly privileged environments. WICGE should seek to bring attention to the unmet funding and research needs in all coastal communities.