URGE
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience (URGE; www.urgeoscience.org) is a community-wide journal-reading and policy-design curriculum to help Geoscientists unlearn racism and improve accessibility, justice, equity, and inclusion (AJEDI) in our discipline. URGE's primary objectives are to (1) deepen the community's knowledge of the effects of racism on the participation and retention of black, brown, and indigenous people in Geoscience[1], (2) use the existing literature, expert opinion, and personal experiences to develop anti-racist policies and strategies[2,3], and (3) share, discuss, and modify anti-racist policies and strategies within a dynamic community network and on a national stage. By meeting these objectives, we hope that Geoscience departments and societies will be able to implement a well-researched crowdsourced group of anti-racist policies.

Deliverable - Safety Plan

Education is essential but action is also imperative for achieving the objectives of URGE. Therefore, each URGE topic is paired with deliverables for individual pods to draft and share. This deliverable is a safety plan, whether you work in a laboratory or in remote field settings.

Consider spaces in your organization as well as in the broader geosciences that have barriers to access for people of color. Much of the attention on this topic has been regarding field work[4] but this also applies to spaces closer to home, e.g. a Black graduate student walking home late from lab work may be more likely to be stopped and questioned by police. Consider that Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other people of color will face different challenges from one another.

Suggested discussion questions:
- Where is your work done? Are these spaces uncomfortable or unsafe for people of color?
- What training does your organization require or offer? How often? Do you find this training effective? What would you introduce to make it more effective?

Deliverable: Develop and publish a safety plan specific to your pod (lab, university, organization). This safety plan should include a code of conduct as well as a process for reporting violations, as covered in your Complaints and Reporting Policy deliverable from Session 2. Outline training resources that are available and requirements for antidiscrimination, bystander intervention, and de-escalation training. For field work, include a racial risk assessment of sites, a pre-departure checklist of discussions within the field team, procedures for documenting incidents in the field, as well as additional required or supported training[5]. This safety plan can (and should be) a work in progress that is revisited and refined.

- Example Safety Plan: (Demery & Pipkin, 2021) www.preprints.org/manuscript/202008.0021/[6]
- Example Code of Conduct: Basin Research Group (under "Inclusivity and Diversity")
- More Resources: https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/field_work.html

Pods should upload their safety plans to the URGE website by 4/16/21. We also encourage pods to post on their organization's website and share over social media (#URGEoscience & tag @URGEoscience). Sharing deliverables will propagate ideas, foster discussion, and ensure accountability.

[1] R. E. Bernard, E. H. G. Cooperdock, No progress on diversity in 40 years. Nature Publishing Group. 11, 1–5 (2018).
[2] https://notimeforsilence.org/
[3] https://www.change.org/p/geoscientists-call-for-a-robust-anti-racisim-plan-for-the-geosciences
[4] www.sciencefriday.com/segments/making-outdoors-inclusive
[5] J. Anadu, H. Ali, C. Jackson, Ten steps to protect BIPOC scholars in the field, Eos, 101, DOI: 10.1029/2020EO150525 (2020).
[6] A.J.C. Demery, M.A. Pipkin, Safe fieldwork strategies for at-risk individuals, their supervisors and institutions. Nat Ecol Evol, (2021).

URGE
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

Graduate Program of
Hydrologic Sciences

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University of Nevada, Reno

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University of Nevada Reno Graduate Program of Hydrologic Sciences Code of Conduct for Field Work

Note: This is not a legal document, but is rather intended to supplement, but not replace, University and/or Department level policies (see *Resources* section of this document).

Introduction

We define field work as any research related work that occurs away from the home institution. Field work may occur in urban areas, remote wilderness areas, agricultural areas, etc. Working in the field may pose unique risks to researchers that do not exist within the institution. We provide guidance to 1) supervisors 2) institutions and 3) individual researchers for promoting the safety of all researchers in the field. Several recommendations may be applicable to more than one party, so reading and considering all of the listed guidance is recommended.

Identifying Risk: Risks may include but are not limited to
- Signals of prejudice or hate speech at or near field sites
- Political climates that may put researchers in harm's way
- Lack of access to resources that may or may not be necessary specifically for individual researchers. Resources may be related to research activities or personal care.
- Historical connotations of field sites

1. **Recommendations for supervisors**
   - Supervisors should meet with all trainees to discuss safety guidelines for field work. Established guidelines should be made easily accessible to lab members. Guidelines should exist in a document that is 1) available for all researchers to bring into the field with them for reference and 2) a living document used to record known instances of risk at specific field sites.
   - Supervisors should make the nature of the field work clear to researchers without assuming that any similar prior experiences have been had. This includes explaining the duration, availability of different resources, equipment that may be necessary and whether or not that can be provided for the researcher, etc.
   - Known risks, plans for mitigating or responding to these risks, and the supervisor's willingness to discuss proactive safety measures should be intentionally discussed with all researchers *in advance* of field work.
   - Supervisors should check in throughout field seasons to set aside time where both the supervisor and researcher are ready and willing to engage in a discussion regarding whether the project needs to be modified for safety reasons. Supervisors should validate researchers' experiences and assist them in modifying their project.
   - Supervisors should use *available* resources to self-educate on the potential risks a researcher may experience at specific field sites so they can work to mitigate

and respond to these risks. This *does not* entail asking researchers to disclose any personal trauma related to their identity in the field.
- Contact relevant institutional offices for advice on how to assess and mitigate risk for researchers in the field.
- Especially for international field work, supervisors should establish allies/collaborators at or near field sites that can be a point of contact and/or assist in the supervisors self-education on understanding laws, customs, political situations, law enforcement. Supervisors should also work with researchers to create an emergency plan with contact information of local authorities and to establish safe housing and transportation.
- For all field sites supervisors should provide researchers with any necessary contact information (i.e. site managers, local police, etc.)

2. **Recommendations for Institutions/Departments**
   - Make harassment and safety/first-aid training available and/or mandatory for all researchers in the department
   - Make a list of resources about diversity in the geosciences, barriers to entry, and unique risks of fieldwork available to researchers and supervisors
   - Inform supervisors of the legal and social consequences of not investing in the safety of the researchers they supervise when they are doing institution-affiliated work.
   - Create an avenue for researchers to submit anonymous feedback regarding realized risks at field sites and involve supervisors in responding to this feedback.
   - Supply an official letter of institution support for field researchers to assist in establishing credibility while in the field should they be approached or questioned
   - Hold department-wide discussions on field safety to come up with guidelines and protocols for the safety of all researchers.

3. **Recommendations for Researchers**
   - It is imperative that researchers advocate for themselves, as even supervisors who self-educate will not be able to always be able to be fully aware of the risks that exist at different field sites for different individuals
   - Document all identified risks in the field by recording them in group-specific guideline documents in writing, with photographs, with recordings, etc.
   - Researchers should contact other researchers who have used a field site to understand any risks that may exist and/or have been previously documented so that the researcher and supervisor can adjust the project accordingly.
   - Researchers should introduce themself and others at the field site to neighbors of the field site to explain who is conducting research and who they are affiliated with. Contact information for an appropriate party at the institution and/or the supervisor should be provided in the event that neighbors have further questions.
   - Have at least two people involved in field work if possible. If not possible, establish a written or verbal communication plan between the researcher and a point of contact (preferably the supervisor) who is aware of the location and expected schedule of field activities.

- In the event that a supervisor is dismissive of discussions regarding risks at field sites, the researcher should 1) seek support from peers, departmental officers, a counselor, etc. who will help report and document risks or act as witnesses 2) report both the risk and the supervisor according to the available reporting policy or institutional office and 3) reach out to departmental officers in charge of bringing concerns to upper administrators.

"Hold-harmless" Recommendation: Many institutions anti-descrimination policies require staff to avoid references to a researchers identity and to ensure all researchers are treated equally for legal reasons, which may conflict with the stated goals and practices in this document. We encourage all relevant parties (supervisors, institutions, researchers) to "hold-harmless" a good-faith effort to engage in conversations relating to the safety of any at-risk individual in the field. The researcher receiving the offer of such a dialogue should have the full agency to pursue the conversation further or not.

Resources
- University of Nevada Reno - Policy against discrimination and sexual harassment
  - Link to submit a report (including a bystander report)
  - Link to request Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations
  - Link to request religious accomodations
    - *NOTE:*
      - All student complaints must be filed within 180 days of the alleged incident
      - All employee complaints must be filed within 300 days of the alleged incident
- University of Nevada Reno - Bias and hate incident reporting