

# URGE

## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



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### Safety Plan

This is what was found by the Horn Point Laboratory (HPL) pod at the University of Maryland Center for Environment Science (UMCES) HPL on the safety plan, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve. We are grateful to Courtney Atkinson and Diana Parnell for their assistance.

#### DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT

- *See images pasted at the end of this document.*

#### UMCES / USM Policies:

- General:
  - <https://www.umces.edu/consolidated-usm-and-umces-policies-and-procedures>
  - Specific policies that may be relevant for this discussion topic:
    - <https://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVIII/VIII261.pdf>
    - [https://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/VIII1100UMCES\\_0.pdf](https://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/VIII1100UMCES_0.pdf)
    - <https://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/XI1000UMCES.pdf>
- UMCES HR:
  - <https://www.umces.edu/human-resources>
- UMCES Title IX Office:
  - <https://www.umces.edu/sexual-misconduct-resources>
- UMCES Sexual Misconduct Resources
  - <https://www.umces.edu/sexual-misconduct-resources>
- USM HR Office:
  - <https://www.usmd.edu/usm/adminfinance/humanresources>
- USM Office of Student Affairs:
  - <https://www.usmd.edu/usm/academicaffairs/>
- UMD Ombuds Office
  - <https://gradschool.umd.edu/about-us/ombuds-office>

#### UMCES Student Handbook:

- [https://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/Full%20Handbook\\_27aug2020.pdf](https://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/Full%20Handbook_27aug2020.pdf)



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- This is accessible within 2 clicks from the home page. It includes a section with mostly suggestions on field safety, with a link to the SERC resources on field programs ([https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/field\\_work.html](https://serc.carleton.edu/advancegeo/resources/field_work.html)) that includes sections on misconduct, inclusivity, accessibility, safety, codes of conduct, and other resources.

### UMCES / HPL Boating Safety:

- UMCES Boating Safety:  
<https://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/hpl/pdfs/Boat%20Safety.pdf>
- HPL Float Plan:  
<https://www.umces.edu/umces-hpl-float-plan>
- HPL Boating Checklist:  
<https://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/HPL%20Boat%20Checklist.pdf>

Safety for everyone at UMCES is inclusive of life, limb, and property, as well as ensuring that everyone can participate with their full selves in UMCES activities.

### *Recommendations:*

- Field safety and inclusivity policies and guidelines should be made available to everyone at HPL who engages in field activities or interacts with people that engage in field activities. Currently most of this information is in the UMCES Student Handbook, and references the SERC resources noted above. The SERC material should be used to adopt a laboratory and field safety plan that includes accessibility and inclusivity policies and guidelines.
- “Field Plan” in addition to “Float Plan”. This would be a means of providing back up to individuals going into the field.
- Implement a plan of “suggested practices” to have a “Safety Buddy” that would either accompany an individual into the field and/or be a point of contact that would ensure the individual in the field has returned safely.
- Training or awareness of field issues could be done in a more informal manner with discussions about specific or general issues at monthly gatherings, where personal stories are shared and people check in with one another about safety, inclusivity, policy, or other pertinent topics.
- A variety of reporting options that provide a range of options for dealing with breaches of the code of conduct or safety plans should be provided. These may range from a complaint/suggestion box up to reporting directly to UMCES HR. We noted that reporting



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procedures for reporting harassment and bullying were documented in URGE session 2. Here we are explicitly discussing safety beyond “life, limb, and property”.

- Mentors should do the legwork so that the students / staff going into an environment know and mitigate the potential challenges or threats that might arise for students, for any reason.

### *Recommendations:*

#### *Re: Code of Conduct:*

1. Largely speaks from an advisor / student perspective, and should include staff perspectives, especially point 4. It was noted by some people that the language itself is somewhat formal, which might be off-putting to some people. It could perhaps be simplified somewhat.
  2. Define “growth mindset” and expand that terminology.
  3. Provide resources and/or training for how to implement these ideas and support their implementation.
  4. The Code of Conduct and its appendices should be included in the in-take packet of all new employees if it is not already, and should be referenced in the interview process to clarify the lab culture and that expectations are that all employees will adhere to the Code. New employees should acknowledge that they have read this information so that it is clear from the beginning what UMCES’ standards are.
  5. Periodically (annually? biennially?) send an email to all students, staff, and faculty with a link to the Code of Conduct to serve as a reminder/refresher.
  6. Some key points that could be added:
    - Take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure safety in the laboratory, field, and other professional settings. Notify the appropriate authorities of any violations or incidents that appear to create a threat to public health and safety;
    - Work to ensure that all UMCES individuals have equal access to professional and academic opportunities. Use clear, unbiased criteria when making decisions and taking actions that affect professional and academic opportunities
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UMCES Code of Conduct  
Draft - Updated 12 March, 2021

### **Code of Conduct for the UMCES Community:**

UMCES does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or intimidation of any person or group on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, national origin, citizenship status, socioeconomic background, position or title, political affiliation, caretaker status, or other characteristics. Accordingly, we expect all members of the UMCES community to uphold the following Code of Conduct:

- 1) Treat all individuals with respect, fairness, and courtesy at all times.
- 2) From the lab and field to the classroom and office, conduct yourself in a professional manner. Expect and require the highest professional and ethical standards not only from yourself but your colleagues, collaborators, mentors, and mentees. Hold one another accountable.
- 3) Critique ideas, not individuals. Give constructive feedback with kindness and respect. Receive constructive feedback with an open mind.
- 4) We are all here to learn. Cultivate a growth mindset at both the individual and institutional levels; challenges and setbacks are opportunities for learning. Reflect on successes and constantly seek out areas for improvement.
- 5) Understand the roles that UMCES has played in upholding structural bias and racism and understand the roles it can play in dismantling barriers to inclusion in STEM going forward. Actively work towards becoming an antiracist institution and embrace antiracist and culturally responsible policies, procedures, practice, and mentality.
- 6) Respect one another's cultural backgrounds and life experiences. Remember that personal and societal circumstances, both outside and within the institution, affect individuals differently.
- 7) Openly and honestly communicate our work with the public as well as within academia. Ensure that our science is clear and accessible to all. This includes (1) making information straightforward to find and available in formats that are easily accessed and understood by the intended audience, and (2) incorporating design elements and other aids that facilitate use and understanding regardless of disability, age, etc.

### **Guidelines for Interpersonal Relationships:**

In addition to the above Code of Conduct, we offer the following guidelines for positive and respectful relationships between faculty, staff, students, and other colleagues at UMCES:

- 1) Remember that your colleagues are people first and foremost. Physical and mental health, safety, and well-being are always top priorities.
- 2) Recognize the value and unique contributions of each individual within the institution, regardless of job description or seniority.
- 3) Actively cultivate an environment that is respectful, supportive, friendly, and free from harassment and intimidation.

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- 4) Be mindful and respectful of the various constraints on one another's time, both in and out of the workplace. Everyone balances many duties and demands on their time; set clear expectations for schedules and deadlines.
- 5) Senior faculty and staff should be mindful of the power imbalance inherent in relationships with colleagues and consider how this may affect their interactions with one another.

### Non-Compliance Procedures

In addition to following the above UMCES Code of Conduct, individuals are expected to comply with the UMCES Policy and Procedures on Misconduct in Scholarly Work (UMCES Policy [III-1.10](#)), Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct (UMCES Policy [VI-L60](#)), Americans with Disabilities Act (UMCES [ADA](#) Policy), and all other policies as outlined in the Consolidated USM and UMCES Policies and Procedures ([link](#)).

When addressing non-compliance, we recommend following a three-tiered process:

1. Whenever possible, we encourage honest and civil dialogue between the parties involved as a first step toward resolving disputes.
2. If attempts at resolution are not successful, or if more guidance is necessary, we encourage individuals to report the situation to their direct supervisor or laboratory director, or to the designated Ombudsperson who will facilitate resolution. The role of the Ombudsperson is to assist with problem-solving and conflict mediation in an anonymous, confidential, and neutral manner.
3. For more serious violations of the Code of Conduct or UMCES Policies, individuals may engage with [UMCES Human Resources](#) or seek support from other offices within the USM. These may include the [UMCES Title IX Office](#), [USM Human Resources Office](#), [USM Office of Student and Academic Affairs](#), or others as appropriate.

Currently, UMCES graduate students may consult the Graduate Student Ombudsman in the [UMD Ombuds Office](#) (see Appendix 3). UMCES is in the process of developing its own Ombuds Program which will be available to all members of the community; staff and faculty are encouraged to use the other resources listed in this document until that program is established.

### Relevant UMCES Offices and Contact Information

#### UMCES Sexual Misconduct Resources

Website: <https://www.umces.edu/sexual-misconduct-resources>

UMCES Title IX Coordinator:

Lisa Ross

Director of Human Resources

UMCES Center Administration, Horn Point Laboratory

Email: [titleix@umces.edu](mailto:titleix@umces.edu)



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\* Additional resources for victims of sexual misconduct are found in the UMCES Policy and Procedure on Sexual Misconduct document ([pages 20-21](#))

Consolidated USM and UMCES Policies and Procedures:  
<https://www.umces.edu/consolidated-usm-and-umces-policies-and-procedures>

VI-1.60 UMCES Policy and Procedure on Sexual Misconduct  
<https://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/VI%20-%201.60%20UMCES%20Policy%20and%20Procedure%20on%20Sexual%20Misconduct%2008-14-2020.pdf>

UMCES Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy:  
<https://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/ADA%20Policy.pdf>

Current ADA Regulations:  
[https://www.ada.gov/2010\\_regs.htm](https://www.ada.gov/2010_regs.htm)

\*\* Significant inspiration for this Code of Conduct provided by the [UT Austin Jackson School of Geosciences Guidelines](#) \*\*

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### Appendix 1 – Statement of Principles

The mission of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) is to lead research that advances our understanding of the environment, serves as a foundation for public policy and sustainable natural resource management, and improves human and environmental health, while training the next generation of scientists and stewards in research, application, and engagement through its rigorous graduate education program.

At UMCES, we are charged with “engaged scholarship,” which consists of not just research but application, teaching, and service. As a public institution, UMCES functions both because of and in service to our communities. We are privileged to do this work. Consequently, we have a responsibility to pursue our science in ways that improve our local, regional, national, and international communities, and to maintain high standards of accountability and transparency to the communities who invest in our efforts. Such investment consists not only of public funding but of public trust, which we must honor by proactively and respectfully engaging and listening to stakeholders, including local community members, to facilitate mutual trust, support, and exchange of knowledge.

All members of the UMCES community have a responsibility to uphold the values of scientific integrity, academic rigor, and ethical conduct upon which our institution is built. The standards of excellence to which we hold our science must also extend to our relationships with our colleagues. It is not only the legal responsibility of the institution to provide a workplace that is free from harassment, discrimination, and bullying, but our shared moral responsibility as well. In every action and interaction, we must strive to promote a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable environment where all individuals are supported and encouraged to reach their fullest potential.

Our greatest strength at UMCES is our people. Strength lies not only in the diversity of our research interests and academic disciplines but in the personal background and experiences of each individual. It is because of our differences that we thrive as an institution. We value and affirm the unique perspectives that all members of the UMCES community, including faculty, staff, students, collaborators, stakeholders, and visitors, bring to the table. We further recognize that such diversity of thought is necessary for tackling the world’s most pressing environmental problems, and that our science must be inclusive, creative, collaborative, and interdisciplinary to meet these challenges.

The practice of science involves continuously updating the way we view the world in light of new and more convincing evidence. As members of a research-support institution, we never stop learning about and refining our understanding of the world around us. We must embrace the same spirit of open-mindedness and discovery when it comes to learning how to make our institution more equitable. We must be willing to listen when colleagues tell us we have made mistakes, admit when we are wrong, and perpetually strive to do better.

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### Appendix 2 - Guidelines for Advisor-Student Conduct:

The relationship between faculty advisors and their students is of special importance. We offer the following guidelines in addition to the above Code; these expectations are written primarily with faculty advisors and their graduate student trainees in mind, but broadly apply to many other mentor-mentee relationships (interns, postdocs, junior faculty, etc.).

- 1) Advisors and students are people first and foremost. Physical and mental health, safety, and well-being are necessary prerequisites for the conduct of science and should be prioritized as such.
- 2) Both advisors and students should have a clear understanding of their respective responsibilities to one another. Advisors should clearly define all expectations of the graduate student's assistantship including research, academic coursework, funding, and university service with input from the student as much as possible. Students should be free to ask questions if these are unclear, and both advisors and students should continue to communicate openly about changing expectations, priorities, and needs.
  - a. We strongly encourage all students and their mentors to work together on developing a [Statement of Mutual Expectations](#) with as much clarity and specificity as possible. This document is intended to serve as a flexible guide to the duties and responsibilities of both the advisor and student; it can also help students define additional goals for their graduate education and professional development that the advisor may be able to help facilitate.
  - b. Advisors and students should have honest discussions about expectations for student financial support, both prior to enrollment and throughout the student's time at UMCES. This includes the expected duration and amount of any assistantships to cover tuition and stipend, as well as financial support for research and conference travel, publication fees, etc. Potential sources may include the advisor's grant funding, UMCES/MEES/UMD fellowships and grants, unit-level funds, and external scholarships, fellowships, or grants.
  - c. Expectations for academic benchmarks and how to meet them, including the timing and format of comprehensive exams, research proposals, and other milestones, should be clearly outlined well in advance.
- 3) While ensuring that the aforementioned expectations and research project objectives are met, advisors should provide latitude and support for students to define and reach their own professional and educational goals whenever possible.
- 4) Students should be proactive about identifying and pursuing professional development and other opportunities to improve their skills beyond the classroom.
- 5) Both students and advisors should be cognizant and respectful of the various demands on their time and respect such constraints, including when seeking and delivering feedback.
- 6) Advisors should model "good behavior" for their mentees, including scientific integrity and research ethics, professional conduct, collegiality, and work-life balance.
- 7) Faculty advisors and others in mentoring positions should be mindful of the power imbalance inherent in these relationships and consider how this may affect their trainees.



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### Appendix 3 – Resources available to UMCES Graduate Students enrolled through UMD

#### UMD Graduate School Ombuds Office

Website: <https://gradschool.umd.edu/about-us/ombuds-office>

Dr. Mark A. Shayman  
Professor and Graduate Student Ombudsman  
Phone: 301-405-3667  
Email: [shayman@umd.edu](mailto:shayman@umd.edu)

#### UMD Bias Incident Support Services (BISS)

Website: <https://diversity.umd.edu/bias/>  
Phone: 301-405-0980  
Email: [biassupport@umd.edu](mailto:biassupport@umd.edu)

#### UMD Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct (OCRSM)

Website: <https://ocrsm.umd.edu/>  
Phone: 301-405-1142  
Email: [titleixcoordinator@umd.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@umd.edu)

Intake Coordinator:  
Phone: 301-405-9732  
Email: [rs Sherman28@umd.edu](mailto:rs Sherman28@umd.edu)

UMD Office of Diversity and Inclusion  
<https://diversity.umd.edu/>

UMD LGBT Equity Center  
<https://lgbt.umd.edu/>  
UMD Trans Resources and Policies  
<https://lgbt.umd.edu/trans-resources-policies>

UMD Conflict Resolvers Network  
<https://president.umd.edu/administration/administrative-offices/conflict-resolvers-network>

UMD Accessibility and Disability Services  
<https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/>

UMD Accessibility Hub  
<https://www.umd.edu/policies-and-procedures/accessibility>