

# URGE

## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

*Unlearning Racism in Geoscience (URGE; [www.urgeoscience.org](http://www.urgeoscience.org)) is a community-wide journal-reading and policy-design curriculum to help Geoscientists unlearn racism and improve belonging, accessibility, justice, equity, and inclusion (BAJEDI) 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<sup>1</sup>, (2) use the existing literature, expert opinion, and personal experiences to develop anti-racist policies and strategies<sup>2,3</sup>, (3) share, discuss, and modify anti-racist policies and strategies within a dynamic community network and on a national stage, and (4) Implement and assess anti-racist policies and resources within Geoscience workplaces. 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.*

**This document contains questions that the URGE team asked geoscience workplace leaders during a focus group in January 2022. Please feel free to discuss these questions with your workplace leaders, then use the answers to improve your existing drafts of the anti-racist policies and resources where applicable. Please allow leaders the courtesy to decline to answer any questions. An anonymized summary of answers that these leaders provided to these questions in the January focus groups is on the Refinement Module II page on URGE's website.**

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### Understanding barriers

1. What, if anything, has prevented you from or made it challenging to effect or inspire anti-racism and other belonging, accessibility, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (BAJEDI) changes in your organization/department? What would you like others to know?
2. How are decisions about diversity made in your department/organization? Is this different from how other decisions are made? What makes them different?
3. How comfortable are you with making final decisions on anti-racism versus making final decisions on other duties that you have to perform?
4. Do you worry about appearing authoritative or about having a top-down decision-making process on issues relating to changing existing policies so that they are proactively anti-racist? Why or why not?
5. Do you find yourself delegating more on issues relating to anti-racism and diversity versus other duties?

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### Understanding context

1. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is “one tool used to understand the historical barriers rooted in the intersectionality of race and power that still exist” (Davis et al., 2022, p. 9). What role, if any, can an acknowledgment of CRT in academia play in implementing anti-racist policies?
2. Ng (2020) defines cancel culture as the withdrawal of any type of support from those that are saying something highly problematic or unacceptable (Nunes, 2022). Using this definition, how do you think cancel culture prevents or stalls discussions when creating anti-racist policies? Do you consider this during your deliberations on anti-racism efforts?
3. DiAngelo (2018) explained white fragility as a white person's defensive and evasive reactions due to racial discomfort. Anger, guilt, fear, silence, and arguing are examples of white fragility displays. In your experience, what impact, if any, does White Fragility have in implementing anti-racist policies in your workplaces?

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### Identifying possible solutions

1. How can your department/organization incentivize employees to engage in anti-racist work and recognize and reward employees who engage in this work? Please feel free to include a discussion of what is and is not feasible and why/why not
2. What would you do if you had full power (i.e., no barriers, peer influence, funding, etc.) to effect anti-racism changes?
3. How can we increase the participation of more senior faculty/executives in anti-racism efforts?
4. How does your department/organization evaluate its efforts to improve diversity and report incidents? What factors contribute to the success or limited success of the existing evaluation and incident tracking system?
5. What actions would you take to address people in positions of power who demonstrate racism?

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### **Additional open-ended questions**

1. What do you see as your main role in making decisions on anti-racism as well as BAJEDI issues more broadly?
2. Briefly describe how you consult others about decisions on matters of racism/diversity.
3. Please explain why you do or do not worry about receiving backlash for actions or decisions related to anti-racism.
4. What strategies do you believe are most effective for receiving buy-in from those you lead so that your department/organization can achieve anti-racism progress?
5. Have you avoided or attempted to avoid conflicts while working on anti-racism? If so, how?