

Framework for Addressing Racial and Ethnic Equity in Geosciences Professional Societies

Geoscientists address humanity's relationship with the natural world and environmental problems of importance to all of society. Our critical mission attracts talented students and professionals from all walks of life and across all dimensions of personal identity. However, as a result of systemic racism and a lack of access, we have failed to attract, retain, and advance Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) geoscientists. BIPOC geoscientists have been met with obstacles and barriers that majority geoscientists typically do not face. Furthermore, the interconnected nature of social categorizations (e.g. the intersectionality of race, class, disability status and gender) mean that many BIPOC geoscientists bear even greater burdens and risks inside and outside of their geoscience specialties. This exclusionary environment must stop. The careers and well-being of our colleagues and the health of our discipline depends upon concerted, systemic, strategic, and urgent anti-racism action.

The signatories expect those in the geosciences to adhere to the highest ethical standards, including the standard to "Encourage and assist in the development of a safe, diverse, and inclusive workforce". We believe organizations that successfully develop safe, diverse and inclusive learning and working environments understand the work of anti-racism to be mission-imperative. This framework is designed to encourage comprehensive and systematic application throughout all of a member society's activities and to build capacity for anti-racism throughout our discipline. That application includes a comprehensive interrogation of our ways of doing business and the commitment to hold ourselves accountable for harmful policies, systems or behavior. Individual societies may choose to delve deeper into their own codes of conduct and activities.

This document a) reflects calls to action by geoscientists of color from and within the broader AGI community, b) joins the statements of other STEM organizations, and c) reflects the evidence-base for promoting safe and inclusive working and learning environments for everyone.

Recognition and Settings

Racism, or the belief that a particular race or ethnic group is superior or inferior to another, leads to discrimination, which is illegal, unethical, and reprehensible, and can also lead to harmful, if not deadly, actions. In a professional environment, racial prejudice and unconscious bias can be isolating to BIPOC and leads to continuing patterns of overt and subtle behavior including micro-aggressions, mistreatment, or restricting access to opportunity. Processes or behaviors that create or maintain an unfair work environment, refuse to acknowledge everyone's contribution and presence, or limit access to power and resources are detrimental to our science and the standards we pledge to uphold. When such processes and behaviors are based on racial or ethnic biases, this is racism.

This Framework refers to racism in all professional, educational, and informal geoscience settings including related environments linked to the geoscience enterprise. Specific examples include, but are not limited to:

- Any professional workplace, including laboratories, classrooms, and other meeting spaces
- Conferences, meetings, and activities associated with those meetings
- Professional fieldwork settings, including off-duty time at remote work sites
- Educational environments, including formal and informal teaching spaces, and residences during sponsored trips

In these environments, activities must be conducted in an atmosphere where all participants are treated equitably and with professional courtesy and respect. We must work consciously to promote an environment free from inappropriate behavior and racism by or toward all participants, including scientists and non-scientists, students, guests, exhibitors, vendors, staff, and contractors.

Racism and racial bias can be expressed in a range of different ways including, but not limited to:

- Verbal and written communication (in person or remotely)
- Refusal to acknowledge the presence and contributions of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)
- Microaggressions including comments that someone doesn't look like a geoscientist or otherwise doesn't belong at the location or event
- Physical behaviors – including subtle body language
- Systemic processes such as mentoring, supporting, and nominating only those who look similar or come from similar backgrounds

Taking Action

To help acknowledge and support the above objectives, the undersigned members of the AGI member organizations agree to the following actions and principles. We will:

- Participate in and contribute to the formation of a proactive Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee across the geosciences and under the AGI organizational umbrella, to help societies comprehensively review and improve their practices from top to bottom (e.g. governance, bylaws, committees, assignments, publications, meetings, awards, membership, programs, accountability) and to share and use leading practices.
- Strive to cultivate an environment and practices that are safe, inclusive, and not simply a superficial response to the systemic exclusion of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern and North African groups or other marginalized racial and ethnic groups.
- Proactively champion and advocate for the complete inclusion of students of color as important and necessary participants in the scientific community.
- Promote and provide discussions and increased education on respect for indigenous knowledge and rights in geoscience in our annual geoscience meetings and conferences.

- Collaborate on, create, and support initiatives such as affinity groups and robust mentoring programs across the geosciences and within membership of our respective organizations, including a focus on support to meet the needs of marginalized racial and ethnic groups, such as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern and North African students, postdocs, research staff, professional geoscientists and faculty.
- Make transparent the demographic composition of annual award recipients, and invited speaking opportunities within our respective organizations. If they are not diverse, we will make an effort to encourage nominations for awards and speaking opportunities for members of underrepresented racial/ethnic, cultural, and ability groups.

In Conclusion

Diversity, inclusion and equity are important for the long-term health and sustainability of the geosciences. We are hopeful that all societies will cooperate and share their experiences, efforts and successes freely so that we can interact, learn, and support each other as we go forward. Achieving real progress in the advancement of Black, Indigenous and People of Color in the geosciences will take a concerted, sustained effort by us all.

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