

Shifting Paradigms for Diversity, Inclusivity, and Engagement in Geosciences

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A shift in the current educational and research engagement paradigms that continue to sideline under-represented minority (URM) populations from the Geosciences is long overdue. While funding agencies and other educational institutions have invested millions of dollars to tackle the "diversity problem" in the Geosciences, there have been only minimal improvements in the last forty years. It is time for the Geosciences to draw on other fields and to embrace decolonizing approaches that center the voices and leadership of URM students, faculty, and researchers. As students and faculty from URM communities, with experiences at both predominantly white and minority-serving institutions of research and higher education, we draw on our collective lived experiences and professional journeys to inform our efforts to create meaningful change that will attract, nurture, retain, and celebrate students and faculty of all races, ethnicities, genders, and of diverse abilities. We propose four essential principles for solving the "diversity" problem in our field:

1. Holistic undergraduate and graduate recruitment and admission protocols that are equitable and just.
2. Relatable mentors in classrooms and field settings.
3. Safe, professionally-facilitated reflection spaces for faculty and students to unpack the ways in which white supremacist practices show up within educational and research settings.
4. Equitable and just funding mechanisms that proactively support minority-serving institutions and URM students and faculty.

From our experience in embodying these principles, we will shine a light on some modest wins over systemic obstructions and some failures that highlight the need for comprehensive reforms in this space. The obstructions many URM face are symptoms of inequitable institutional practices that protect the status quo. Reforming our institutions requires a collective commitment by our field to center the voices and leadership of URM students and faculty who are fighting every day to create a more inclusive and just discipline.