

UFERN 2021 Network Meeting Workshop Descriptions

All workshops are on March 2nd from 1:15 – 2:45 pm eastern time.

Know Before You Go: Pre-Orientation Program Trailers as an Approach to Support Inclusion by Demystifying Field Experiences

How do we make field experiences more approachable for students new to research and our study sites? To support participation by students underrepresented in science, we must work to balance out differences in prior experience and situational knowledge and to bridge cultural differences in perceptions of field work and field stations. One feasible approach is to create a ‘pre-orientation site trailer’ that helps orient students, and potentially their families, to the realities of station life and field work associated with our programs. In this workshop we will work together to explore the contents and production of pre-orientation videos. Preparation will combine inclusivity and field safety considerations (beginning with Demery & Pipkin 2020) with DIY video creation guidance from The Virtual Field (OBFS) and LTER. The session will include time to discuss important content elements, a tool to support individualized planning, and guidance on how to elicit ideas and feedback from your site’s research community. We’ll engage with these elements in short work sessions via Zoom and Google. The workshop agenda prioritizes starter sessions and feedback opportunities to lower the barriers to getting production underway. The resources provided will remain available for use during ongoing production.

Mentoring Undergraduates through Field Research at Field Stations and Marine Labs

This workshop will introduce participants to existing resources that field researchers can use to enhance their ability to mentor undergraduate students, including 1) Entering Mentoring training curriculum, an evidence-based, interactive, facilitated mentor training program, 2) NSF Geosciences Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Handbook on steps to preparing and supporting engaging and inclusive mentors. A discussion of current needs and interests of field researchers, field stations, and marine labs around mentoring will follow wrapping up with a focus on future directions to advance mentor development of undergraduates participating in field research. Topics to be included are: mentoring students virtually/developing a virtual community of scholars, developing an Indigenous land acknowledgement and other diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, models of mentoring, and supporting mentors navigating pandemic resumption research plans. This conversation will give particular attention to the needs of researchers to develop mentoring practices that help support and retain undergraduate students who have been historically underrepresented in field and marine experiences.

Developing Effective Codes of Conduct (ADVANCE workshop)

The foundation of a positive work and learning program climate is professionalism. Professionalism refers to the attitudes and behaviors that affect interpersonal relations of all types in professional settings. These relations include concepts of power, trust, respect, responsibility, justice, and fairness. Social structures that have hierarchical and asymmetric power relations have the potential for colleagues in positions of power to use this power to enable and enrich or abuse and diminish individuals. This can endanger professional and personal well-being, contribute to hostile work climates, and reduce productivity, research, and education outcomes. Ultimately, issues related to hostile work and learning climates can affect program success.

This workshop will provide resources to develop a departmental, field station, or undergraduate field program code of conduct that is proactive, preventative and promotes cultural change in office, laboratory, and field settings. In this workshop, participants will 1) identify best practices when developing a code of conduct; 2) work in groups to identify the strengths and weaknesses of examples of codes of conduct; and 3) identify any unique spaces or environments that need to be considered when developing codes of conduct. A special emphasis will be placed on the field setting in this workshop.

“What is the Field and Who is in it?”: A Continued Discussion

This need for this workshop/discussion emerged from the limitations and challenges that are facing traditional approaches to field courses and research. These challenges and limitations, including the global pandemic, funding/institutional support, issues of equity, access and inclusion, have opened spaces to critically examine the essence of the “field.” We ask: Who is in these spaces? Who is not and why? What types of experiences are central? What outcomes do we hope for? What is the field and where is it located? We hope by exploring these questions and centering on how we define the field, we may work towards a newly imagined “field space” that promotes not only learning and positive affective outcomes, but inclusion, equity and access.

In this workshop, participants will collaboratively continue the discussion started in the panel, bringing a diversity of perspectives and knowledge. We imagine the time to be focused on group discussion and brainstorming, allowing space for participants to continue to further grapple with and process these big questions. We plan to end with time to think about “next steps” and what a re-envisioned field would truly mean.