Northern Gulf of Alaska-Long Term Ecological Research (NGA-LTER) Code of Conduct

The NGA-LTER code of conduct outlines expected conduct in the field, in laboratories, during meetings, and in professional interactions with the public. It underscores our desire to provide a research environment that promotes respect, is safe and productive, and provides the entire NGA-LTER community with a platform for success. Violations of this code of conduct may have serious repercussions for the NGA-LTER program and its home institutions.

The NGA-LTER community represents several institutions, and this document is meant to complement the institutional codes of conduct of all NGA-LTER participants. It is expected that all NGA-LTER participants (in any capacity) should abide by the NGA-LTER code of conduct.

Expectations from all LTER Participants

- Participants are treated with respect and consideration independent of career level, caste, class, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, participatory role, physical appearance, race, religion, sexual orientation, or tribe.
- Participants contribute towards the NGA-LTER goals through professional behavior, research integrity, and transparent communication that values diversity of views and opinions.
- Participants conduct activities safely whether in the field, laboratory, or university setting by following established protocols, being aware of potential hazards, voicing concerns, and caring for each other's safety.
- Participants respect the rules and policies of research vessels, the Seward Marine Center, research institutions, lodging establishments, and meeting venues.
- Participants assign due credit when sharing scientific findings formally and informally with the rest of the NGA-LTER community and other stakeholders.
- Robust exchange of ideas is expected and encouraged. Participants should voice differences in opinion as critique of ideas rather than individuals.

Unacceptable behavior

- Discrimination of any kind including, but not limited to, career level, caste, class, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, participatory role, physical appearance, race, religion, sexual orientation, or tribe.
- Disrespectful behavior or attitudes towards local communities. This includes, but is not limited to, dismissal or disrespect for Indigenous Knowledge, values, and cultures, as well as local knowledge and ways of life.
- Harassment or intimidation in any form including microaggressions*. These include verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

- Sexual or physical assault.
- Disorderly conduct.
- Intoxication.
- Possession or use of recreational drugs, alcohol, or other intoxicating substances as described in UAF policy 02.09.030.
- Any action that endangers participants.
- Failure to comply with reasonable requests from vessel's crews, NGA-LTER staff, venue/lodging personnel, employees of research institutions, or community members.
- Lack of research or academic integrity.

*Microaggressions have been described by psychologist Derald W. Sue as: "The everyday slights, indignities, put downs and insults that people of color, women, LGBT populations or those who are marginalized experience in their day-to-day interactions with people."

Reporting

Inappropriate behavior, safety concerns, or assault should be reported immediately. Retaliation is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

- *If you see something, say something*. Safety concerns should be reported to the person in charge during a given situation (e.g., the bosun on deck, lab manager, etc.). Everyone has the right to voice safety concerns and halt operations until concerns are addressed. Concerns will be taken seriously, and when appropriate, adjustments will be made.
- Inappropriate behavior such as harassment, intimidation, discrimination, or sexual misconduct should be reported. Reports will be confidential and, when possible, anonymous within Title IX reporting requirements.

Reporting Options

The person to report to will depend on circumstances, but in general the project lead is responsible to respond first to issues within their group. Other options are listed below:

- If you are comfortable addressing concerns due to inappropriate behavior, please directly communicate the issue to the individual so they can modify their behavior.
- Alternatively, to the responsible principal investigator (PI), project lead, the Code of Conduct Committee, or the Care and Conflict Resolution Team.
- Report discrimination you have experienced or witnessed to your supervisor, an NGA-LTER PI, and/or the institution's Equity and Compliance Department (see resources below).
- Report sexual misconduct or assault you have experienced or witnessed to your project lead, an NGA-LTER PI, the Chief Scientist, the captain of the ship, and/or the institution's Title IX representative (see resources below). Please note faculty and staff of academic institutions are mandatory reporters to the Title IX office of any allegations of sexual misconduct or assault.

- If you do not feel comfortable reporting directly to your supervisor, project lead, NGA-LTER PI, captain, or institutional representative, you may instead work with the Care and Conflict Resolution Team to assist in reporting the inappropriate behavior through institutional avenues (see resources below).
- Conduct that violates criminal laws may also be reported to law enforcement.

Responding to Reports

Within 48 hours after a report has been made, a NGA-LTER PI, project lead/chief scientist, or a member of the NGA-LTER Executive Committee will reach out to the complainant and any person impacted by the behavior described to ascertain what course of action can be taken to improve the situation or stop the inappropriate behavior. Resolution will depend on the circumstances.

When appropriate, NGA-LTER group members can provide mediation during conflict via leadership representatives such as an NGA-LTER principal investigator (PI), project lead, the Care and Conflict Resolution Team, or the Chief Scientist or Captain when at sea.

When appropriate, the individual institution where the issue was reported should provide conflict resolution, for example via staff at the UAF Office of Rights, Compliance and Accountability or Human Resources.

The Chief Scientist and NGA-LTER Executive Committee may take immediate actions to ensure the physical and psychological safety of NGA-LTER participants. Immediate actions are temporary changes that address pressing concerns or danger.

NGA LTER Code of Conduct Committee

Complaints related to the Code of Conduct will be referred to the NGA-LTER Code of Conduct Committee (CoCC) for review. The CoCC will be composed of three members, appointed by the Executive Committee, with preference for named principal investigators who serve or have previously served on another relevant committee, such as the Fairness and Unity committee. CoCC members should recuse themselves if they are involved in the complaint, have a supervisor-supervisee relationship or familial relationship with those involved with the CoC violation, or otherwise feel that they are unable to address the complaint in an impartial manner due to a conflict. If a CoCC member is recused then an alternate will be appointed.

Investigation

The CoCC will investigate the complaint by collecting and reviewing information. Depending on the findings of an investigation, the CoCC may choose to modify the immediate action that was taken, and/or implement additional repercussions, up to and including dismissal from the NGA-LTER program. An investigation may take significant time and additional necessary action, such as a Title IX hearing, to complete. In the case of a concurrent Title IX or law enforcement

investigation, the CoCC may choose to enforce temporary consequences prior to other Title IX/law enforcement outcomes. Care will be taken not to compromise other investigations by consulting with legal advisors.

The complainant will be informed of steps being taken in response to their disclosure, to the extent that doing so maintains confidentiality of those directly impacted. If information about a CoC violation was gathered from research cruise participants, a project-wide discussion may be held to debrief the process. During the debrief, identifying or confidential information will remain undisclosed, and will be conducted in consultation with appropriate offices such as UAF's Office of Rights, Compliance and Accountability, Human Resources, and/or the Center for Student's Rights and Responsibilities. This is intended to both respect the confidence and trust of those involved, and to inform the NGA-LTER community on how concerns are being addressed. While we respect the privacy of those involved, absolute confidentiality may not be able to be maintained in all circumstances, especially in cases where the university must take action to protect the safety of others.

A person who feels they have been unfairly accused of violating the Code of Conduct may contact members of the NGA-LTER CoCC or appropriate University of Alaska officials. The CoCC will respond to such grievances within 7 days. University of Alaska officials may take longer to respond. University of Alaska employees should also contact UA Human Resources or Center for Student's Rights and Responsibilities.

Consequences

Minor Infractions

Minor infractions of the Code of Conduct need to be proactively dealt with before issues escalate or repeat. A documented pattern of repeated minor infractions may be elevated to the level of a major infraction (see below).

Examples of minor infractions:

- Shouting at someone during scientific operations.
- Inappropriate jokes.
- Disorderly conduct.
- Acting with disrespect towards local communities, ship crew, or other interacting parties.
- Repeatedly misgendering someone.
- Failing to provide appropriate acknowledgement/credit to collaborators during publication.

Examples of consequences:

- Formal warning.
- Mediation between persons involved.

- Request for apology and/or making amends.
- Provision of additional resources and/or training.

Major Infractions

Major infractions include conduct that hampers the ability to conduct core activities effectively and safely, interpersonal conflict that is significantly impacting the wellbeing of others, and conduct that creates a significant and/or repeated risk of harm for self or others.

Examples of major infractions:

- A pattern of repeated minor infractions that have been documented and investigated.
- Use or possession of unprescribed controlled substances onboard a research vessel.
- Disregard for safety protocols.
- Sexual or physical assault.
- Harassment.

Examples of consequences:

- Reporting infraction to an individual's institution.
- Required training.
- Reassignment of berths.
- Reassignment of duties.
- Removal from a research cruise.
- Dismissal from participation in the NGA-LTER program.

Consequences may also include those adopted by individual institutions where the behavior was reported.

Resources

INSTITUTIONAL

- University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)
  - UAF Office of Rights, Compliance, and Accountability (ORCA)
    Phone: 907-474-7300
    Email: uaf-orca@alaska.edu
  - UA Accountability and Compliance
  - UA Confidential Hotline
    Phone: 855-251-5719
- University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC)
  - UCSC Title IX Office
    Phone: 831-459-2462
    Email: titleix@ucsc.edu
  - UCSC Center for Advocacy, Resources, and Empowerment (CARE)
- Western Washington University (WWU)
  - WWU Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance Office
    Phone: (360) 650-3307
    Email: crtc@wwu.edu

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Alaska State Troopers
  - Phone: 907-451-5100
- UAF Police
  - Phone: 907-474-7721

OTHER RESOURCES

- RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline
  - Phone: 800-656-HOPE or Text 'HOPE' to 64673
- Interior Alaska Center for Nonviolent Living (local to Fairbanks, AK)
  - Phone: 907-452-2293 (local); 800-478-7273 (toll free)
- LTER Network Meeting Code of Conduct
- ADVANCEGeo
- FieldFutures