How Geology and Geological Engineering (GGE) is creating a culture of inclusion and increasing accessibility

GGE DI&A Committee: Yvette Kuiper (chair), Donna Anderson, Mary Carr, Ben Frieman, Luke Gezovich, Adrienne Marshall, Lauren Guido, Danica Roth, Bruce Trudgill

This year, GGE focused on two primary goals: (1) building a more inclusive and interconnected department through community events and communications, and (2) increasing access by implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in one course, addressing potential barriers to entry into our department, and ensuring all our students, faculty and staff have access to information, resources and support.

Inclusion is important to GGE because:
- Without inclusion, diversity and equity can not be sustained
- It is the key to ensuring everyone feels they belong and can thrive in our department

Access is important to GGE because:
- Geology is rooted in colonialism (Pico, 2019) and ableism (Carabajal et al, 2017), both of which impede students’ ability to participate.
- If we don’t address access barriers, then we can’t be representative of the communities we serve and we can’t produce the best solutions or science.

**OVERVIEW/INTRODUCTION**

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**OUR GOALS ALIGN WITH THE FOLLOWING FROM THE DI&A STRATEGIC PLAN:**

- **CULTURE OF INCLUSION #1 and #5**
- **RETENTION #1**
- **SHARED RESPONSIBILITY #1, #2 and #3**

**DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK**

Goal 1: Interconnected Community

GECCo increased feelings of belonging and connectedness for most participants!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My feelings of belonging to the GGE department increased</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My feelings of connectedness to other students and faculty increased</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have made new friends or colleagues in GGE that I otherwise wouldn't have interacted with</td>
<td>24%</td>
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**Outcomes and Impact**

Donations helped 9 students attend field camp!

Donated Items included:
- 3 sleeping bags
- 2 tents
- 4 rain jackets/pants
- 6 pairs warm socks

**LOOKING AHEAD**

Activities to expand on:
- Integrate UDL into all sections of GEOL 102
- Add DEI workshop topics into GECCo activities and expand to GP, MN and PE departments.
- Fundraising efforts for field camp equipment drive – tap into alumni
- Department temperature check on belonging and feeling welcome in GGE

**What students are saying:**

- “The new 3D maps helped me understand how the lines on the paper maps relate to altitude”
- “It was hard to meet people at first as a new student in GGE. I went to the coffee hour and now I have a study group of friends.”
- “I was so grateful for the equipment donations. If I couldn’t get a tent, I wouldn’t have been able to go, and that would’ve set me back for graduation!”