PNW Just Futures Institute for Racial and Climate Justice
Vision, Mission, and Justice Principles

Vision

We imagine just futures that value climate and racial justice narratives by BIPOC, low income, rural, working, and migrant communities in the U.S. Pacific Northwest.

Mission

Our collective work is constituted by various research and digital open-access projects, as well as capacity building initiatives to support emerging climate and racial justice leaders, specifically in BIPOC, low income, rural, working, and migrant communities.

Research and Data Justice Principles[1]

We are committed to ethical research and dissemination practices delineated in a series of research justice principles that seek to decolonize historically hierarchical university-community relationships:

Relationship Building, not Extractive Research Models:

As scholars, we are committed to sustaining the long-term health of all communities with whom we collaborate and co-lead projects. We allocate time to meet and listen to collaborators, to engage their interests and needs, and to work within timelines that accommodate community circumstances and calendars. We do not seek to extract knowledge in a utilitarian way (for articles or policy processes). In collaborations, we co-produce the knowledge and follow the lead of the communities that have trusted us to bring us into their fold. We draw from research and data justice frameworks produced by community-based organizations, such as the Coalition of Communities of Color and the Movement Strategy Center, as well as the Environmental Justice Principles articulated by the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit (October 24-27, 1991, Washington DC) to design and implement collaborative research, digital, and participatory-action projects. When producing solo-authored traditional scholarship (literary and cultural analysis, historical texts, etc.) we seek informal and formal feedback that can evaluate the quality of the work as well as any potential harm it may cause to communities represented in it,

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[1] Lead Author: Alaí Reyes-Santos. Principles concerning digital projects adapted by Rachael Sol Lee from the Digital Project Service Level Agreement, authored by Kate Thornhill and Franny Gaede (UO Libraries Digital Scholarship Services).

especially our most vulnerable communities. Projects that require human subjects review will be especially mindful about the specific vulnerabilities faced by our partner communities.

Community and Capacity Building:

Our motivation is to offer tools, expertise, institutional resources, skill sets, and access that can serve long-term community and capacity building efforts around climate and racial justice — while transforming how universities produce knowledge with BIPOC, low income, rural, working, and migrant communities. We collaborate, co-create, co-lead, partner, defer to, listen to, and seek feedback.

Respect for Community Expertise:

We value — and honor — local knowledge. Communities collaborating with the Institute are the experts on their experience and systems of knowledge production. All stages of each project are undertaken in open dialogue and collaboration with community partners around questions, content, lines of inquiry, modes of inquiry, findings, and dissemination.

Accountability:

We are accountable to the communities we serve both on and off-campus. We co-develop MOUs with collaborators that clearly state time commitments, roles and responsibilities, timelines, conflict resolution strategies, decision-making processes, and modes of reciprocity. Community-based organizations, tribes, and participants involved in research projects must have their time and energy honored through reciprocity (traditional gifts, honoraria, work exchange, deliverable, etc.) previously agreed upon by all parties. Research findings and dissemination tools are reviewed by a Community Council with representatives from pertinent community and/or university partners as well as UO's Innovation Partnership Services before they are made public. All collaborations are properly credited in any dissemination platform (digital, oral, written, audio, etc.). We also encourage collaborative ownership of work in any ways that make sense to specific research teams, such as developing community/university advisory bodies and co-authoring articles/books/websites/curriculum/tools with on- and off-campus partners.

Protection of Intellectual Property:

Copyright or intellectual property licensing practices required by the Mellon Foundation and approved by UO protect the right to access and disseminate research findings, interests, and vulnerabilities of communities represented in any archival and dissemination tools. All digital deliverables will be covered

under a non-commercial, educational, Creative Common license that does not allow production of derivatives without proper permission. Data information privacy and security will be reviewed to ensure digital project user accounts and project data are aligned with the principles of the UO Libraries Privacy Statement and appropriate UO privacy and information security compliance standards, e.g. IRB, FERPA, HIPAA, etc. Credit for collaborative work will be legible and fair, noting current as well as past involvements. We are especially conscientious about acknowledging contributors who historically have been and still often are left unnamed in research projects, such as community members, undergraduate and graduate students, and staff. We are currently exploring ways to also engage Indigenous-led efforts to protect intellectual and cultural property, cultural heritage, environmental data and genetic resources within digital environments, such as *Local Contexts*.

Awareness of Social Location:

We are self-reflexive about how our particular social location impacts power dynamics in any collaboration. We practice when and how to speak/communicate and when to remain silent to engage what others are communicating in a way that ensures that all get their voices considered at the table. We practice leadership that is inclusive and open, while being transparent about who holds power or who are the people who have the last word on a specific project. Partners in community-based organizations will be understood as having the last word. The MOU specifies how power dynamics are navigated. We also note cultural differences within our research teams and make sure they are valued and incorporated in research design and implementation.

Research Transforms the Researcher:

We are transformed by the research, documentation, and dissemination work we do. We are humble. We are committed to have our initial assumptions questioned and receive generous, respectful, and constructive feedback. We acknowledge that we are constantly transformed personally and professionally in our interactions with one another. We recognize and require that these efforts take time, and that we will honor that time and push for institutions of higher learning to value this fragile space.

Gender, Economic, and Dis/Ability Justice is Central:

All projects engage racial and climate justice through a lens that recognizes how they are interwoven with gender, economic, and disability justice. Misogyny, homo/transphobia, heteronormativity, ableism, and poverty contributes to climate and racial injustice in communities. Our projects recognize the ways in which multiple sites of oppression intersect through (1) an engagement with Ethnic Studies, Feminist and Queer Studies, Disability Studies, Planning, Design,

and Policy research, and Environmental Studies scholarship; (2) research design that is inclusive and aware of differential power dynamics in research teams and constituencies; (3) an inclusive workspace for women, queer/trans, gender non-confirming and non-binary, dis/abled, and low income individuals and communities; (4) an ethics of care; (5) a commitment to accessibility.

Empathy and Compassion:

All work must be shaped by an ethics of care characterized by empathy and compassion among the Institute's university and community-based partners. Timelines are essential to meet our collective goals. And we are creative and willing to adapt plans to meet deadlines, while supporting communal physical and emotional health. Time changes as our work adapts to emerging circumstances and we find the support we need. What seemed impossible may be possible after all. We provide and receive feedback with compassion, wishing to support and construct with one another.

Accessibility:

We engage all research partners and institutional accessibility experts in conversations about the best formats to collect, produce, and disseminate information and about the best tools for a specific project. We may experiment with a variety of formats (digital, multimedia, academic articles, op-eds, reports, presentations, public conversations, exhibitions, studios, workshops, art) to ensure as much accessibility as possible to completed projects. We are mindful of the digital divide, social disparities, linguistic diversity, and varying physical abilities as we develop dissemination platforms. Digital projects should be designed to be used comfortably and communicate information regardless of ambient conditions or a user's sensory abilities.

Digital Project Preservation and Sustainability:

We are thoughtful about the long-term impacts of our research. For digital projects subject to the limits of media failure or technology changes, we will develop policies, strategies, and actions that ensure access to digital assets and digital projects over a pre-established period of time or in perpetuity. Before the start of a digital project, digital asset quality will be evaluated in consultation and coordination with other UO Libraries information professionals and technologists to ensure longevity, integrity, and accessibility. This includes post-project plans for the people, funding, policies, and other resources necessary to ensure a digital project is usable and accessible. In consultation with the UO Libraries Digital Scholarship Services and Innovative Partnership Services offices, we will strive to always use interoperable and open standards for digital file formats and metadata to support digital asset utility, access, representation, and archiving for future content use. Post-project sustainability — the actions of updating software,

a solving technical problem, adding new functions, fixing bugs to support access and preservation of a digital project — will be determined before a project begins. Teams will document how the digital project will be compiled, delivered, and maintained to support future growth and maintenance.

Digital Stewardship:

We honor our collaborators' shared visions by developing workflows that ensure efficient and mutually beneficial project outcomes. The Digital Project Charter, from the UO DSS Digital Project Service Level Agreement, will be used across digital projects to establish agreements on the following: project intention, plans for ongoing assessment and evaluation, team member roles and communication channels, budgetary resources, and technology platform and access. Digital project workflows will be determined and planned before the start of a digital project. In the event that digital project workflows are not working to the best of their abilities then there will be appropriate project pauses. Once paused, there will be a workflows review, remediation, and project timeline modification. After these actions are completed then the project will continue.