

AGU Bridge Program

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What is the AGU Bridge Program?

Two key components:

- Advancing equitable practices in graduate geoscience departments
- Direct support of individuals interested in pursuing an advanced degree

40+ partner departments across the US work to expand equitable educational practices and review student applications via the Bridge Program.

Interested applicants apply with one application for admission consideration by AGU Bridge partners. Accepted students become Bridge Fellows and receive support from AGU and the department

AGU

BRIDGE PROGRAM

What does it mean to be an AGU Bridge Fellow?

Graduate
school
onboarding

Bridge Fellow
Online Community

AGU Fall
Meeting
Engagement

Sharing
of relevant
AGU and non-
AGU resources

AGU
membership

Virtual gatherings with
other Bridge Fellows
each semester

AGU Bridge Fellows

 **x42**  **x24**
Students Departments

**Currently
Enrolled**

25

**Students
are first
generation
students**

5

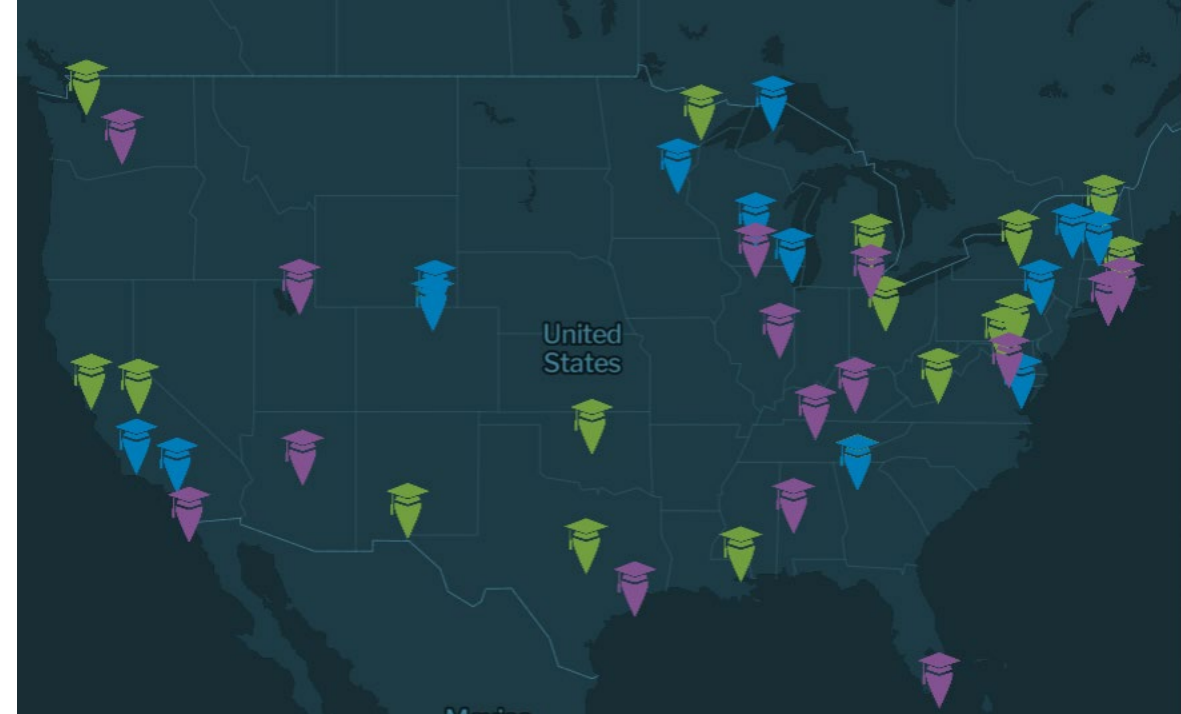
**Students
Identify as
having a
Disability**

 **x1**
Student

Graduated

Current AGU Bridge Partners

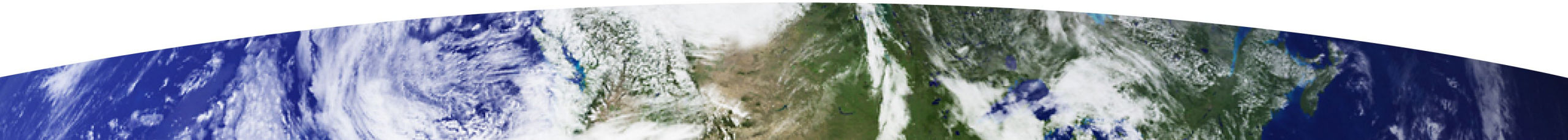
- 46 departments across the US
 - 13 are Minority Serving Institutions
- Department leaders engage with AGU and IGEN through:
 - National meetings
 - Workshops
 - Virtual journal club
 - AGU Heads & Chairs program
 - Discussion with other Bridge department leaders across disciplines
 - Student selection through the IGEN application portal
 - Student progress reports



<https://www.agu.org/bridge-program>

Examples of Practices

- First year graduate seminar to expose the hidden curriculum of graduate school
- Eliminating GRE and implementing rubric-based, holistic application review
- Adding transparency to department website/handbook on how admission and funding decisions are made
- Implicit bias training for students and faculty
- Specific guidance centered on advising and mentoring
- Relocation funds
- Peer mentoring and community building activities



Initial Evaluation Results

Successes

Over 80 percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that their mentors treat them with respect (87%), provide constructive feedback (85%), and are available when they need support or guidance (85%).

Over 75% of faculty members indicated that their department's admissions and recruitment practices have changed due to their involvement with an ACS/AGU/APS Bridge Program.

Challenges

During interviews and focus groups, nearly every student, from across all three disciplines, described feeling imposter syndrome. Students often mentioned feeling an inherent need to prove themselves to the faculty and students at their institution, in part because they were admitted into a Bridge Program as opposed to other avenues.

Nearly 90% [of faculty] also agreed or strongly agreed their cultural identities may influence their mentoring practices and relationships. Corresponding to responses in the student survey, Bridge faculty expressed less confidence in broaching the topic of race/ethnicity with their mentees. Only 64% agreed or strongly agreed that they broach the topic of race with their students. However: Fewer students agreed or strongly agreed that their mentors are sensitive to institutional racism (68%), recognize their cultural identities influence their mentoring practices (58%), and recognize cultural differences can impact their mentor-mentee relationship (50%). As was the case in the previous three years, the fewest number of students agreed or strongly agreed that their faculty mentor broaches the topic of race or ethnicity with them (22%).