MENTORING DIVERSE STUDENTS – BEST PRACTICES
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WHAT DOES MENTORING MEAN TO YOU?

SOME EXAMPLES OF CHALLENGES YOU HAVE HAD

WHAT DO WE GAIN BY MENTORING A DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE GROUP OF STUDENTS?

EFFECTIVE MENTORING INVOLVES UNDERSTANDING STUDENT’S IDENTITIES, COMMUNITIES, AND GOALS

• First generation?
• Underrepresented?
• Women in STEM?

WHAT IMPACTS WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE SEE, AND WHAT MAKES US FEEL INCLUDED?

• http://web.jhu.edu/dlc/resources/diversity_wheel/
YOU HAVE RECRUITED STUDENTS FROM A DIVERSE ARRAY OF BACKGROUNDS.

NOW, HOW TO MAKE SURE THEY FEEL WELCOME, SUCCESSFUL, VALUED AND MENTORED!

MENTORING IS ALL ABOUT RETENTION

“There just came a day when I had to ask myself, Why am I here? Is it worth it? Hardly anyone talks to me. I know most of them (students and teachers) don’t think I’m as smart as they are. They don’t think I earned my place here. Maybe they don’t even like me. Do I have to take this crap?”

(Johnson-Bailey, 2004)

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE RETENTION

• Negative classroom interactions
• Family responsibilities
• Insensitive institutional atmosphere
• Class schedule
• Support structures centered on traditional students
• Apathetic advisor

IMPORTANCE OF A PEER NETWORK

Mentoring is NOT just about the faculty-student relationship

IMPICIT BIAS

• Watch: Alan Alda as part of a Scientific American Video
  • https://www.sci.am/shows/article/722992

How Do We Know We Have Bias?

TAKE THE IMPLICIT BIAS TEST TO LEARN MORE!

• https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/

A very important outcome of this research – biases are ‘plastic’ and can be remodeled, with work.
VALUE OF MENTORING IN ADVANCING DIVERSITY IN SCIENCE

• In a recent study of leadership in the medical field, it was found that metrics of success correlated well to opportunities provided by a mentor/sponsor (Paton et al., 2017).

• “For both men and women in academic medicine, being sponsored was associated with success defined by typical metrics emphasized in the academic promotions process, like publications, grants, and leadership positions.”

• Men reported higher levels of mentoring/sponsorship.

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BEST PRACTICES IN MENTORING FOR DIVERSITY

• Consider, and accommodate, needs of family (family-friendly policies)

• Offer additional mentoring or opportunities that give students a step ahead
  •Summer research experiences
  •Connect students with campus-wide resources or programs for diversity

• Discuss challenges that face diverse groups
  • Imposter syndrome
  • Implicit bias and stereotype threat

• Encourage strong building of networks
  • Connect to other scholars & mentors
  • Pair newer and more advanced students together
  • Provide support for attendance to diverse meetings (e.g., SACNAS)
  • Provide support for memberships to National Center for Faculty Diversity & Development

• Carefully consider language you use in letters of recommendation

• Consider how your research, teaching, or activities may exclude students of differing abilities, financial stability, or backgrounds (do a self-assessment)

• Bolster the feeling of “belonging”
  • Consider the messages you send in your own language, room décor, discussion facilitation

• Acknowledge that school (undergraduate, graduate) can be challenging to students from all backgrounds

• Assess your expectations and your student’s expectations about mentoring

MENTORING ASSESSMENT

CONNECTIONS TO OTHER TOPICS/SESSIONS

• Safety in the field

• Campus resources for sexual harassment and mental health

• Others?
EXTRA SLIDES

WHEN IS MENTORING IMPORTANT?  
(TESSA Posted this question on Twitter)

- A suite of responses, including:
  - In early stages of scientific career when students are trying to make decisions about their future
  - During 'transition' phases from one step to another
  - Dealing with harassment or negative academic culture
  - When trying to juggle family/life responsibilities with career
  - When seeking advice on challenges in this career

‘BEST PRACTICES’ ARE COMPILED FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES:

- https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/3-myths-plus-a-few-best-practices-for-achieving-diversity/
- https://www.slideshare.net/utepgrad/mentoring-diverse-students
- https://tomforth.co.uk/genderbias/
- https://www.theiagd.org/research-literature/
- https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/
- https://web.jhu.edu/dlc/resources/diversity_wheel/

- http://tedc.by/4Ee5T