Mentoring Diverse Students: Best Practices

# What does mentoring mean to you? What are some examples of challenges you’ve had/ observed?

# What do we gain by mentoring a diverse & inclusive group of students?

Effective mentoring involves understanding students’ identities, communities, and goals.

* Some identities are visible: person of color, woman
* Some identities are invisible: first generation, religion

# Mentoring is all about Retention

Factors that influence retention:

* Negative classroom interactions
* Family responsibilities
* Insensitive institutional atmosphere
  + Class schedule
  + Support structures centered on traditional students
* Apathetic advisors

# Importance of a Peer Network: how do you create a space for peers to support each other?

Mentoring is NOT just about the faculty-student relationship, for example, Peer-to-Peer mentoring

* Less of a power dynamic
* Can address cultural diversity in ways the advisor may not be able to
* Expands networking opportunities
* Opportunity to collaboratively problem solve, share ideas and perspectives, and develop community and thus serves as a mechanism for developing independence and career self-efficacy

(tips from Horner-Devine, M. C., Gonsalves, T., Margherio, C., Mizumori, S. J., & Yen, J. W. (2018). Beyond hierarchical one-on-one mentoring, *Science, 362*(6414), 532.

# Implicit Bias

We all carry biases about other individuals and groups, but this is plastic and can be remodeled with work.

# Value of mentoring in advancing diversity in science

* Greater retention
* Greater production
* Higher quality work

# 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
* Discuss challenges that face diverse groups
* Encourage strong building of networks
* 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”
* Acknowledge that school (undergraduate, graduate) can be challenging to students from all backgrounds
* Assess your expectations and your student’s expectations about mentoring