Mentoring for Diversity, Mentoring for Success
National Postdoctoral Association

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“Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave.”
National Institutes of Health Draft Report of the Advisory Committee to the Director Working Group on Diversity in the Biomedical Research Workforce
Key Points
The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has long recognized that achieving diversity in the biomedical and behavioral research workforce is critical to ensuring that the best and brightest minds have the opportunity to contribute to the realization of our national research goals.
....diversity in biomedicine still falls far short of mirroring that of the U.S. population

.... disturbing discrepancy in success rates for research grant (R01) applications between White applicants and Black applicants, even after controlling for numerous observable variables, was reported in 2011 by Ginther, et al.
ACD Recommendations
*Increasing the number of URM in the workforce pipeline

*Mentoring URM scientists and strengthening the infrastructure of comparatively under-resourced institutions with a documented track record of producing and supporting URM scientists

*The potential role of bias
The Importance of Diversity
Increasing Creativity - Diverse teams working together and capitalizing on individuality and distinct perspectives outperform homogenous teams.
*Broadening the Scope of Inquiry - Increasing workforce diversity helps to expand the range of research questions, some of which may have been neglected.*
Narrowing the Health Gap - While the United States has been a global leader in improving health throughout the world, significant health inequities and disparities continue to persist on our own shores. Former Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher has suggested that a diverse team of researchers will be more likely to ask and pursue the most appropriate questions in the most appropriate manner — whether in basic and clinical research, or in health services- and behavioral research (Satcher, 2009).
Promoting and Ensuring Fairness - The NIH is a steward of public funds, and as a matter of basic fairness, the agency should ensure that access to careers in biomedical investigation is equally open to all Americans. Furthermore, in a society where past discrimination has conditioned current workforce demographics, it is important that neither historical wrongs nor emerging circumstances hamper the pursuit of biomedical and behavioral research careers by underrepresented minorities.
Mentoring
*The availability and quality of mentoring support for graduate students and newly graduated doctorates as an important variable in successfully enhancing the proportion of URM students.*
*Having access to an experienced mentor to help shape a junior investigator’s ideas and formulate a compelling proposal could help level the playing field for URM scientists.
*Engaging well-established senior scientists at research-intensive institutions directly in mentoring, nurturing, and supporting URM scientists across the country is necessary and important.
*NIH should partner with established minority scientific and professional groups and other trusted organizations to implement a system of mentorship “networks” for underrepresented minority students that will provide career guidance throughout their career development.
COMMITMENT
...the disparity in R01 funding between applications submitted by Black and White investigators in a later cohort (2006-2010) and revealed a large difference in the number of applicants and applications from underrepresented minorities compared to Whites. Of particular significance, the number of African American or Black applicants who applied for grants in the basic sciences was a very small fraction of the whole, 1 percent, compared to that of White applicants who comprised 64.6 percent of this pool.
The NIH is a steward of public funds, and as a matter of basic fairness, the agency should ensure that access to careers in biomedical investigation is equally open to all Americans. Furthermore, in a society where past discrimination has conditioned current workforce demographics, it is important that neither historical wrongs nor emerging circumstances hamper the pursuit of biomedical and behavioral research careers by underrepresented minorities. Without urgent and deliberate action to increase the diversity of the biomedical and behavioral research workforce, the inequities will become even more challenging for future generations.
PROFESSIONALISM
Traditional mentors...advisors who have career experience and share their knowledge of it; supporters who give emotional and moral encouragement; tutors who provide specific feedback on performance; employers to graduate students; sponsors who are sources of information and opportunities; and models of identity who serve as academic role models.
The notion of traditional mentoring lacks appropriate attention to cultural competence, and thus is likely to be inadequate for Black, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders scientists, as well as for recent immigrants.
*Adviser, Teacher, Role Model, and Friend: On Being a Mentor to Students in Science and Engineering. National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine

*Mentoring Minority and Underrepresented Students, Harvard University

*University of Michigan, Quick Tips for Promising Practices Mentoring

*Science Mentoring

*Felder, P., On Doctoral Student Development: Exploring Faculty Mentoring in the shaping of African-American Doctoral Student Success
Mentor Roles
Mentor Roles

*providing career guidance (socialization to institutional norms, design and implementation of research, writing for publication, teaching and advising, presentations, writing grant

*providing emotional support (understanding and respecting cultural-racial norms, facilitating a welcoming environment, building productive working relationships)
Mentee Roles
Mentee Roles

*understanding faculty/post-doc power dynamic
*understanding mentee responsibilities
*understanding institutional norms
*understanding rules of co-authorship
*understanding rules of research ownership
*explaining/articulating cultural-racial norms
Types of Mentoring Programs

* university-specific mentoring programs

* external, professional association mentoring

* mentoring by a consortium of colleges and universities (e.g., HBCUs)

* models that include a combination of any of the above
ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION
THANK YOU!