

Guideline for Inclusive Mentoring



The mentor-mentee relationship has traditionally been at the heart of educating the next generation of scientists. It is important to create an inclusive environment for these scientists. There is evidence that diverse groups of mentors are more successful at mentoring and provide better insight to mentees. The goal of this document is to highlight important aspects of this relationship to guide you in creating an inclusive mentoring environment.

Selecting mentees

- ✓ Be open to different types of mentees. Some mentees are already excelling, while others may need your help to succeed.
- ✓ Be inclusive and evaluate candidate-mentees objectively. In addition to common biases (age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, etc.), be aware of academia-specific biases such as GPA, academic lineage, or affinity bias (favoring mentees who follow the same career path as you). To help become aware of these potential biases, we recommend undergoing implicit bias training (such as Project Implicit).
- ✓ Reflect on your own privileges (e.g., Inclusive Teaching) as a way of recognizing systemic discrimination.



Communicating and interacting with mentees

- ✓ Always be supportive of your mentee(s). Give them credit, help them network, and always have their best interests in mind. Treat all mentees with respect.
- ✓ Adjust your mentoring style and expectations based on the needs and goals of the mentee, which can change over time. Not all mentees are the same – each mentee has their own strengths and weaknesses.
- ✓ Keep an open mind about what type of mentoring your mentee may need. Mentoring can come from different sources, and mentees may require access to different types of advice at different stages of their career. Advise your mentee to seek out additional mentors. Peers or other PIs can also be mentors and some mentoring relationships can be temporary. Having diverse mentors can be very beneficial to your mentee.
- ✓ Incorporate systematic tools for fairness and equity in communication with mentees by establishing clear plans and guidelines. For example, assign and stick to equal allotted times to meet with your mentees and consciously give other mentors an opportunity to contribute.
- ✓ Avoid favoritism and even the perception of favoritism. Distribute tasks and chores equally, while keeping the strengths and preferences of your mentees in mind.
- ✓ Involve mentees in activities that best match their career path. Keep an eye out for workshops, meetings, and other training opportunities that would prepare them to move forward in their chosen career path.
- ✓ Always consider that a mentor-mentee relationship automatically comes with a power imbalance. Act accordingly to achieve and maintain a healthy mentoring environment.

