

Mentoring Future Researchers: Advice and Considerations

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Despite efforts to increase the diversity of academia, minority scholars continue to face significant barriers (e.g., higher financial burden, lack of institutional support for research interests, social isolation) that undermine their representation in the field and overall professional success. Researchers have suggested increased mentorship as a means of mitigating these challenges. In 2015, with the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a panel of senior investigators met via WebEx to discuss strategies to improve the mentorship of underrepresented scholars. The topics covered by this panel included factors that optimize or challenge mentorship based on personal experience, what is special about mentorship in the context of race/ethnicity, relational dynamics, work–life balance, discrimination, and how to address challenges to the mentoring relationship. The current article provides an overview of the convening and synthesizes the lessons learned by panelists' first-hand experiences of mentoring trainees and junior faculty of color. Authors conclude with recommendations and a description of the social and institutional implications of bolstering the professional support of minority scholars.

Public Policy Relevance Statement

Faculty of color are underrepresented in academia and health research despite the importance of their contributions and their key role in addressing health inequities. Recommendations from senior investigators of color with significant mentorship experience highlight the importance of access to quality mentorship for scholars from underrepresented backgrounds to address important concerns of race and bias in the academic context, identify career and research opportunities, and build institutional programs and practices that can advance the work of faculty of color.

I tell my students, “When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else. This is not just a grab-bag candy game.”

—Toni Morrison (Houston, 2003, para. 12)

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has identified the recruitment and training of scholars from underrepresented minority (URM) backgrounds as necessary to ensure broad-based leadership in science and innovation, and to advance the reduction of health disparities for underserved popu-

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lations (Bristow, Butler, & Smedley, 2004; Grumbach & Mendoza, 2008; Richert et al., 2013; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Despite concerted efforts, faculty of color remain a distinct minority (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Further, scholars from URM backgrounds face multiple barriers to career advancement, including higher financial burdens, social and professional isolation, and race- or ethnic-related biases (Jolly, 2005; Price et al., 2009; Zambrana et al., 2017). To achieve more equitable representation in these fields, more must be done to tackle identified barriers to career advancement for these scholars (Carethers, 2016; Mendoza-Denton et al., 2017; Peek, Kim, Johnson, & Vela, 2013; Whittaker & Montgomery, 2014).

Importance of Effective URM Mentorship

Mentorship by established faculty of color has been suggested as one method of furthering the early career development and later advancement of junior researchers from URM groups (Beech et al., 2013). Such mentors may help their mentees navigate institutional culture, develop strategies for overcoming race-related barriers, and chart career road maps to achieve desired goals (Daniel, 2009; Fogg, 2003; Fries-Britt, Rowan-Kenyon, Perna, Milem, & Howard, 2011). Several mentorship models have been developed, both for junior faculty in general and for newer faculty from URM backgrounds in particular (e.g., Daley et al., 2011; Lewellen-Williams et al., 2006; Pololi & Knight, 2005). Further, research evidence suggests that successfully implementing such mentorship programs can support faculty of color as they pursue productivity, grant funding, and internal advancement (Daley et al., 2011), and can improve retention rates for new faculty across racial/ethnic and nationality groups (Phillips, Dennison, & Davenport, 2016). However, several challenges to effective mentorship for these groups exist, including limited senior faculty members from URM backgrounds, tensions between cultural and institutional values, and additional administrative expectations for faculty of color that impede on potential mentorship time. As we confront the divide between diversity calls to action in research and the “glacial” pace of advancement for faculty of color (Striving Toward Excellence, 2009), these barriers must be addressed to better facilitate the development of important partnerships.

Challenges to Effective URM Mentorship

Recent figures indicate that faculty of color remain underrepresented at postsecondary educational institutions. The National Center for Education Statistics (2016) reported that, in 2015, non-Latinx Whites comprised 71.33% of full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary education; Latinx and Black faculty were far behind (at 4.43% and 5.47%, respectively). In an institutional research setting, this gap translates to a dearth of mentors of color, creating difficulty matching junior researchers from URM groups with faculty who share their experiences and culture. As a result, junior scholars of color often experience social isolation at work as they navigate a culturally unfamiliar terrain; they also leave academics at higher rates (Pololi, Cooper, & Carr, 2010). At an institutional level, few opportunities for matching mentees from URM backgrounds to faculty mentors contribute to

underdeveloped knowledge of the needs of emerging scholars from racial/ethnic minority groups.

Junior faculty of color face unique challenges in navigating the intersection of institutional values and their own cultural values. Scarcity imposes an added “tax” on faculty from URM groups, who are disproportionately asked to serve on diversity committees and boards, negatively impacting availability for mentoring, time for research, and professional advancement (Diggs, Garrison-Wade, Estrada, & Galindo, 2009; Mahoney, Wilson, Odom, Flowers, & Adler, 2008; Wyatt, Williams, Henderson, & Sumner, 2009). Thus, institutions with few scholars of color ask each one to do more than other faculty members. These scholars also express feelings of social isolation (Odom, Roberts, Johnson, & Cooper, 2007) and difficulty negotiating microaggressions and other stressors associated with race (Joseph & Hirshfield, 2011; Padilla, 1994; Turner, González, & Wood, 2008). Meanwhile, mentors to junior faculty of color are confronted with the problem of charting a complex course for mentees. They must encourage researchers to follow their research goals and cultural voice while also facilitating their promotion at largely White institutions that may not support the junior faculty’s research interests.

Current Study

In 2015, with the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through their New Connections initiative, the primary author convened a panel of mentoring experts by webinar to discuss strategies to improve mentorship of researchers from URM groups (New Connections, 2015). The webinar’s main objectives were (a) to identify factors that optimized or challenged the mentoring of both URM and non-URM scholars; (b) to identify how mentors handled issues of race/ethnicity, relational dynamics, work-life balance, and discrimination; and (c) to discuss “killers” of mentoring, including job demands, time management challenges, and absent mentees. Members of the interdisciplinary panel included Cleopatra Caldwell, Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, University of Michigan; Melanie Domenech Rodriguez, Department of Psychology, Utah State University; Dharma Cortes, Institute on Urban Health Research and Practice, Northeastern University; Bonnie Duran, School of Social Work, University of Washington; Gail Wyatt, Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior, University of California, Los Angeles; Mike Spencer, School of Social Work, University of Michigan; Luis Zayas, School of Social Work and Dell Medical School, University of Texas at Austin; Peter Guarnaccia, Department of Human Ecology, Rutgers University; and Margarita Alegría, Disparities Research Unit, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, who led the panel.

Discussion was framed around three sets of interactive questions designed by the primary author and one of her mentees of color to draw on panelists’ experiences mentoring individuals from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds; each set of questions was followed by an opportunity for attendees to ask additional questions. A full list of the questions discussed during the webinar is included in the Appendix to this article, and a recording of the webinar is available on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation website (New Connections, 2015).

Following completion of the webinar, its recording was transcribed verbatim, and common themes and recommendations were synthesized by members of the Disparities Research Unit at Massachusetts General Hospital. Panelists' responses were synthesized thematically to convey lessons learned from their experiences mentoring young faculty of color. We include additional considerations specific to the experience of Latinx researchers and the impact of immigration policy on professional development. Finally, we present a series of recommendations based on these responses to help facilitate successful mentoring relationships for faculty from URM backgrounds.

Mentoring Expert Responses

Several themes reverberated throughout the panelists' discussion. Specifically, panelists spoke at length about necessary, though sometimes difficult, mentor–mentee conversations about race/ethnicity and other challenging topics; the need to address challenges both within and outside of the mentor–mentee relationship; how mentors might work with mentees to address others' biases; providing career advice; and characteristics of ideal mentees.

Conversations About Race and Ethnicity

Consistent with existing literature recognizing the need for mentors to engage in challenging conversations with their mentees (Bickel & Rosenthal, 2011), panel members described conversations about race and ethnicity as “hard” but critical. As one mentor stated, “there is no point in being a mentor of color if you can't tell the mentee the truth about what they're getting ready to encounter.” Some panelists suggested that these conversations become even more important in subjective situations with political undertones, such as obtaining a promotion, undergoing a teaching evaluation, or receiving research feedback. In these instances, panel members suggested that mentors help their mentees decode ambiguous feedback language or vague statements without metrics or specific suggestions for improvement, such as “You're not making as much forward progress as other junior faculty.” Experts suggested that mentors help their mentees better understand these comments and offer advice for navigating the situation, such as returning to the individual providing feedback to ask for specific examples of how they could improve or “keep up” with their peers. Similarly, if assistant faculty of color are asked to participate in certain committees at the department, school, or university levels—for example, diversity committees, on which faculty members from racial/ethnic minority groups are often asked to serve—panel members noted that it might be important for such faculty to debrief with their mentors and talk through their decision-making process. Mentors should ask their mentees to consider the following questions: Why might the institution want the URM faculty member to participate, and what are the costs and benefits to such involvement? For example, such service to the academic community might be considered in future promotion decisions and allow the building of relationships with other committee members; however, committee involvement requires a significant time commitment, which takes away time for the researcher's own scholarship.

Panel members recognized that creating a favorable environment for these conversations can be challenging, because mentees

might feel uncomfortable discussing nonacademic topics in their mentor–mentee space, perhaps thinking “I'm here because of my science, not my race, so I shouldn't be talking about those issues.” Difficulties might also arise if mentees feel their mentors are too busy or too highly accomplished to spend time discussing more personal issues. Thus, experts noted that mentors should take the lead in nurturing the pipeline of diversity and inclusion by creating a space where conversations about race/ethnicity and other forms of underrepresentation are welcomed and encouraged. They might do so by developing a “Mentorship Meeting Form” that can provide a structure for the topics covered during such meetings, which would include protected time for talking about concerns about race/ethnicity and other forms of underrepresentation. Additionally, “Mentorship Feedback Forms” could be created to provide mentees with the opportunity to identify concerns about the mentor–mentee relationship (e.g., the mentor is too busy for meetings) that can be first raised with the mentor and then, if still unaddressed, with other department members who can help address the issue.

Other Challenging Topics

Panelists stated that the easiest conversations to have with mentees were focused on straightforward science and academic questions related to publishing, grant writing, networking, or job searching. In contrast, they identified difficult discussions as those involving political issues such as racism, sexism, ageism, and heterosexism; interpersonal challenges; and mental health issues. When mentees reveal experiences of discrimination within the university or in their personal life, panelists recommended that mentors listen to obtain as much detail as possible about the event, express empathy, and work with mentees to examine the nature of the action and understand the impact of the experience. Mentors might advise mentees to keep notes about an encounter and why it seemed discriminatory. They should then work together to determine how to address the source of discrimination—how to approach the individual or individuals to ensure recognition of what transpired. At times, the mentor may need to go directly to the person involved, with the mentee's consent and knowledge, to confront the issue. Mentors should become familiar with institutional protocols and policies that exist to formally address issues of discrimination and suggest invoking these policies as appropriate for workplace incidents; however, they should also recognize that mentees may not want to pursue these avenues, especially if protocols lack a neutral third-party advocate for the complainant.

Panelists noted that both mentors and mentees have the responsibility to address others' biases and miscommunication when they arise within social and professional systems. For example, when asked about advising junior faculty of color who feel unfairly overlooked, disrespected, or dismissed, panelists suggested that mentors or mentees present the facts back to the faculty member and ask questions about what might explain the differential treatment. Such questioning was framed to educate and bring awareness to that person and potentially prevent them from acting similarly in the future. In that way, faculty from URM backgrounds—both senior and junior—can work to “change the system” rather than just “be in the system.” Additionally, another panelist described asking mentees of color to describe experiences

handling discrimination in their personal lives and helping them transpose those strategies onto their professional encounters.

Some panelists mentioned that mentors might begin difficult conversations by acknowledging that unconscious biases *do* exist in the academic environment and discussing with mentees from URM groups what to do when they encounter a culture that reflects sexism, racism, ageism, or heterosexism. Providing both students and faculty a safe space to discuss these moments was described as aiding both to realize that “we are not crazy when we see those things.” This approach further creates opportunities to discuss with junior faculty how reactivity to these experiences can be dangerous to their career and brainstorm better methods for approaching such scenarios. Panelists also discussed specific strategies they and their mentees have used in the past, including asking someone who has used discriminatory language to repeat a biased statement, observing, “When people say things two or three times, they tend to start to see the unconscious bias in the thing they said or asked,” thus potentially creating a teachable moment. Mentors might offer such strategies to mentees as tools that help encourage others to identify and examine their biases without confrontation or judgment.

Addressing External and Internal Problems

Acknowledging the sometimes hectic “rhythm of life,” panelists noted that mentors and mentees would benefit from anticipating future life problems for both parties (i.e., sick children, aging parents, economic concerns, burnout from too many responsibilities) that may, over time, affect the mentee’s career and/or the mentor–mentee relationship. Panelists suggested that mentors emphasize the need to set limits and model how they have dealt with similar circumstances in their own lives to signal that these situations are normal and to reinforce self-care as a priority.

Internal strains on the mentor–mentee relationship were also discussed during the webinar. Per the panel members, a clear set of goals and metrics to determine progression are key to a successful mentorship duo. Additionally, panelists cautioned against unrealistic expectations, such as a mentor who acts as an expert on everything, who treats their mentee as an assistant, or who does not let their mentee develop professional independence. They also weighed in on how to respond when a mentee lashes out at a mentor; for example, mentors might say, “That’s a big statement. I need to think about it, you might take some time to think about it, and let’s come back together.” During that interval, mentors might consult with colleagues, gain perspective on what might be happening for the mentee, and then regroup productively. One panelist described a “village” component to mentorship in which the mentor and mentee each have their own external supports, and the mentor encourages the mentee to use their additional supports by modeling similar behavior. This approach aligns keenly with collectivist cultural values familiar to many researchers of color and is among the most popular and easily implemented methods of building mentoring networks for young faculty, both within institutions and across cities and states. Such networks help build solidarity across researchers involved in similar work as well as those experiencing similar challenges, such as the promotion process.

Advice for Navigating Careers

Panel members noted that researchers from URM backgrounds should select employment based on mentorship opportunities at the institution and whether the institution has opportunities and/or assistance for new faculty to obtain funding. Additionally, to be prepared for new mentees of color, panelists stated that mentors should be familiar with the racial/ethnic dynamics at their institutions and understand the larger historical, political, economic, and structural conditions at the institution as well as the attitudes, beliefs, and values demonstrated by the individuals that make up the institution. Similarly, it was expressed that mentors have the onus of providing their mentees with this information and helping them prepare to navigate the institutional culture, for example, by sharing articles about healthy paranoia or institutional racism and engaging in discussions about how to apply the information.

The panel was asked how to address situations in which a mentee is in a “no-win situation” professionally, meaning that the mentee cannot advance because of the specific dynamics of their department. Responses stressed the need for mentors to inform mentees when they observe such a situation and work with them to find a resolution. For example, if a junior faculty member of color does not receive a promotion or has their contract discontinued without clarity or justification, mentors might encourage mentees to obtain more information and pursue an appeal. However, the group also acknowledged that some places, people, and situations are toxic, particularly for people of color, who may have been hired to fill a quota but have not received appropriate career support from the institution. In that case, mentors might encourage their mentees to look elsewhere for a new position.

Mentee Characteristics

When discussing the ideal mentee, panelists identified several characteristics, including hardworking, independent, and “both humble and brilliant.” Panelists were also asked about mentorship strategies for mentees with learning, psychological, or intellectual disabilities. They recommended that mentors encourage their faculty mentees from URM groups to contact the institution’s office for students with disabilities as needed and noted that doing so demonstrates a sign of strength rather than weakness, as it is important to utilize any resources and services that exist to facilitate success. Mentors should initiate such conversations early in the mentor–mentee relationship—for example, by asking mentees, “Do you have any issues that make it hard for you to see, hear, or learn?”—and then encourage them to engage with appropriate resources. For mentees with cognitive disabilities, mentors might help them connect with a tutor and determine realistic work expectations. For individuals with psychological issues or related stress, the mentor might help mentees develop feasible work plans and involve others to support stress reduction. Finally, for mentees with physical disabilities, mentors might help identify potential obstacles for working together productively and help identify a collaborative, supportive approach. As an example, one panelist relayed simple modifications he made after learning that one of his students was hearing impaired—he stopped pacing during lectures and trimmed his mustache to improve the student’s ability to read his lips.

Additional Considerations

Although not discussed during the panel, the primary author has encountered additional challenges through the course of mentoring Latinx scholars that may also apply to scholars who are not U.S. citizens. Some challenges are related to structural inequities and others are linked to differences in values or normative expectations that conflict with the demands of a research career. For example, most National Institute of Health training programs, diversity supplements, loan repayment plans, or K-award applications are not available to scholars on J-1 Visas or individuals without U.S. citizenship. Undocumented scholars face additional challenges, as resource limitations including those related to health insurance, financial aid, fellowships, and funding opportunities greatly inhibit their ability to build a successful research career. Further, these individuals might feel the need to remain silent about their undocumented status, particularly given the current political climate, and thus may not share their concerns with mentors or other potential allies. Conference presentations, research promotion that includes researchers' names and photographs, and even domestic and international travel—all examples of research-related activities many researchers take for granted—may be difficult or impossible for scholars without documentation, especially those who may also be trying to protect family members with similar immigration concerns. Their undocumented status will often preclude them from getting funding to start their research career, obtaining jobs with researchers, or receiving training. Consequently, the research community loses prospective talent that could integrate and prosper but for whom these opportunities are closed.

Additionally, first- and second-generation Latinx trainees and researchers often face significant familial expectations, wherein they serve as a major source of financial and emotional stability. They might be expected to send a *remesa*—a remittance or transfer of money to family in their country of origin. Or, as the most educated family member, they might be expected to navigate complex systems (e.g., health care, immigration) for their relatives. Often, families of these researchers are less established financially and therefore less able to buffer against shocks to the system, such as a major illness, leaving the scholar to attend and help bridge these needs. In some cases, the Latinx researcher might feel the need to care for an ailing family member personally. These expectations and values can add significant burden to young Latinx scholars and increase the need for time off, thus impeding career advancement.

Recommendations

Based on the panelists' discussion and experiences, we offer recommendations aimed at improving mentor/mentee relationships and advancement for junior researchers of color.

Mentor–Mentee Relationship Framework

Discussion of the mentor–mentee relationship at its inception and the collaborative development of expectations for personal, professional, and academic goals can be important first steps for both mentors and mentees. For mentors new to mentoring, sharing personal journeys of experiences of exclusion and inclusion; re-

viewing strategies around feelings of disempowerment, under-value, and burnout; and defining boundaries around personal issues can be helpful introductory topics of discussion. Mentees from URM backgrounds may respond to perceived social distance with their mentors by failing to reach out for help when needed, especially if they are feeling the effects of “imposter syndrome.” Early establishment of an open-door policy and mechanisms to address time constraints and how to say “no” can help establish a pathway for communication and signal that addressing these topics is a normal component of integrating into academia.

Talking About Race and Bias

Effective mentor–mentee relationships for racial/ethnic minorities reflect both willingness and ability to discuss issues that involve race (Hassouneh, Lutz, Beckett, Junkins, & Horton, 2014). Junior faculty of color may express reticence to bring nonacademic issues to mentors for discussion as they seek to reinforce the academic nature of their appointments. Further, some mentees from URM backgrounds lack familiarity with the structure and cultural values of research institutions and how these factors might impact their professional advancement. Discussing and acknowledging the reality of unconscious bias with a mentor—especially how these biases function within a largely White system—can help trainees and junior faculty externalize negative experiences and build strategies to work for them. Mentors who discuss and model coping strategies can help mentees avoid adverse impacts to psychological health and research productivity (Espinoza-Herold & Gonzalez, 2007).

Skill Building and Support

Mentors can help junior faculty of color by introducing them to institutional expectations and any gatekeepers and organizational frameworks that could impact their success. Mentors can also promote the work of their mentees by sharing development plans with academic supervisors to better inform them of work goals and challenges, thereby contributing to a shared structure that supports career advancement for junior researchers (Manson, 2016). Both minority and nonminority investigators may face gaps in research skills because of limited availability during earlier training or lack of previous mentoring. Mentors can help build skills through various channels and help mentees normalize discussion around both strengths and weaknesses without embarrassment. When mentees from URM groups identify areas in which they require support—such as editing papers because English is not their primary language or a lack of previous exposure to certain research methodologies—mentors can consider multiple ways to meet those needs. For example, for junior researchers who lack quantitative or qualitative research experience, mentors can direct them to university training programs and scholarships through which they might develop these skill sets. If program or class affordability is a barrier to access, mentors might reach out to instructors to see if their mentee can audit a class without necessitating payment. Mentors can also link their mentees to additional faculty mentors that can help them facilitate development of these skills.

Equally important are social and professional introductions that help junior minority scholars build connections and effective net-

works that aid their research. Supports might include offering junior researchers the opportunity to join a research project or pairing the mentee with a colleague or collaborator who can complement their research or language abilities. The potential for multiple mentors or mentors who can provide unique supports across career, research, and social environments should be considered when appropriate. In departments that lack senior faculty with a shared race/ethnicity or cultural background, expanding the search to other departments and exploring novel mentoring models can help to address this limitation. For example, connecting a mentee with indigenous heritage to researchers with similar backgrounds in other parts of the country might allow that mentee to learn about particularly relevant data sets or conferences that they otherwise may not have had the opportunity to pursue.

Mentors should also encourage junior faculty from URM groups to pursue training grants or career development awards, while showing them the steps needed to be successful. These opportunities can help mentees to engage in studies or pilot projects that will help prepare them for future work. Importantly, providing junior faculty an opportunity to try, fail, and persevere while supported by a mentor can aid in the development of strength, skills, and resiliency for future endeavors.

Career Planning and Research Considerations

Junior researchers from URM backgrounds can benefit from discussions that encourage strategic thinking about career plans and choices and transparency regarding institutional expectations. Although many researchers aim to achieve tenure, some academic institutions may not effectively advise the young scholar's research goals or provide an inclusive academic climate. Mentoring conversations should explore whether job selection might instead prioritize institutional opportunities for mentorship or collaboration, including determining whether there are specific researchers or data sets that might prove beneficial for mentees' research and career goals. These conversations about employment can also encourage discussion of financial compensation and commitments with employment, including grant expectations and required dedication between academic departments, programs and committees, and teaching, as well as what time might be left for career work. Although career opportunities may arise at institutions that seek diversity, it may not always mean that they support the research interests of the mentee of color or offer the ability to teach without unrealistic course and committee load. The overburden in requests to represent minorities, mentor minorities, and recruit minorities might impose limits on a mentee's own productivity and career goals.

Regarding publications, grant applications, and coursework, mentors should encourage mentees to share drafts of their work, both to obtain feedback and review other mentees' drafts to have a clear view of expectations. Research with diverse populations might require mixed methods or community-based participatory research. These methods can be time consuming and difficult, requiring a need for methodology that surpasses general problem and risk assessment to uncover causes of underlying disparities. Investigators engaged in these topics and methods can be encouraged to look for secondary data sets for analysis that may advance their publication record or collaborate with community organizations that can help with community-based methods. Again, encour-

agement and direction in how to negotiate research collaborations, including how to evaluate and both accept or decline advice, can be key to aiding professional progress and are important skills evaluated during the tenure process.

These discussions can also aid junior researchers as they make decisions about committee service and which mentors to work with or avoid, and to better understand the landscape in which they will work as they plan their careers. Assignments to diversity committees or academic appointments can be made for reasons that range from a mentee's expertise and institutional need to institutional recruitment goals. Frank discussions around commitments that may take time away from scholarship can help scholars from URM backgrounds make thoughtful decisions about where to direct their pursuits.

Mentors as Advocates

In situations in which junior faculty from URM groups experience bias or encounter racism, sexism, ageism, or heterosexism, they may find it helpful to discuss strategies for appropriate resolution with their mentors, including the cost and benefits of these approaches. During such conversations, mentors might explore problem solving through role playing and sharing of previous personal experiences, stress the importance of nonreactive responses, and generate possible solutions. A direct strategy for conflict negotiation can include neutral inquiry, both during an encounter and in revisiting an event, to explore what was said or meant, especially in circumstances in which actions were unconscious in nature. Mentors should ultimately help their mentees to develop awareness, resilience, and skills for dealing with the reality of race-related biases. However, there may be circumstances that require more assertive action, like discussing problems with the dean or chairperson or even supporting the mentee to file formal complaints. The well-being of the mentee (from the mentee's perspective) should take precedence over other priorities in deciding courses of action under such serious circumstances.

Finally, mentors can serve as important advocates, not only for their mentees but also for practices and programs that help advance diversity and better support researchers of color within their institutions and networks (Daley et al., 2008). Mentorship commitments can constrain financial resources and time for both mentors and mentees, so giving time off to mentors or course relief might be a way to avoid exhaustion or burnout. Senior faculty can advocate within their institution for sustained support that includes financial incentives and committed resources for mentorship programs, and for funding mentees projects that cannot receive NIH federal funding. They might also advocate for additional resources for new faculty from URM groups, including "startup" funding sources and staff that can assist them with article editing and literature reviews. To reduce the burden for underrepresented mentors and junior faculty, universities might hire several faculty members of color at one time and encourage the creation of regular meetings or groups that build sustained support. Because diversity committee work can be a burden imposed disproportionately on faculty from URM backgrounds, encouraging optional participation on diversity committees for these faculty while advocating for participation by non-URM faculty may help balance this load. Similarly, senior faculty can advance advocacy for the incorporation of equity into organizational values at the institutional level.

Philanthropies and foundations can also play a prominent role in supporting the career of faculty from URM groups, for example, by expanding their opportunities to network with successful scholars who can help them navigate challenges and complement their skill sets. Mentoring takes a village; having financial resources for workshops and convenings is critical to reduce isolation and provide social support. Further, philanthropic organizations can aid scholars who cannot apply for federal grants by providing research funding that allows them to reach their full potential.

Conclusion

Effective advancement of researchers from URM backgrounds helps institutions through increased capacity and representativeness, helps communities through improved outreach and service, and helps science through expanded focus on problem solving the needs of increasingly diverse populations. Faculty of color can help engage in effective mentorship of junior researchers of color, helping ensure that others follow in their footsteps through responsible nurturing of the diversity and inclusion pipeline.

Keywords: underrepresented minority scholars; mentorship; workforce diversity; academia

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Appendix

Questions Discussed by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Panel

- How often do you talk with your racial/ethnic minority mentees (or those from historically underrepresented groups) about the politics of race/ethnicity within academia? What barriers get in the way of engaging in these kinds of dialogues? What factors might facilitate such conversations?
- How do you advise mentees about practical work–life balance? What are some good strategies that have worked for you to have productive conversations about this?
- What would you call the major pitfalls/dangers of mentoring? And what are the killers of mentoring?
- How do you bring up and discuss unconscious bias and discuss ways to deal with it?
- Should there be a timeline for some mentoring relationships? A possible expiration date?
- How should mentors navigate those uncomfortable moments when a mentee lashes out, or when you do not have a choice of changing mentee or mentor?
- How do you think you can assist racial/ethnic minority mentees to better navigate critical junctures of their career? (e.g., negotiation of their first job offer; going up for tenure/promotion). Would you give them any differential advice than majority mentees? What would it be?
- What kinds of issues are easiest to talk about with about your mentor(s)? What issues are most difficult? Why? Are there any issues that you feel are “taboo” when establishing a mentor–mentee relationship? Why or why not?
- Can you please speak to how you would advise junior faculty of color to address the tendency to be underappreciated and disrespected? Especially by a mentor when you witness this same individual act differently to non-minority faculty of the same level.
- What strategies can you use to mentor individuals with disabilities, including intellectual, psychological, or physical disabilities?
- Have you ever been faced with a circumstance in which your mentee is in a no-win situation politically? In other words, in a situation in which you know there is no realistic solution for a mentee due to the specific dynamics of their department? How do you advise underrepresented junior faculty in situations in which the risk of action may be greater than the risk of inaction?
- What do you do when a mentee reveals that they have been the target of some form of discrimination within the department/university or in their personal life? How do you respond? What can you do to help?