NGP DEI

Mentoring and Faculty Engagement Task Force

Our mission is to support student mentoring by expanding mentor networks, providing resources to improve mentor-mentee interactions, and developing policies and procedures for transparency and accountability.

ACTIVITY UPDATE 9/2021

- Mentoring is a fundamental part of graduate education, and effective mentoring is an essential part of wellness, navigation of the trials and tribulations of graduate school, progress toward degree completion, and even long-term goal setting. In recognition of the importance that mentoring plays in graduate school life, the NGP is establishing a multilayered mentoring process. Finding primary and secondary mentors is an organic process but we recognize that institutional policies can enhance the formation of a strong mentoring network. In addition to the primary dissertation mentor, the program will establish processes to connect first year students to both peer and faculty mentors, encourage inclusion of a student advocate mentor on thesis committees, and foster methods to expand mentoring networks to include those with shared social identities.

- The Task Force has advanced the Rackham MORE workshops and clarified policy that participation is required for primary mentor-mentee pairs. Participation and completion will be tracked in the student Individual Development Plan.

- Tracking of other mentor and diversity training will become part of faculty profiles, displayed on the NGP website.

- In collaboration with the MI Chapter of the Society for Neuroscience and through funding from a DEI mini grant from the UM Office for Health, Equity & Inclusion (OHEI). Efforts are now underway to find and hire a web developer to assist in setting up the Mentor Bureau. This state-wide Identity-based Mentor Bureau will include faculty at Michigan colleges and universities as well as STEM professionals from regional companies. The database will be searchable by graduate students throughout the state of Michigan.

- To support these growing mentor networks, we are collating mentoring resources for both faculty and students. These will be curated at the Mentor Bureau website.

- Discussions are underway to establish First Year-Friends, a faculty mentor separate from other established mentors who can act as a sounding board and friend during the first year of graduate school.

- We are working with motivated NGP students and postdoctoral fellows to create ‘mentor the mentor’ workshops aimed at introducing and sharpening mentoring skills for those supervising undergraduate students. These workshops will be paired with additional outreach efforts into undergraduate classrooms to raise awareness of and promote careers in research. Eventually, our goal is to bring in additional funding to support undergraduates from underrepresented minorities and those without financial resources to volunteer in laboratories.

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Members

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