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Intersectionality, Identities, and Mentoring: What Every Mentor Should Consider



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Intersectionality, Identities, and Mentoring: What Every Mentor Should Consider

Agenda

- Describe the unique challenges HEUGS* faculty and learners face in seeking mentorship.
- Discuss the importance of cultural identity and the intersection with other faculty and learner identities
- Define “identity interference” and “code switching” and describe the impact they can have on HEUGS faculty and learners
- Discuss best approaches to mentoring HEUGS faculty and learners (lessons learned).

*historically excluded and underrepresented groups in STEM



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Challenges Faced by Graduate & Medical Students, Residents and Faculty from HEUGS*

Odom KL et al, Acad Med 2007; Dyrbye LN et al, Mayo Clin Proceedings, 2006; COGME, 2006; Osseo-Asare A et al, JAMA Network Open, 2018; Smith WA et al, J Negro Ed, 2011; Smith WA et al, Int J Qual Studies in Ed, 2016; Misra J et al, Sociological Forum, 2012; Pololli L et al, J Gen Intern Med, 2010; Rodriguez JE, Campbell KM, Fam Med, 2014; Boulton C, Howard J Communications, 2016; Cyrus KD, JAMA 2017; Shayne J, Inside Higher Ed, 2017; NASEM, 2019



- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of exposure to BIPOC faculty, scientists, health care providers • Lack of BIPOC faculty, scientists, health care provider role models & mentors • Difficulties in acculturation to culture of medicine & science • Expectation to assimilate • Undesirable geographic distance of school from student's home and community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily microaggressions • Stereotype threat • Imposter syndrome • Racial biases, prejudice, discrimination • Racial battle fatigue • Identity interference • Code switching • Minority tax • Mistreatment • Sexual/gender harassment • Isolation/marginalization |
|---|---|

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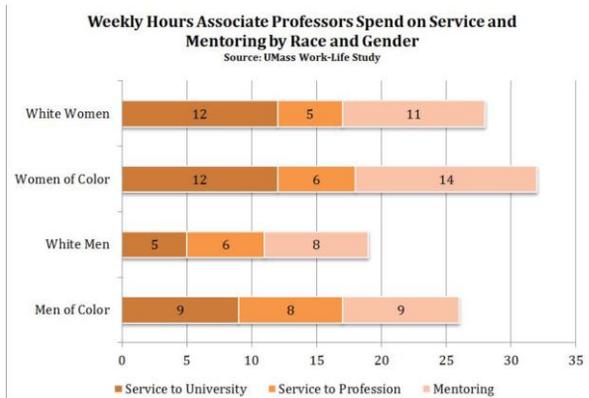
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Unique Challenges Facing HEUGS Faculty Mentors

- Asymmetrical burden
- “Universal donors of mentorship”
- Time-intensive (“mentoring tax”)
- Emotional labor
- Unrecognized, unrewarded
- Narrows pool of available BIPOC mentors



Brown NE Montoya C., Political Sci & Politics, 2020

Lundquist J, Misra J, 2015



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The Importance of Identity and Intersectionality



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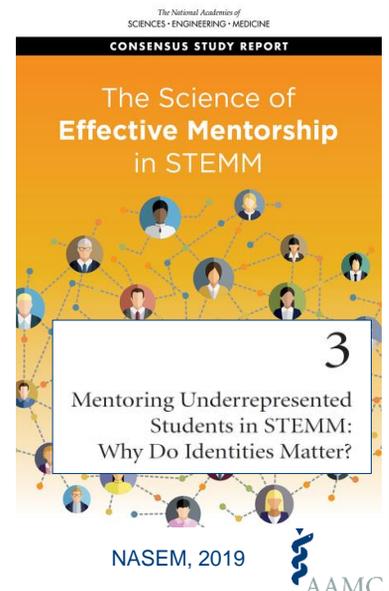
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Intersectionality, Identities, and Mentoring: What Every Mentor Should Consider

Culture Identity

- Identity matters – culture identity is just as important (if not more important) as a science identity.
- Cultural identity creates both a sense of belonging and recognition as an accepted member of a group.
- Ignoring a person's identities & sociodemographic background without positively recognizing and affirming the value of differences can be the difference between success and failure.
- Research has shown that how an individual's science identity fits with other social identities has a significant effect on career goals.



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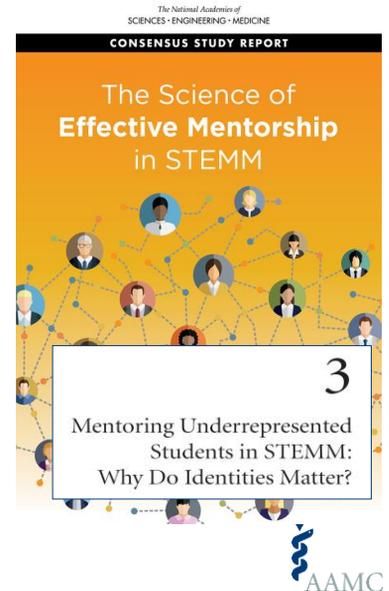


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Culture Identity

- Mentors who were *culturally responsive* had more success in fulfilling needs of HEUGS faculty & learners
- *Culturally responsive mentoring* validated faculty & students' various identities and help them navigate invalidating experiences encountered
- HEUGS faculty and learners report they felt more confident as researchers, refined their academic and career goals, and enhanced their commitment

NASEM, 2019;



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Restorative Justice Tier I: Community Building

- Who are we?
- What are our stories?
- What are our core values?
- What is important to us?
- What kind of community do we want?
- How do we want to treat each other?
- How will we all contribute?



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Intersectionality and Identities

- Social identities are complex!
- Intersectionality is a framework for understanding different people's varying experiences in the world – how people with overlapping identities experience systems of power.
- Model of “intersectional mentorship” moves beyond traditional approaches to mentorship (mentors providing advice based on their own experience).
- Intersectional mentorship provides a lens through which a mentor can examine the system responsible for faculty/students experiencing disadvantages or discrimination (the processes, practices, policies, and infrastructure) and sustaining the status quo.

NASEM, 2019; Ramos C, Brassel S, 2020



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Identity Interference

- In certain circumstances those with multiple identities feel that one identity interferes with the successful performance of another identity¹ (devalued)
- They dis-identify, minimize, or downplay their devalued social identity to “fit in”^{2,3,4,5}
- Challenges their sense of authenticity and sense of belonging^{3,4,5} → can even result in lower academic or professional performance⁶
- More likely to experience depression, reduced psychological well-being, and impaired academic performance^{4,5}



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Code Switching

- Adjusting one's style of speech, appearance, behavior, and expression in ways that will optimize the comfort of others in exchange for fair treatment, quality service, and employment opportunities.
- Creates perception of being devalued → decrease contribution, reduces commitment⁷
- Comes at a cost → threatens authenticity; generate hostility from in-group members.
- Shown to hinder performance, reduces authentic self-expression, & can lead to burnout

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Lessons Learned – What Mentors Should Consider



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Intersectionality, Identities, and Mentoring: What Every Mentor Should Consider

Lessons Learned – What Mentors Should Consider

- Leave your comfort zones...



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Intersectionality, Identities, and Mentoring: What Every Mentor Should Consider

Lessons Learned – What Mentors Should Consider

- Cultural Humility

“Lifelong process of learning, self-examination & refinement of one’s own awareness, knowledge, behavior and attitudes on the interplay of power, privilege, and social constructs.”



Tervalon M, Murray Garcia J, 2018

- Self-reflection
- Open-mindedness
- Respectful attitude towards differences
- Legitimizing alternative ways of being & thinking
- Willingness to learn about the unique perspectives of the other & the communities they come from
- Being enlightened



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Intersectionality, Identities, and Mentoring: What Every Mentor Should Consider

Lessons Learned – What Mentors Should Consider

- Leave your comfort zones...
- Check in with your biases – avoid assumptions



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Examples of Self-Reflection Questions for Cultural Humility

Khan S. Health City Newsletter, Boston Medical Center, 2021

For self

- Which parts of my identity am I aware of? Which are most salient?
- Which parts of my identity are privileged and/or marginalized?
- How does my sense of identity shift based on context & settings?
- What are the parts onto which people project? And which parts are received well, by whom?
- What might be my own blind spots and biases?

For how you receive the other

- Who is this person, and how do I make sense of them?
- What knowledge and awareness do I have about their culture?
- What thoughts and feelings emerge from me about them?

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Lessons Learned – What Mentors Should Consider

- Leave your comfort zones...
- Check in with your biases – avoid assumptions
- Cultural identity – the need to have a strong & sustained sense of belonging
 - Create peer-to-peer mentee community networks within and across institutions to extend their reach
 - Identify potential HEUGS faculty mentors across the campus
 - Identify leaders nationally that have a vested interest in diverse workforce development
 - Intentionally solicit engagement with local community

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Lessons Learned – What Mentors Should Consider

- Leave your comfort zones...
- Check in with your biases – avoid assumptions
- Cultural identity –
- Intersection of multiple identities → adopting the model of intersectional mentorship and “mentoring as a buffer”



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Lessons Learned – What Mentors Should Consider

- Leave your comfort zones...
- Check in with your biases – avoid assumptions
- Cultural identity –
- Intersection of multiple identities
- Identity interference → needs to be on the radar – approach similar to the approach to code switching...



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Lessons Learned – What Mentors Should Consider

- Leave your comfort zones...
- Check in with your biases – avoid assumptions
- Cultural identity –
- Intersection of multiple identities
- Identity interference
- Code switching – discuss the importance of authenticity → bringing their full self to the table



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Intersectionality, Identities, and Mentoring: What Every Mentor Should Consider

Summary

- An enterprise-wide commitment to effective mentorship in STEMM could lead to effective, high-quality & sustainable mentoring relationships at all career stages → ripple effect
- Reminder: The lack of access to effective mentorship and a need to subsume other aspects of their identities in order to fit in continues to keep HEUGS learners and faculty from choosing and/or remaining in STEMM disciplines.
- There is a sense of urgency – it is critical for mentors to be aware of and understand the many unique challenges facing HEUGS faculty and learners that other non-HEUGS faculty and learners do not encounter.



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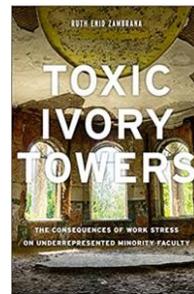
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Summary

- Mentoring takes practice and skills...highlights the importance of investing in and committing to faculty development – this should include URM-specific aspects of mentoring training.
- Consider putting into action the following strategies of good mentorship...



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Strategies of Good Mentors

- Show deep respect for mentees' contributions, ideas, and intellect
- Offer political guidance in the form of knowledge about institutional norms and the role of race and power relations in higher education institutions without demanding assimilation
- Forge connections between mentees and interested and responsive faculty who have power and prestige
- Provide concrete scholarly opportunities along with offering moral support and encouragement in ways that promote mentees' autonomy and independent scholarship

Zambrana RE. Toxic Ivory Towers..., 2018



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“Effective mentorship of URM faculty [and learners] is everyone’s responsibility if we are to transform the academy into a space where all faculty [and learners] can thrive and not be left behind.”



- Ruth Zambrana, PhD

Professor, Women's Studies,
Director, Consortium on Race, Gender
and Ethnicity, University of Maryland
College Park



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Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine
presents the inaugural virtual symposium

*Mentoring Across
the Continuum*

*Incorporating Inclusive Practice
to Foster Academic Success*



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Thank you for your attention!



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