Departmental Mentoring Guidelines
to increase recruitment, retention, and trainee success

Strong mentorship has been shown to improve the diversity of the biomedical workforce. Yet, many early career researchers, particularly those from underrepresented minority (URM) backgrounds, report that their academic departments do not effectively support or incentivize quality mentorship. To address this gap, **Future of Research** organized a meeting to develop mentoring climate guidelines for academic departments. With support from **experts in the field of mentoring**, we used the available evidence-based research on mentorship, the expertise of departmental leaders, and the experience of early career researchers to develop **a set of guidelines to be used as an assessment tool by departmental leaders** wishing to commit to actionable improvement.
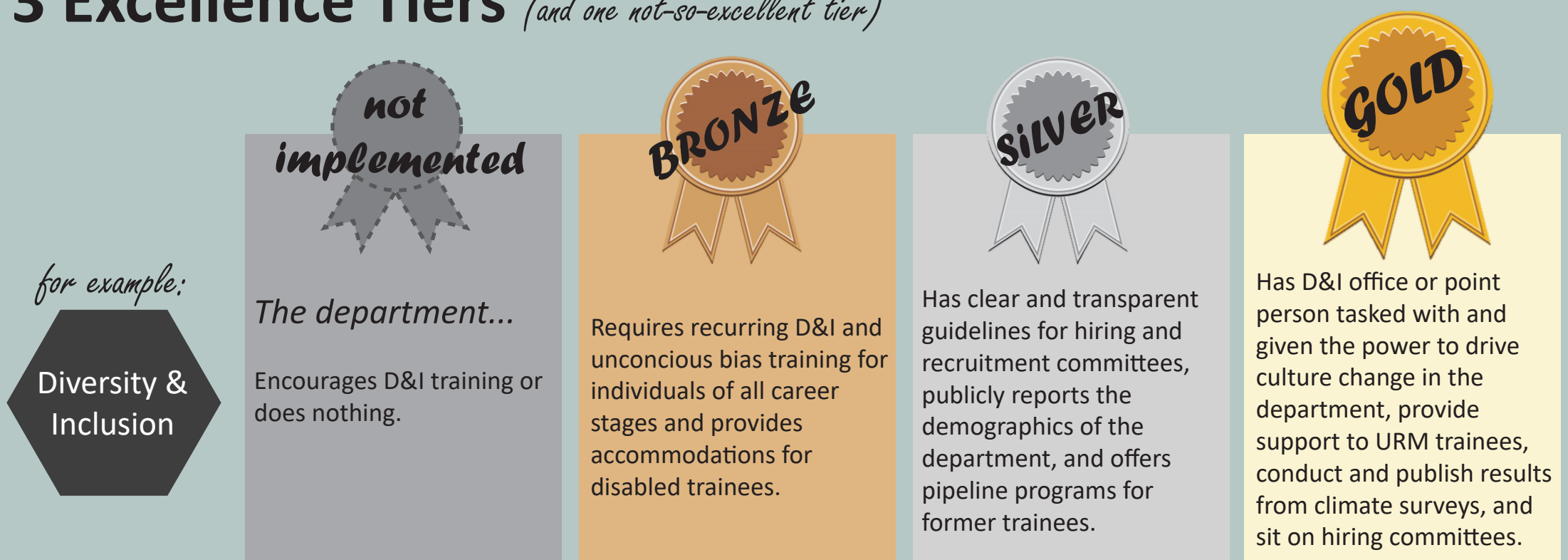
learn more!

mentoringfuturesci.net

commit to the guidelines!

9 Categories:

- Supplemental Mentoring
- Peer Support Cohorts
- Required Mentor Training
- Exit Interviews
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Transparent Accountability
- Guidelines & Timelines
- Mental Health & Wellness
- Career Development Resources

3 Excellence Tiers *(and one not-so-excellent tier)*

for example:

Diversity & Inclusion

not implemented

The department...

Encourages D&I training or does nothing.

BRONZE

Requires recurring D&I and unconcious bias training for individuals of all career stages and provides accommodations for disabled trainees.

SILVER

Has clear and transparent guidelines for hiring and recruitment committees, publicly reports the demographics of the department, and offers pipeline programs for former trainees.

GOLD

Has D&I office or point person tasked with and given the power to drive culture change in the department, provide support to URM trainees, conduct and publish results from climate surveys, and sit on hiring committees.

(scroll down for full guidelines)

How to use the guidelines:

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mentoring committee:

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Departmental leaders:
- ➤ Use the guidelines as a benchmark for your department's mentoring climate.
- ➤ Identify areas for improvement. The guidelines are designed to have clear and actionable steps to move up the excellence tiers.
- ➤ Report your department's alignment with the guidelines and-
- ➤ Sign our guidelines to show your commitment to improving training at mentoringfuturesci.net!

Current trainees and early career researchers:
- ➤ Report your department's alignment with the guidelines at mentoringfuturesci.net
- ➤ Use the guidelines to support your requests of departmental leadership.

Prospective trainees:
- ➤ Check if a department you are interested in has signed the guidelines or reported their alignment at mentoringfuturesci.net.
- ➤ Ask your prospective departments about their mentoring climate!

Future of Research	not implemented The department...	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
Supplemental Mentoring	Encourages more mentors in addition to the PI or does nothing.	Requires at least one co-mentor in addition to the PI to oversee the trainee's progression through the program.	Requires the creation of a mentoring committee that is separate from the thesis advisory committee to oversee the trainee's progression through the program.	Requires that the mentoring committee contains three or more individuals to address specific mentoring needs and meets on a regular basis to track the trainee's progression through the program.
Peer Support Cohorts	Provides no formal organization of peer cohorts.	Groups incoming trainees into peer cohorts and organizes social events for interaction and networking.	Pairs incoming trainees with at least one other, more senior peer mentor in the department.	Groups all incoming trainees into small Peer Mentor groups. The department has a trained facilitator on staff to conduct regular peer mentor meetings.
Required Mentor Training	Encourages PIs to take mentor training or does nothing.	Requires all PIs to take mentor training at least once before supervising PhD or postdoctoral trainees.	Requires all PIs take recurring mentor training. Data on mentor training is publicly available to trainees.	Requires all PIs, lab personnel, and trainees in supervisory roles to take recurring mentor training.
Exit Interviews	Encourages some form of anonymous exit survey or does nothing.	Collects data from required anonymous exit surveys and uses it for departmental improvement.	Makes summary data from anonymous exit surveys publicly available and disseminates it to incoming trainees.	Collects alumni data in follow-up surveys (e.g. 2 years later). Exceptional service and mentoring are rewarded. Patterns of harmful behavior are addressed.
Diversity & Inclusion	Encourages D&I training or does nothing.	Requires recurring D&I and unconcious bias training for individuals of all career stages and provides accommodations for disabled trainees.	Has clear and transparent guidelines for hiring and recruitment committees, publicly reports the demographics of the department, and offers pipeline programs for former trainees.	Has D&I office or point person tasked with and given the power to drive culture change in the department, provide support to URM trainees, conduct and publish results from climate surveys, and sit on hiring committees.
Transparent Accountability	Aims to foster inclusive and safe training and work-place environments or says nothing.	Requires sexual harassment and bystander intervention for everyone in the department, and has a clear no tolerance policy for bullying and harassment.	Provides safe, clear, and anonymous avenues for reporting harmful behavior and has a publicly available plan for dealing with such behavior.	Makes use of a third party company that is trauma-informed for investigating and resolving harmful behavior, and transparently abides by decisions reached
Guidelines & Timelines	Encourages PIs to provide clear guide-lines and timelines for completion or does nothing.	Has clear and appropriate checkpoints for completion of training, monitored by PI, trainee, and a third-party and requires mentor/mentee compacts.	Provides all trainees and supervisors with a list of departmental expectations for the supervisor and the trainee, which both must sign. Mentoring plans/requirements are modeled after training grant requirements.	Has limits on the number of years that can be spent in the training program, and provides appropriate pathways for career advancement to postdoc and staff scientist or independent positions.
Mental Health & Wellness	Aims to provide trainees with wellness resources or does nothing.	Has a public and easily-navigable website with a list of all available resources, promoting them to incoming trainees, and holds optional mental health first aid training for those interested.	Provides all trainees with benefits and has clear standard salary and paid leave policies.	Hosts regular mental health awareness events. Requires at least one person per research group to be trained in mental health first aid and regularly surveys student mental health, publicly reporting results.
Career Development Resources	Encourages PIs to provide career guidance for trainees or does nothing.	Hosts career-specific panels and workshops. Trainees are required to attend at least one. An individual development plan is required for all incoming trainees, with minimal yearly check-ins with the PI and an additional mentor.	Has a discipline-specific career development office or person. Professional development activities are integrated into the training curriculum. Regularly reports on graduation and employment data and promotes this among prospective trainees.	Supports trainees exploring career choices through internships and fellowships and keeps an updated list of program alumni for use by current trainees as potential career mentors and networking.