



URM Near-Peer Mentorship Pilot Program

Council formed a URM Mentoring Task Force in 2021 with a time limited mission to develop goals and initiatives to provide mentorship to under-represented minorities in our field. This task force seeks to build a pipeline of under-represented minority scientists, to assist in launching and maintaining successful careers in our field, as well as become an integral part of the College. To achieve these goals, the task force developed a URM Near-Peer Mentorship Pilot Program.

The specific aim of the URM Near-Peer Mentorship Pilot Program is to provide mentorship support to under-represented minority scientists who plan to enter research careers in neuropsychopharmacology. The program will provide education on topics such as career skills, goal setting, negotiating, time management, starting a lab, lab management, negotiating positions, career life balance, and publishing. The program will include remote, long-distance virtual mentoring, training opportunities, and an in-person half day mentorship program just prior to the 2022 ACNP Annual Meeting.

The pilot mentorship program will occur over a 12-month period and be comprised of an annual class of 10 mentor/mentee pairs. Any interested under-represented minority trainee was asked to complete an online application, based on specified criteria, as well as submit a curriculum vitae. All applications went through a review process and were scored based on task force defined guidelines. The accepted mentees were matched with an ACNP member mentor. The mentors were also asked to complete an online application to complete a skills self-assessment in preparation for long-distance mentoring and online continued learning sessions. The program also includes engaging online peer-mentoring activities as well as program workshop evaluations. Program near-peer mentors consist of ACNP member volunteers that are a bit more senior but close to the same career stage as their mentee, have similar interests, goals, and backgrounds who can lend firsthand insight and advice to the mentee.

Members of the Education and Training and Diversity and Inclusion Committees were contacted to ask for volunteers to review applications or become a mentor for the URM Near-Peer Mentorship Program. The member mentors are: Gregory Carr, Breno Diniz, Emmeline Edwards, Gabriel Fries, Nicholas Gilpin, Helen Lavretsky, Romina Mizrahi, Mercedes Perez-Rodriguez, Daniela Tropea and Consuelo Walss-Bass. The mentees are: Laura Benoit, Araba Chintoh, Austin Coley, Amelia Cuarenta, Alexandre Paim Diaz, Sunday Francis, Alexius Lampkin, Andrew Olagunju, Denisse Paredes and Michelle Sequeira. [Click here](#) to learn more about the Mentor/Mentee pairs.

The College is working in partnership with CIMER, Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research, to conduct the mentorship workshops. CIMER offers customized research mentor training workshops led by Master Facilitators using theoretically-grounded, evidence based, and culturally responsive training interventions and investigations. They have provided resources for various organizations and institutions to help improve mentoring relationships. [Click here](#) for information on CIMER.

Results from the first workshop evaluation show that 75% of the respondents rated the guidance and discussion workshop as very effective and 25% rated the workshop as effective and 100% of the respondents rated the workshop as a valuable use of their time. During the workshop, the mentees and mentors learned about the concept of a mentor map; an actionable plan to reach the next level of success. The main goal of the dedicated tool is to help build the best community of support for the mentee. They also learned about creating written agreements for accountability. The mentees and mentors were asked if they planned to make any changes in their mentorship relationships as a result of the workshop.

"I will be working to add in discussions about expectations with my mentors. Additionally, I will be working towards incorporating a mentor map."

"To have regular meetings with my mentor and try to have the commitments and agreements more clear. Also, try to have more frequent meetings with previous mentors who have been important for my career."

"Good advice re: setting ground rules & expectations for the relationship, identifying gaps in current mentor infrastructure and addressing those in the Near Peer mentor relationship."

"Optimize my mentoring capabilities based on the knowledge gained by my "mentoring profile."

The mentees and mentors learned how complex the mentor-mentee relationship is. It needs to be active with clear goals and agreements in order to achieve success!

The College looks forward to providing future updates to our membership as this group of mentees and mentors continue to evolve through the comprehensive URM Near-Peer Mentorship Program.