

## **GEO REU Workshop 2016**

### **Working group: Recruiting and supporting students from underrepresented groups, minority-serving institutions, and minority science organizations**

10:30-11:30 am - Thursday, Sept. 22, 2016

Leaders: Corey Garza, Itchung Cheung

*This is from a small working group of workshop participants who discussed the topic and made notes on their discussion.*

#### **Conferences and groups that are focused on minority students:**

- ABRCMS, AISES, SACNAS, NABG, ASLOMP, LSAMP. Many have been to SACNAS (but we don't see each other, so perhaps better coordination is needed).

#### **Goals**

- Short term
  - Want different applications (not more); have some diversity in applications, but not from HBCUs or Tribal Colleges. Historic recruiting strategies have not worked. New ideas needed. Want students with academic promise.
  - Want community college students.
  - Bring in smart diverse students to our relatively non-diverse community.
  - Prepare students for long term in the short term (e.g. leadership training, career guidance, extracurricular activities, role models)
- Long term
  - Reach communities that are not traditionally in ocean sciences, particularly as demographics are changing within our states. This should bring new ideas into the field.
  - Greater number URM role models in our institutions, particularly in the geosciences.
  - Improve retention of URM students in STEM.
  - Increase participation of URM students and mentors at a national level.

#### **Challenges**

- Attracting applicants from URM communities, particularly from African American communities.
- Getting initial students from HBCUs, HSIs, and Tribal Colleges. Building the initial relationships with these institutions.
- Bridging the personal and scientific identity of the students we are bringing in.
- Providing students with a broader perspective on how their education can be applied to our fields.
- Family support for students leaving local community; fear of going away to a 'big school'.
- Do students feel supported once on campus? Building a tight-knit cohort on campus during the REU.
- Totally different generation and expectations between undergraduate students and the faculty mentors. Getting faculty to understand these differences and be a strong role model.
- Young students who do not understand the financial and human resources issues associated with being a student/employee.
- Balancing the barriers to applying with selecting students who will get the most from the program.

## **Solutions and strategies**

- Create an appropriate pipeline for the students you have. Can lead to long term increase in applicants through former mentees.
- Persistent personal relationship with faculty in local schools.
- Send mentors out to build these relationships as well.
- Videos from NSF of students from HBCUs and others who are successful in these programs.
- Telling mentors expectations up front (writing letters, conference participation, follow up with mentees after the program).
- Post-program support: Giving graduate student position offers to some students at the end of the program.
- Getting alumni to give talks about where they have gone (sometimes will increase applications).
- Application process questions that can get students in your target population (and get past the GPA question)
  - Does your GPA accurately represent your abilities? Why or why not?
  - What are you especially proud of outside of your academic record?
  - How being in our program will help you in your academic career and career plans?
- Sending personal letters to faculty who have written very good rec letters for excellent students.
- Enrolling students in a 0 credit extended ed class to make them students and eligible to receive funding.