

NRMN-CAN Postdoctoral Mentor Training Workshop Recap



NRMN-CAN hosted a Mentor Training Workshop for Postdocs on June 19-21, 2016. 27 postdocs from 13 Universities throughout the CIC network participated in the workshop, which was held in the Big Ten Conference Center in Rosemont, IL.



This workshop was developed for NRMN-CAN by the NRMN Mentor Training Core to be specifically tailored to postdocs who are in the dual role of mentees to their PI and mentors in training as future faculty members. NRMN Master Facilitators Andrew Greenberg, PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Robert Tillman, PhD, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center organized the curriculum and facilitated the workshop.

The full NRMN Research Mentor Training Curriculum was implemented over the 1.5 day workshop and covered core competencies including: Maintaining Effective Communication, Addressing Equity and Inclusion, Aligning Expectations, Fostering Independence, and Promoting Professional Development, as well as new modules on Promoting Research Self-Efficacy, Cultivating Ethical Behavior, and Enhancing Work-Life Integration. Postdocs discussed case studies with their small groups and participated in big group discussions led by the Master Facilitators.



Over lunch on Monday, NRMN-CAN participants were treated to an inspiring keynote address from Jabbar Bennett, PhD, Northwestern University, titled “Mentoring and Leading From Within: Who Knows YOU Best?”. Dr. Bennett shared the story of his pathway to becoming a biomedical research faculty member and the current Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion at Northwestern. He also shared statistics on the diversity of academic faculty in the United States, demonstrating the need for continued efforts to increase diversity in academics, especially among tenured professors and chairs of departments. He encouraged the postdocs to be engaged in their mentoring relationships, to seek out professional development opportunities, and to develop support systems in order to be successful in their careers in academic research.





In the final session of the workshop, the postdocs used what they learned to develop their own personal mentoring philosophies to be implemented in their mentoring relationships back on their home campuses and throughout their careers.

In addition to the organized agenda, NRMN-CAN hosted informal networking dinner receptions on Sunday and Monday evenings, which allowed the postdocs time to develop important connections among their peers at CIC institutions. 70% of the postdocs in attendance were from underrepresented backgrounds in the sciences, and many expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this unique workshop.

“I felt that the conference allowed for participants to discuss issues that may have gone beyond the scope of scheduled topics. This created a safe space for discussion from the perspectives of people of color and other protected classes to share their experiences in a unique environment. I feel these discussions enhanced the conversations about our mentoring experiences and subsequent mentoring philosophies. Thank you for the opportunity to participate, and I look forward to continued discussions around these important professional development issues.” – NRMN-CAN Postdoc

The annual Fall NRMN-CAN Postdoctoral Professional Development and Grantwriting Conference will be held October 30 – November 1, 2016.