

Mentor Training 3: Defining College Success

Individual Reflection Questions

1. What has benefitted you in your journey into college? Into science?
 - Examples may include specific people who believed in you, your high school experience, your family background, access to books/media/materials or equipment, media representation, other resources you had access to growing up
2. What are meaningful values and beliefs you hold that are unrelated to school? Pick a few that stand out most to you and write a few sentences about why and how they are important. Some examples are included below, but feel free to come up with your own!
 - Enjoying Sports
 - Being Good at Art
 - Being Creative
 - Being Independent
 - Living in the Moment (or Enjoying Today)
 - Belonging to a Social Group (such as your community, racial group, or school club)
 - Listening to Music or Playing Music
 - Following Politics or Government
 - Being with Friends or Family
 - Being Religious
 - Having a Sense of Humor
3. Now think about how you show up in college settings and scientific settings (class, research lab, conferences, etc). Do those spaces reflect your values and beliefs? Alternatively, do you feel comfortable expressing your values and beliefs in these spaces?
4. Lastly, what do you think of when you visualize someone successful in college in general? In science specifically?
 - What kinds of external outcomes do you project to the world, or what expectations do you hold yourself to?
 - Are there ways you can connect your own aspirations (motivated by your internal values and belief systems) to a successful journey through college and science?

Bag Portrait Sharing Activity Instructions

This is an activity for helping students reflect on their identities as scientists, what motivates them to pursue science, and the experiences, values, and assets they bring with them. You will use a paper bag on which you will create a portrait of yourself. One side of the bag will reflect what you project to the world. The other side will reflect what you perhaps keep hidden from the world. Inside the bag you can keep objects, items, memorabilia, pictures, or anything else you deem relevant that connects you to your study, inspires you to do what you do, and informs your values, beliefs, and assumptions. With this self-portrait bag, notice what you notice about yourself throughout the semester.

We will share/present our bags in small groups. Share at your comfort level.

Self-Affirmation Research Citation

It's important to realize that we all carry our whole selves with us wherever we go, including scientific settings. Each of us has individual aspirations, motivations, values, and beliefs that brought us to college and into science. Research has shown that self-affirmation is a valuable exercise that can improve outcomes for students. Exercises such as the one we just did can actually help improve test scores and GPA for students experiencing stereotype threat. For more information and references, scan the QR code below. From this training, we hope you take away the idea that your personal values are actually assets for succeeding in science!

We also each have different comfort levels expressing ourselves in different environments. This is important to keep in mind as you interact with your peers as TAs, tutors, and mentors. We want to make sure that we are not projecting our own values systems on others who are seeking our guidance. For example, a student might come into tutoring hoping to just pass a class, which might not align with your goals when you were taking that class. At the same time, we are motivated to make scientific spaces more welcoming for everyone (especially if their background is different from "the norm"), because research has shown that affirming people's values (even if outside of science) increases their chances of succeeding in science.



Resources



Exit Ticket