

## **Diversity & Inclusion Notes**

Supplemental details to the Diversity & Inclusion Timeline  
Compiled on November 4, 2020

Below is a summary of current and sustained Department of Molecular Biology (MOL) efforts in Diversity and Inclusion, which are being led by the D&I Committee and Dr. Gonzalez-Perez (Assistant Dean for Access, Diversity and Inclusion) in close collaboration with the MOL leadership (Chair, Director of Graduate Studies, DGS), MOL committees (the Post-doctoral Scholars Committee, the Graduate Student Mentorship Committee, GSMC), and the University Administration:

### **Graduate Student Initiatives**

***ABRCMS/SACNAS (2007-present)***. MOL sends graduate students, faculty, and staff representatives to both the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) and Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) events every year. Beyond recruitment, our presence both increases MOL visibility and advances collegial interactions between URM students and MOL graduate students. Coaching and mentorship after the conferences are key components of this effort.

***MolBio Scholars (2017-present)***. This signature summer program and the first of its kind at Princeton provides a unique opportunity for URM and first-generation students to experience the Princeton campus and for MOL to demystify the institution and clear up misconceptions, all before the students apply for graduate studies. MolBio Scholars participate in workshops to support their graduate school applications, are invited to present their research at the annual MOL departmental retreat, and they are matched with faculty members to gain insight into research projects, collaborations, and the interdisciplinary nature of the department. Whether MolBio Scholars end up at Princeton or beyond, MOL acknowledges the importance and impact of this program to boost the national STEM student pipeline with a greater number of URM individuals. This program is now a model for similar programs among other STEM departments at Princeton. During the first 4 years of this program, an average of 51% of the applications received were from minority-serving institutions.

***On-campus interviews and recruitment (2017-present)***. At a coffee and dessert break during each MOL graduate admissions interview and recruitment weekend, current MOL URM students answer questions about climate, inclusivity, and the MOL community. In partnership with MOL, the University developed a student resource fair

for these weekends, at which various administrative offices, student groups, and clubs from outside of MOL discuss campus activities and support for students during graduate school.

***First-year orientation (2017-present).*** The Graduate School implemented a Fostering Inclusion workshop as part of the general orientation for all incoming graduate students. The orientation sets the standard for expectations concerning collegiality and inclusion across the university.

***Peer mentorship (2017-present).*** At the beginning of the 2017 academic year, the MOL Graduate Student Mentoring Committee (GSMC), a partner committee to the D&I Committee, launched a Peer Mentorship Program (PMP). Each first-year graduate student is assigned a graduate student mentor with whom they meet once a month to discuss general or specific issues related to the academic program, work life balance, their Princeton experience, and more. The GSMC has been collating non-private results from these mentoring meetings to identify common issues faced by first year graduate students in general, and first year URM students in particular. The GSMC is providing steps to alleviate and circumvent such issues. In addition, peer-organized workshops are conducted on the themes of choosing mentors, choosing rotations, and choosing a thesis lab. The GSMC's and PMP's efforts focus on ensuring that graduate students from different backgrounds feel welcome and supported, educating all students about implicit biases and the importance of diversity, and ensuring that all students have access to the resources they need to be successful at Princeton.

***Programming around Diversity training (2016-present).*** All MOL graduate students receive Diversity training as part of the first-year orientation. In addition, MOL provides mandatory trainings in areas related to Diversity and Inclusion. MOL has organized a video-game based workshop using *Fair Play*, a program led by Shawn Maxam on *Diversity and Inclusion Innovation*, and training from the Office of Disability Services.

## Postdoctoral Researcher Initiatives

***Programming around Diversity training (2020-present).*** MOL provides mandatory trainings in areas related to Diversity and Inclusion. MOL has organized a program led by Shawn Maxam on *Diversity and Inclusion Innovation* and training from the Office of Disability Services

***Princeton Presidential Research Fellows program (2019-present).*** This University initiative supports postdoctoral scholars from historically underrepresented groups among STEM fields in academia. This program is understood to include individuals from racial and ethnic minorities and women. Since the program's inception, MOL laboratories have successfully secured fellowships in each round of the competition.

See: <https://www.princeton.edu/news/2019/04/08/twelve-scholars-named-princetons-first-presidential-postdoctoral-research-fellows>

***MOL Alumni Career Support Network for Postdocs (2020-present)***. In an effort to support the career development of MOL postdoctoral researchers, the D&I Committee has established an alumni network database. This resource is used to connect postdocs with Princeton MOL alumni, primarily former postdocs, who are willing to provide support, advice, and mentorship on professional topics.

## Faculty Initiatives

***Programming around Diversity training (2016-present)***. MOL provides mandatory trainings in areas related to Diversity and Inclusion. MOL has organized a video-game based workshop using *Fair Play*, a program led by Shawn Maxam on inclusive mentorship, and training from the Office of Disability Services.

***Faculty Mentorship Program (2019-present)***. The D&I Committee initiated a new Faculty Mentorship Program aimed at improving mentorship of MOL junior faculty. The goal is to ensure that all junior faculty, but particularly women and URM faculty members, have access to a senior faculty advisor who can help the junior faculty member successfully navigate the start of their independent career.

***Faculty Diversity recruiting (2016-present)***. New faculty recruiting strategies have been put in place to identify a diverse applicant pool with the goal of continuing to diversify the MOL faculty ranks. One such strategy is that in every faculty search, the top 40 candidate applications are identified, and all women and URM individuals among those applicants automatically receive initial interviews for the position. This process aims to identify candidates that might otherwise be overlooked.

## Departmental Level Initiatives

***Code of Conduct (2017-present)***. The D&I Committee drafted a departmental Code of Conduct, which is now prominently displayed on the departmental website. MOL wrote the Code of Conduct to serve as an explicitly stated set of principles upon which to base discussions about department culture, diversity, and inclusion. This code of conduct is read aloud or referred to at the departmental retreat each year.

***Faculty Ambassador Program for recruitment and visibility (in pilot phase since 2018)***. Direct interaction between candidates and MOL faculty members is the department's most effective recruiting mechanism. In the MOL Faculty Ambassador Program, MOL faculty members pay regular visits to Minority-Serving Institutions with

which official partnerships have been made. The goal is to present MOL research to a wider set of URM and first-generation undergraduate students and to promote the MOL graduate program. This program has been piloted since 2018 and will expand going forward.

***Town halls (2020-present).*** The D&I Committee, along with the MOL Chair, have started conducting town hall meetings with MOL graduate students, post docs, and staff, to gauge the department climate and to discuss ongoing Diversity and Inclusion efforts. These town halls have been well received and have sparked new initiatives that the D&I committee is currently implementing.