WOW Pod at WHOI
Session 7 - Discussion

This is a draft resource map for the WOW pod at WHOI. This was modified from the “Sample PhD mentoring plan” developed by Vashan Wright (WHOI) and Karin Block (City College of New York and CUNY Graduate Center), License: CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Overview of WOW Pod discussion: To address resources specific to living on Cape Cod (our location) and institution (WHOI and MIT), we draw from our collective experiences and expand on resources that we wish existed for our community. Below, we specifically highlight resources related to (1) Mentoring, (2) Building community at work, (3) Professional development, and (4) Broader community support and mental health. During the drafting of this deliverable, we acknowledged as a group that it was difficult to find resources for each category above that are catered specifically to establishing and sustaining a sense of belonging for new People of Color joining our community. One shared experience that was discussed, is that upon sharing how we originally heard of many of these resources, it was either during a short orientation session or by word of mouth. These two approaches may be sufficient in some cases, but are not effective for actually creating and sustaining a culturally competent environment where new hires from historically excluded groups will feel welcome. Thus, alongside a short description of these resources, we comment on how many of these resources could be improved.

1. Mentoring - Opportunities to receive mentoring
   a. WHOI-specific mentorship for individuals
      i. **Mentorship** is provided for postdocs and Assistant Scientists through mentoring committees that meet with the researchers once or twice a year to discuss progress and provide guidance. Listed below are several avenues in which formal mentoring occurs. A suggestion for these mentoring meetings/sessions/committees is to include a ‘sense of belonging’ component - where we can acknowledge that individuals may not feel welcome in the workplace or local community. As mentors, it should be a priority to hear about these concerns and then be able to look at resource maps (perhaps generated from URGE-led efforts) to contribute a more customized roadmap of welcoming at WHOI.

      1. **Postdoc Mentoring Committee** - In addition to their postdoc advisor, who can serve as a mentor, WHOI postdocs are assigned a Postdoc Mentoring Committee that meets one-on-one with postdocs on a yearly basis. These mentors are assigned by department and are available to give career and postdoc advice any time, not just at the meetings. The meetings are designed to be very casual, and the committee is there to help postdocs achieve their goals and suggest options for the future.

      2. **Janet Fields and Meg Tivey** provide postdoc support
3. **Postdoc Association-hosted career panels** - several times per year PDA will host panel discussions on negotiating, navigating careers, industry careers, and opportunities to peer review job application material.

   ii. The Technical Staff at WHOI has a volunteer mentoring program. The mentoring program is cross departmental, and a person can serve both as a mentor and a mentee. The goal of the program is to help with professional development, discuss career paths and advancements, share knowledge, build relationships across the institution and overall improve workplace and retention.

b. **non-WHOI mentorship**
   i. ASLO Multicultural Program: increasing accessibility to scientific meetings, providing additional networking, and working to develop cohorts of students (undergrad and grad) from underrepresented groups.
   ii. ASLO-/ AGU-hosted LGBTQIA+ events at the regular conferences:
   iii. SACNAS conference: networking and mentoring opportunities at the annual meeting

2. **Resources for building community within the workplace**
   a. **Coffee hours and social events** are ways to be introduced to the community within the WHOI departments.
   b. **Postdoc community**
      i. Happy hours and meet-ups - Important casual settings with Postdocs. These are sometimes planned around a specific topics (i.e. how best to do our taxes!), but often it is a space to connect with peers.
      ii. Slack space & email listserv to connect with other postdocs, hosted happy hours (virtual tool!) and events that range from playing games to discussing how to do our taxes. Recent efforts have also emphasized the importance of expanding postdoc community-building to virtual meet-ups, as many postdocs are working remotely. Resource for open jobs, meet-ups, housing, and anything related to postdocs. As one example, there is a #postdocparents channel where postdocs can connect specifically on parenting-related topics in the Woods Hole/Falmouth area.
      iii. **Postdoc Breakfast** This is a time for WHOI postdocs and the Postdoc Association (PDA) to discuss issues with administration, to meet and greet one another, and to learn more about the PDA.
   c. **Technical Staff community**
      i. Elected technical staff committee that represents the technical staff in all departments.
      ii. Quarterly newsletter
      iii. Icebreaker/social events
      iv. Technical staff women’s group meetings with invited speakers (some with invited scientist, HR representatives, social events).
   d. **Groups at WHOI**
i. Opportunities to join sport activities in the summer.

ii. Women’s Committee at WHOI, which represents women in any position at WHOI. The committee meets monthly, hosts events that highlight women at WHOI, and provides a space to bring up issues specific to women at WHOI.

iii. International Committee at WHOI: group at WHOI dedicated to welcoming and helping with the adjustment of international employees and students. Resources provided by the group include information on housing and transportation in Falmouth and Woods Hole, and a group of volunteers one can contact if they need assistance.

https://website.whoi.edu/internationalcommittee/

1. This is an example of a webpage that currently is in need of updating, but presents a good platform to provide a sense of belonging to new hires or students. See this FAQ page:
https://website.whoi.edu/internationalcommittee/faq/

iv. Glow - active email listserv and events year-round

v. Slack Space (current URGE slack space that we intend to convert) to share resources related to DEI in the Woods Hole Falmouth area. Also a virtual space for affinity groups to create private channels (e.g., Latinx, AAPI, and more).

e. Groups outside of WHOI

i. Society for Women in Marine Science - community building, meet-ups at scientific conferences, Slack space, and symposium held once or twice a year - https://swmsmarinescience.com/get-involved/chapters/

ii. AAPI in Geosciences community - meet-ups (virtual), talks, events (especially during May), student mixers, and a Slack community to provide support for Asian American scientists https://www.aapigeosci.org

iii. Pride Field Network - organized group for sharing resources and support for gender and sexual minorities that work in the field, especially in more remote areas. https://pridefieldnetwork.com

3. Professional development

a. WHOI CDEI website links are now centralized and include a list of resources (https://web.whoi.edu/cdi/resource-library/)

i. Opportunities to join working groups at WHOI focused on specific topics that are united by the goal of fostering a culture of inclusion at WHOI.

b. Skillset support

i. WHOI Data Science

1. Slack space for learning data science-related skills
2. Multiple workshops put on for learning code

ii. Workshop on proposal writing is offered twice per year for all WHOI community (and the rest of the research centers of the area)

iii. How to be a better mentor - Our group has recognized that this is an area we would like to see improved. While our group includes a range of
people in more junior to more senior roles, we all have acknowledged that we would like additional training and resources regarding how to be better mentors.

1. Through summer student programs, specifically PEP and WHOI SSF, there are mentoring sessions that are mandatory for mentors. The content of these mentoring sessions, specifically the PEP session, is on practices for inclusive teaching and mentoring.

c. Postdoc community
   i. Awards & recognition - For postdoctoral scholars, funds are available that can be used for professional development. For the technical staff, there are internal awards specifically targeting professional development.
   ii. Opportunities to show work
      1. Department seminars
      2. Postdoc symposium - every fall in which each postdoc is invited to give an oral or poster presentation on their research. Voting on the new PDA occurs here.

d. JP-student community
   i. Job-seeking
      1. A bit of a disconnect between MIT and WHOI job resources: for MIT, even graduate student resources are more so geared towards individuals looking for a career in industry (mostly engineering and software), which is not always the goal of PhD students in the Joint Program
      2. However, MIT’s Career and Professional Development page specifically addresses inequities involved in the hiring process, which extend to all forms of employment, in their resources for employers and mentoring philosophy
      3. The resources endorsed by the Joint Program specifically for Career and Professional Development are quite limited and mostly constitute links to articles, etc.
      4. The WHOI specific career development page does not address diversity-related issues

4. Broader community support and mental health
   1. Various resources also listed on the WHOI community wiki, which anybody can contribute to (currently maintained by the WHOI Womens Committee):
      https://wiki.whoi.edu/
   2. Mental health:
      a. ESAP service from KGA Mental health support and resources available for all employees
      b. There is also a list of Massachusetts and Rhode Island area therapists of color
3. **DEI Safe Slack Space** - establishment of private channels in a Slack space so that individuals can network virtually.

4. **BIPOC-owned business:** [https://amplypoccapecod.com](https://amplypoccapecod.com) In addition to this website, the best way to find business that are owned by POC.

5. **Twitter (& other social media):** WHOI-associated scientists have a large presence on twitter and have been a part of themed weeks and months that highlight #blackinmarinescience, #blackindatascience, #blackinmicro, #blackingeoscience and more.

6. Opportunities for outreach and connecting with Woods Hole/Falmouth area:
   a. Summer activities like #AskAnExpert
   b. Other outreach/educational activities: [https://wiki.whoi.edu/topic/outreach/](https://wiki.whoi.edu/topic/outreach/)
   c. Community-wide WHOI science day with ship tours, etc.
   d. Science Fair judges, mentors (Falmouth public schools, Falmouth academy)