Recommendations for Fostering STEM Mentoring that Builds Knowledge about Careers and Workforce Skills

For Professional Societies

Many professional societies already include a number of activities that build knowledge about STEM careers and workforce skills, including student poster and essay competitions; travel grants for attending the annual meeting; career materials and websites; special issues of the scientific journal devoted to careers; and career workshops.

However, science society representatives who have participated in focus groups indicated that a more coordinated approach could be developed for bringing increased attention to STEM mentoring, including:

• Declaring a decade, year or particular week for STEM mentoring.

• Providing mentor and mentee training at annual meetings and in special forums.

• Encouraging journals to publish editorials, mentoring research, essays, columns, or special issues on STEM mentoring. This might include a coordinated effort, where journals publish a special issue during the same month.

• Creating a Code for Mentoring, incorporating mentoring into existing Codes of Ethics or creating guidelines that foster high quality career and workforce mentoring.

• Creating board statements about the importance of mentoring that build knowledge about STEM careers and workforce skills.

• Establishing mentor awards, particularly departmental mentoring awards.

• Conducting research on STEM mentoring.

• Incorporating mentoring in the accreditation process.

Recommendations to foundations included:

• Provide funding for research on STEM career and workforce mentoring. A single-focus program can be developed, or this topic may be incorporated into an existing grants program.

• Include grant review criteria that require applicants to present a plan for STEM career and workforce mentoring.
• Write a “Dear Colleague” letter to encourage awardees to pay more attention to developing STEM career and workforce skills. See example from the NSF Geosciences Directorate. [http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2006/nsf06038/nsf06038.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2006/nsf06038/nsf06038.jsp)

**Recommendations to STEM departments include:**

• Appoint a departmental mentoring committee to develop and implement a departmental mentoring plan with a particular emphasis on providing students with career information and opportunities to develop workforce skills;

• Provide mentor training for faculty.

• Provide mentee training for students.

• Provide online mentoring resources or links to resources for faculty and students.

• Assess and provide incentives for high quality faculty mentoring.