Mentors 101

What is a Mentor
A mentor is more than an adviser. A mentor provides you with wisdom, technical knowledge, assistance, support, empathy and respect throughout, and often beyond, your educational career. Mentoring helps students understand how their ambitions fit into education, undergraduate life and career choices.

An effective mentoring relationship develops over time. The student benefits from the mentor’s support, skills, wisdom and coaching. Later, both people deepen their working relationship, sharing ideas about the design and implementation of your leadership project.

Best Practices before Meeting with a Mentor
- Develop your elevator pitch – who are you and what do you want to learn – 30-45 seconds
- Reflect on what you would like to learn and possible goals
- Research your mentor (LinkedIn, company bios)

Meeting with Mentor
- Arrive on time
- Dress for success; business casual always for meetings with mentors
- Exhibit professionalism, including professional language (verbal and written)
- Send a thank you after each meeting
- For meetings, be prepared with a topic/ topics you would like to discuss; see below for a list of ideas
- Don’t be afraid to initiate contact; keep trying – mentors are busy individuals
- Work around your mentor’s schedule whenever possible; be respectful of their time
- If invited to visit your mentor’s workplace, be sure to follow the company dress code
- Take responsibility by following up on recommended actions

How Your Mentor Can Help You
- Knowledge and perspective of an organization of culture
- Positive and constructive feedback on professional and personal development
- Expanded personal network
- Career advice, direction, and exploration
- Critique of resume, cover letters, or other professional communication
- Interview preparation and mock interviews
- Business etiquette, dining etiquette, corporate culture, and professionalism
- Job shadowing
- LinkedIn profile review and use of social media

What You Bring to Your Mentor
- Share interesting articles, readings
- Share what you are learning in your classes or job/internship experiences
- Update your mentor on the University’s events and news
- Update you mentor on the success that resulted when you followed their advice

**Initial meeting(s): Getting to know each other**
- Complete the “Mentor- Mentee Partnership Agreement”
- Expectations: How often will we communicate? What is the best way for us to communicate (email, text, etc)? What are good/bad times for meeting?
- Roles and Responsibilities: What will we each get from the relationship? Who will take the lead in agenda setting, communication, and follow up? What expertise, time commitment, and resources will each of you provide?
- Deliverables: Will we establish any “deliverables” for our meetings? Will one of us take notes on our meeting, progress, and objectives? (see “mentoring journal template”) Will we both read a book or article in preparation for a meeting? Is any other preparation needed before our meetings?

**Building the foundation**
- Sharing background information: Student shares resume, background, and interests, as well as mentoring goals. Mentor shares personal and professional background and interests, resume, and life lessons.
- Goal setting: Develop SMART goals based on the students mentoring goals. Identify resources needed and action items for student and mentor, deliverables, and deadlines.
- Getting to know you: What is your dream job? Who are your role models and why? What have you liked/ disliked about previous jobs? What are you afraid of? Write responses ahead of time and review together.

**Professional Development**
- Professional communications: Resume, cover letters, emails, thank you notes, note-taking, who is the right person to contact.
- Networking: Advice for networking, professional dress and appearance, and business etiquette. Before attending networking events, information sessions, career fairs, etc., ask your mentor for advice on how to best prepare. Afterwards, debrief with your mentor and discuss what went well and what didn’t. Identify ways you could improve.
- Social Media: LinkedIn profile review, how to use social media effectively.
- Professionalism: What journals, blogs or reference materials would be helpful? Any professional associations worth consideration? Any professional events you could attend together?
- Interviewing: Interview preparation and practice. Debrief after interviews to discuss what went well and how you could improve for the future.

**Career Exploration**
- Brainstorm: What options are available to a student with my major? Possible job titles? Pros and cons on each area? What positions/titles might be a good fit for you? Are there options you haven’t considered?
- Assessment: Work with your career counselor to identify career assessment tool(s) (StrengthsFinder, Interest Profiler, etc.). Discuss the results with your mentor.
- Job Shadow: If possible, arrange a day to visit your mentor’s office, and meet with a variety of departments depending on your interests. Learn about your mentor’s daily activities. Your mentor might be able to help arrange a job shadow or informational interview with another professional as well.
- Informational interviews: Research companies or individuals you would like to meet with, and develop a list of questions you would like to ask. Review your question list with your mentor. Ask for insights and advice. Afterwards, debrief with your mentor about what you learned.

**Follow-up**
- Feedback: You have a far better chance of succeeding if you know what others are thinking of you. Ask your mentor for feedback frequently. Be sure to thank them for any suggestions, even if it might be hard to hear. Reflect on and consider the advice, then determine what (if anything) you want to do.
- Revisit and refine goals: Refer back to goals frequently, check on progress, and revise goals as needed. Be sure to celebrate success!
Mentor- Mentee Partnership Agreement

Between Student ______________________ and Mentor_________________________

Confidentiality
• What information is okay to share, and what information will we commit to keep confidential? (confidentiality commitment will extend beyond the length of academic year)

Meeting arrangements
• How often will we meet and for how long?
• How will we communicate between meetings? Text, call, email?
• Discuss expectations for response time.

Mentor contact information
• Primary email _________________________________
• Secondary email _______________________________
• Primary phone_________________________________
• Secondary phone ______________________________
• Preferences: (time of day, time sensitive questions, etc.)

Student contact information
• Primary email _________________________________
• Secondary email _______________________________
• Primary phone_________________________________
• Secondary phone ______________________________

Mentees Roles and Responsibilities:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Mentor’s Roles and Responsibilities:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Mentoring Journal Template

Meeting date:

Key topics:

Reflection:

Action items:
  Student-
  Mentor-

Next meeting:
  Date/time/location-
  Who will set and send agenda-
  Anything I need to do to prepare-

  Tentative topics-
Possible Discussion Questions

- What is your job like?
  - A typical day?
  - What do you do? What are the duties/functions/responsibilities of your job?
  - What kinds of problems do you deal with?
  - What kinds of decisions do you make?
- Why does this type of work interest you and how did you get started?
- How did you get your job? What jobs and experiences have led you to your present position?
- Can you suggest some ways a student could obtain this necessary experience?
- What are the most important personal satisfactions and dissatisfactions connected with your occupation?
  - What part of this job do you personally find most satisfying? Most challenging?
  - What do you like and not like about working in this industry?
- What things did you do before you entered this occupation?
  - Which have been most helpful?
  - What other jobs can you get with the same background?
- What are the various jobs in this field or organization?
- Why did you decide to work for this company?
- Do you find your job exciting or boring? Why?
- How does your company differ from its competitors?
- Are you optimistic about the company’s future and your future with the company?
- What does the company do to contribute to its employees’ professional development?
- What sorts of changes are occurring in your occupation?
- How does a person progress in your field? What is a typical career path in this field or organization?
  - What is the best way to enter this occupation?
  - What are the advancement opportunities?
- What were the keys to your career advancement? How did you get where you are and what are your long-range goals?
- What are the skills that are most important for a position in this field?
- What particular skills or talents are most essential to be effective in your job? How did you learn these skills? Did you enter this position through a formal training program? How can I evaluate whether or not I have the necessary skills for a position such as yours?
- How would you describe the working atmosphere and the people with whom you work?
- Is there a basic philosophy of the company or organization and, if so, what is it? (Is it a people, service or product oriented business?)
- What can you tell me about the corporate culture?
- What is the average length of time for an employee to stay in the job you hold? Are there incentives or disincentives for staying in the same job?
- Do you have any special words of warning or encouragement as a result of your experience?