

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & ENVIRONMENT

ALUMNI MENTORING PROGRAM



2016



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Dear Participant,

This handbook was designed to outline our Alumni Mentoring Program, requirements, responsibilities, and expectations for Mentors as well as our Student Participants. Please consider this handbook a resource to assist you in assessing your mentoring relationship as well as developing it further as time passes. The mentoring relationship is a partnership and will require strong commitment and participation from both parties. At any time, if you feel that the mentoring relationship is not developing as it should, please contact us.

Thank you so much for your commitment to this program and dedicating your time and talent to a program that can have a lasting effect on our alumni and students. Your dedication and loyalty to the University of Kentucky is valued.

Sincerely,

Amanda Saha
Director, Career Development & Academic Enrichment

Billy Toombs,
Alumni Relations & Annual Giving Coordinator

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

As an alumni, student, or friend of the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, you have a unique opportunity to be a part of a big, blue experience never offered before. Our goal is to connect current students with alumni and friends of UK and establish a relationship that offers benefits and strong outcomes for both the mentor and the student participant.

Program Objectives

- Provide insight and guidance for students through interactions with working professionals.
- Encourage a relationship that enriches the student's academic experience and promotes leadership and professional development.
- Offer contacts, networking, and shadowing experiences in the students' fields of interest.
- Engage alumni and help them connect with current students, staff, and faculty.
- Allow alums to learn and sharpen mentoring skills they can use in other personal and professional areas of their lives.
- Increase the professional network of our alums.
- Demonstrate their abilities to recognize and potentially acquire new talent.



Mentee-Specific Skills

- Acquiring Mentors
- Learning Quickly
- Show Initiative
- Following Through
- Managing the Relationship

• • • • Shared Core Skills • • • •

- Listening Actively
- Identifying Goals & Current Reality
- Encouraging
- Building Trust

Mentor-Specific Skills

- Instructing/Developing Capabilities
- Inspiring
- Providing Corrective Feedback
- Managing Risks
- Opening Doors

INFORMATION FOR MENTORS

What does it mean to mentor?

A mentor is someone who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced and often younger person. In Greek mythology, Mentor was a friend of Odysseus who was trusted with the education of Odysseus' son Telemachus. As a mentor, we encourage you to support your mentee in a way that allows exchange of knowledge and potential development of new skills. Your relationship should be based on trust and mutual respect.

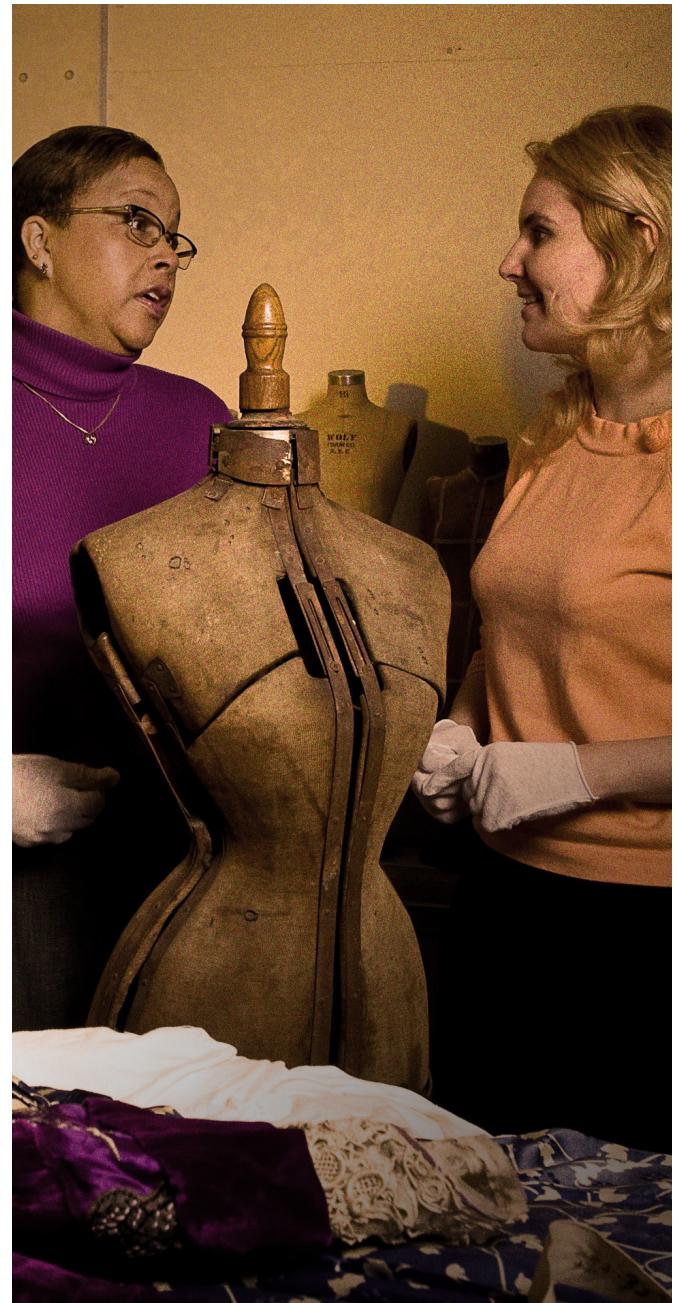
Each student who has been accepted into our mentoring program was chosen based on his or her professional ambitions and motivations. Commitment to maintain the mentoring relationship will be emphasized along the way. As the committee assigns matches, we will do our best to encourage partnerships based on professional goals and experiences as well as interests and variables that would strengthen the relationship.

As a mentor, you will have an opportunity each month to provide feedback and details with our Alumni Coordinator. This is an opportunity for you to let us know if there are any concerns regarding your arrangement or if you need additional resources. At any time during the mentoring process, please feel free to share with the coordinators if you have strong concerns or doubt the effectiveness or benefit of the partnership. We value your time and want to make sure you are supported.

Expectations of the Mentor

For your mentoring partnership to be successful, we expect mentors to....

- Participate in at least one quality interaction with student per month.
- Have respect for the student and a willingness to share.
- Provide and encourage a job shadowing activity for the student.
- Attend a CAFE professional development activity with the student.
- Promote and encourage networking opportunities and introduce your student to the idea of a professional network.
- Assist the student with professional development needs as they arise.
- Maintain confidentiality



INFORMATION FOR MENTORS

Are You a Long Distance Mentor?

The relationship between a student and a mentor located outside of the state can be just as easy and beneficial as those matches set up inside the state. Arrangements should be made and agreed upon by both parties. Travel is not required as a part of this program and we will work with you to make sure the process is easy and provides opportunities for quality interaction. While we would love to have alumni come to the Bluegrass for a visit, we realize this is not always feasible. Interactions made via technology will be encouraged and we can assist you in this process.

- Participate in at least one quality interaction with your mentee. Consider meeting via Skype, phone, Facetime, or social media.
- Provide a job shadowing experience for the student in your location if the student is open to travel. If the student cannot travel, we can help set up a shadowing experience with a colleague in town.
- Consider visiting us for an alumni or college professional development event. Would you like to come to town and speak to our students? We can make that happen!
- Introduce the student to your professional network via LinkedIn.
- Provide an opportunity for the student to tour your company if they are willing to travel. If not, consider setting them up with a similar company or contact here in Kentucky.
- Encourage your student to participate in phone conferences or any meetings in which you regularly participate via distance.

Special challenges for a long distance mentoring relationship:

- Allow time for the relationship to grow. Consider meeting more than once a month.
- Keep personal information regarding your professional match handy when you are meeting.
- Take notes or keep a record of your conversations.
- Try to talk on the phone or Skype in a private yet professional location. We can provide an office or conference room for students.
- Stay committed to scheduled meetings. Avoid cancelling unless there is an emergency.
- Start conversations with a quick debrief of the prior meetings. Conclude meetings with "homework" or "next steps". Always have a plan for your next interaction or activity.
- Listen actively. Don't interrupt your partner.

Partnerships
will be monitored
& supported

INFORMATION FOR MENTEES

Expectations of the Student

In order to maximize the program's benefits, we expect you to:

- Meet your mentor for a face to face initial introduction at a mutually agreed upon location.
- Participate in at least one monthly quality interaction with their mentor.
- Take initiative and manage the relationship. This is a mentee driven partnership.
- Participate in a job shadowing activity

As a student participant in the program, you will have an opportunity each month to provide feedback and report any details you are comfortable sharing. This is a time for you to let us know about the highs and lows, wins, and take-aways. At any time during the mentoring program, you can let us know if you have concerns about your experience or worry about the effectiveness of your partnership.

Professional Expectations

- Because this is a student led mentoring program, it is your responsibility to take an active role in planning and engaging in meetings and professional events. Please take this role seriously.
- Communicate with your mentor often and schedule your interactions. Ask questions and seek his or her advice when you need to outside of your scheduled activities.
- As a UK student, you are expected to conduct yourself as a mature and responsible member of the University community. Be prompt, respectful, courteous, and appropriate in your communication and behavior while participating in this program.

What is a quality interaction?

You and your Mentor have the opportunity to decide what quality interactions work well for your partnership.

- Skype meetings
- Phone conversations
- Phone conferences
- Meetings over coffee
- Mock interview

In the case of a long distance mentoring partnership, it is important to spend adequate time to allow the relationship to build. You might consider meeting more than once a month if face-to-face meetings are not possible. Communicate in between your meetings to strengthen your partnership. Don't be afraid to be spontaneous. Call, text, or email just to say "Hello", check in, or share good news. Email can be a great way to conveniently keep in touch.

No Chemistry? No Worries!

A formal mentoring relationship is different than other relationships that occur naturally over time. At first, it is possible that a pair does not feel much "chemistry". Research suggests that while it is nice to have chemistry, it is not necessary for a Mentoring partnership to be successful. What is required is expertise on the part of the mentor, mutual respect for each other, and a willingness to share. In many formal relationships, chemistry can eventually occur over time.

"Being involved in a mentoring relationship is a privilege for both members of the pair, so you should go out of your way to be gracious and thoughtful to each other. When you are unclear about what to do, or how to act, ask your partner. The gesture of asking conveys respect for what the two of you are working to accomplish"

-The Mentoring Group

et·i·quette

'edəkət, 'edə, ket/
any special code of
behavior or courtesy

An unspoken etiquette exists in mentoring relationships. Here are some explicit rules to follow during your mentoring experience. These rules are guidelines, since all mentors and mentees come to relationships with different styles and expectations. Ideally, one of the first things you and your partner should discuss with each other are the rules you would like to use in your relationship.

DOS AND DONT'S FOR MENTORS



Do...

Help your mentee take the initiative in the relationship. This is a MENTEE directed partnership. The student participant has the most to gain from this program, so allow them to manage the relationship. Be open to the student's ideas, questions, and discussion topics.

Respect the mentee's time as much as your own. (Be very explicit regarding your own needs and limitations, i.e. time constraints, communication styles, etc.)

Always ask if you can make a suggestion or offer some constructive criticism.

Tell your mentee that it is okay if they don't follow all of your advice or suggestions.

Expect your mentee to establish and move toward their own personal goals.

Recognize and work through conflicts as they arise. Invite discussion with your mentee and ask for a program coordinator to assist you if needed. Keep your relationship professional.

Make only positive or neutral comments about your mentee to others outside of the program. If you disagree or have concerns regarding your mentee's behavior or values, share your perceptions and ask for help if necessary. If the situation remains unresolved or troublesome, take steps to end the relationship by contacting the program coordinator.



Don't...

Insist that the mentee suggest every activity and do all the leading. Your role is to encourage and support. If you need to "nudge" the relationship in a forward direction, please do so. Feel free to check-in with the student just to touch base and ask them if they would like to talk, meet, or work on a professional development activity.

Automatically give advice or criticism.

Assume that all of your advice will be followed.

Expect your mentee to follow your footsteps professionally.

Take your mentee for granted or assume he or she doesn't need some reinforcement.

Move your relationship into a friendship prematurely.

Talk negatively about the mentee.

Hang onto the mentee indefinitely. If the mentee would like to continue the relationship informally, let them take the lead.

End the relationship on bad terms.

As with all etiquette, the overriding rule is to make the other person feel at ease, knowledgeable about what to do, and valued. In general, this means showing kindness, flexibility, appreciation, and using a combination of good business and social manners.

More specifically, there are several dos and don'ts that are usually followed in successful mentoring partnerships. Since mentees should show respect to their mentors, the first set of dos and don'ts is for them.

DOS AND DONTS FOR MENTEES



Take time to identify your goals.

Be considerate of your mentor's time.

Return phone calls and emails promptly. Be on time.

Let your mentor suggest extra time or additional activities.

Listen attentively to what your mentor has to say.

Be complete yet succinct in your comments and explanations. Ask directly if you are talking too much.

Seriously consider all advice you receive.

Show evidence that you have utilized the help to make your choice.

Show appreciation for every form of assistance your mentor provides. Say thanks!

Make it easy for your mentor to give you constructive feedback.

Assume your relationship will remain professional.

Make only positive or neutral comments about your mentor to others. If you disagree with your mentor's behaviors or values, share your perceptions with her/him. If the situation continues, accept it or move forward.



Depend on your mentor to identify the goals for you.

Assume your mentor has unlimited time for you. Tune out when the topic seems irrelevant to your immediate needs.

Say "Yes, but...."

Forget to share the outcome of the help your mentor gave.

Take your mentor for granted or assume he/she doesn't need reinforcement too.

Immediately defend or explain yourself, or criticize your mentor.

Intrude into your mentor's personal life or expect to be close friends.

Talk negatively about your mentor.

Hang on to your mentor indefinitely.

Move on without checking in with past members.

we
grow
blue.



College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment