



# Mentoring Program Handbook

2008 - 2009

## WELCOME

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Thank you for participating in the University of Minnesota Alumni Association's Mentor Connection program. Webster's New World Dictionary defines mentor as "a person looked upon for wise advice and guidance." A mentor can play many roles including coach, teacher, advocate, friend, cheerleader, and opener of doors. Though a mentor may be a role model, a true mentor does not ask another person to "be like me." A mentor says, "I will help you be whoever you wish to be." A mentor is not a parent, a peer, or a counselor.

### **Above all, mentoring is about listening without negative judgment and questioning with respect.**

Remember to enjoy your mentoring relationship and to keep an open mind.

## PROGRAM PURPOSE

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Over the past 15 years, more than 6,500 students have been matched with alumni or friends of the University of Minnesota. These relationships have provided a learning experience for students outside the classroom, where they have a chance to see the opportunities that the "real world" has in store for them. Mentoring relationships are intended to:

- be professional in nature;
- help students make the transition from an academic environment to the world of work;
- offer an opportunity for professional development, networking, and an exchange of ideas between experienced professionals and the next generation of leaders.

## ROLES

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Mentors and mentees should display the following characteristics in their interactions:

- High personal standards
- Problem-solving skills
- Communication skills
- Active listening skills
- Patience, flexibility, and empathy
- Enthusiasm
- Responsibility and commitment
- Positive attitude

## EXPECTATIONS

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### **Mentor**

- **Listen to the needs and expectations of your mentee.**
- Work with the student to help him/her develop and establish realistic and obtainable goals.
- Offer suggestions and feedback.
- Keep the mentee aware of his/her progress.
- Be committed to serve as a resource to the mentee.
- Encourage your mentee to explore new areas.
- Attend scheduled training and orientation sessions; notify program staff if you are unable to attend.
- Follow up on commitments made to the mentee.
- Contact the mentee if you are unable to attend scheduled meetings.
- **Contact program staff if there is a concern with the mentor relationship.**

### **Mentee**

- Discuss your needs and expectations with your mentor; think about what you want out of the program prior to each meeting.
- Negotiate ideas and activities with your mentor.
- **Be committed to carrying out agreed-upon goals; follow through.**
- Be receptive to suggestions and feedback.
- Keep mentor informed of progress.
- **Contact mentor if unable to attend scheduled meetings in a timely manner.**
- Attend scheduled training/orientation sessions, and notify program staff if unable to attend.
- Realize that having a mentor is a privilege and work hard to take advantage of the opportunity.
- Maintain a professional demeanor.
- **Contact program staff if there is a concern with the mentor relationship.**

**For more information about the University of Minnesota Mentor Connection visit: [www.alumni.umn.edu/mentorconnection.html](http://www.alumni.umn.edu/mentorconnection.html)**

## **Mentor and Mentee**

- Respect confidences and trust each other.
- Discover common ground and respect your differences.
- Be yourself and be flexible.
- Be a good listener.
- Be available - meet or talk 1-2 times per month.

## **INITIAL MEETING**

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### **At the first meeting:**

- Discuss both of your needs and expectations.
- Discuss both of your goals and objectives for the relationship.
- Establish a schedule for future meetings in person or on the phone.

## **QUESTIONS TO ASK A MENTOR**

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### **Job Description**

- What is your job title?
- What is your typical day on the job?
- What percentage of each day do you spend in various work activities?
- What is the title of the person to whom you report?
- How free are you to do your work independently?
- What types of problems are you likely to face during the day?
- What are the most satisfying and the most frustrating parts of your work?

### **Advancement**

- How did you get to your current position?
- What are the future trends and developments that you see affecting careers in your field?

### **Preparation**

- How did you prepare for this occupation?
- What preparations do you recommend for a person entering this occupation?
- What education/degrees/training/licenses are required?
- What are the best places to go for additional education or training for a position like yours?
- If you could start all over again in launching your career, what steps would you take?
- What courses do you recommend taking for this occupation?

## **Lifestyle**

- What hours do you normally work?
- Is overtime common?
- Is travel a factor in this job?
- What are the professional organizations in this field?
- How do these organizations serve their members?
- What are the pressures that you face?
- How does this occupation affect your private life?
- What is expected of you outside of working hours?
- Is there a formal mentor program set up in your workplace?
- Who was/is your mentor?

## **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

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### **Become Acquainted**

- Discuss your backgrounds and get to know each other.
- Discuss your goals for the relationship.
- Discuss the mentee's career interests and goals.

### **Career Conversations**

- Discuss and list the mentee's talents, skills, and interests.
- Discuss how the mentor's personal and professional life fit together.
- Read a book related to your field of interest and discuss it.
- Discuss the mentor's educational background and the role of educational preparation in your field.
- Discuss organizational types and cultures.
- Search the Internet together for job resources and other information related to your field.
- Discuss how individual work values impact career choices.
- Discuss a current event or issue in your field.
- Visit/discuss a variety of work environments.
- Discuss the professional standards that exist in your field.
- Discuss the transition from school to work.
- Go out to lunch or dinner and discuss proper business etiquette.
- Discuss "office politics."

## Career Observation

- Participate in a company tour, if appropriate.
- Attend a professional meeting or program together.

## Resume/Interview Exercises

- Critique the mentee's resume and cover letter.
- Assist the mentee in completing a job application packet, portfolio, etc.
- Practice an informational interview.
- Practice a job interview.

## Back to School

- Attend a campus lecture, concert, or sporting event together. The UMAA Web site will have a list of campus events that may be of interest to you.
- Invite the mentor to attend one of your classes.
- Investigate career-related student clubs.
- Visit your college's career center together.

## Creating Professional Networks

- Compile a list of contacts the mentee could meet with in your field.

## WHAT IS NETWORKING?\*

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*"It is the process of developing and using your contacts for information, advice and moral support as you pursue your career. It's linking the people you know to the people they know in an ever-expanding communications network...It's helping each other to become more effective in the work world..."*

- Mary Scott Welch, *Networking*

Your main networking goal is to create mutually supportive professional relationships. In that regard, networking in a mentoring relationship can benefit both partners. You never know where career help may come from or what form it may take, and the mentoring relationship provides both partners with an opportunity to expand their networks.

\*From Mary Scott Welch, *Networking*, Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich New York, 1980. See also *Dynamite Networking for Dynamite Jobs* by Krannich and Krannich

**Mentors and mentees should assess their current networks at the start of the mentoring relationship and use the following information to further develop their networking systems:**

## Benefits

- **Information** – A network is your conduit to the kind of information you need to advance your career...or to discover creative career possibilities.
- **Referrals** – Sometimes the best information is knowing who to call.
- **Feedback** – A network helps you check out your behavior, your ideas, and your strategies for success before you risk them in the "real world."

## Costs

- **Time** – Networking takes a lot of time; time for "getting-to-know-you" conversations, scheduling meetings, and renewing contacts.

## Tracking Your Network

- **Keep Records of Contacts** – Notes with brief information about each, referrals they may have made, promises you made to provide information, etc.

## Topics of Discussion in Networking

- **Career Information** – Ask for information about the career field, but don't ask for a job or internship. However, sometimes the information will lead you in that direction.
- **Common Interests** – Consciously look for common ground, professional interests, and attitudes. This requires that you share a little of yourself.
- **Accomplishments** – Learn to talk comfortably about your own accomplishments.

## What Not to Discuss

- **Criticisms** – Do not talk about other professionals or previous colleagues in a critical manner. The only exception is when you are specifically asked to give your opinion of someone AND you are absolutely sure that your opinion will be kept confidential.
- **Family/personal matters** – This is a professional network; know the boundaries.
- **Gossip** – Don't violate professional confidences or abuse inside information.

## Dos and Don'ts of Networking

- Do try to give as much as you get.
- Don't be afraid to ask for what you need.
- Do report back (Did you follow their advice? What happened?)
- Do follow up all referrals.
- Do be businesslike. Be prompt, respect other's schedules.
- Don't pass up any opportunities to network - they can happen in the most unlikely places.
- Do keep in touch with your old networks (you may go back that way again).
- Don't expect your network to function as a placement office.
- Do call members of your network for "no reason at all." Keeping in touch is a reason.
- Don't be discouraged if someone brushes you off. It happens - and usually has nothing to do with you.
- Do ask questions for which you really need the answers; not for things you easily could have looked up yourself.
- Do keep expanding your network.

### Equal Opportunity Statement:

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

### Sexual Harassment Statement:

Sexual Harassment: "Sexual Harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic advancement in any University activity or program.
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis of employment or academic decisions affecting this individual in any University activity or program.
3. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program.

## GOAL SETTING & CAREER RESOURCE

*One of the most important tasks of the mentor is to assist the mentee in setting short-term goals (less than a year) and long-term goals (more than five years).*

### Purpose of Goal Setting

Setting goals helps people strive to achieve. Although goal setting may be challenging, it is worthwhile. The intention is to increase efficiency and effectiveness by specifying desired outcomes. Hellriegel, Slocu, and Woodman & Martens (1992) find the following to be the most important purposes of goal-setting:

- Goals guide and direct behavior.
- Goals provide clarity.
- Goals provide challenges and standards.
- Goals reflect what the goal setters consider important.
- Goals help improve performance.
- Goals increase the motivation to succeed.
- Goals help increase pride and satisfaction in achievements.
- Goals help increase self-confidence.
- Goals help decrease negative attitude.

### Goal-setting Model

The SMART guidelines can help set effective goals that will help in traveling the road to success.

#### SMART

**SPECIFIC** – A goal of graduating from college is too general. Specify how this will be accomplished, e.g. study more in order to receive better grades.

**MEASURABLE** – Establish criteria for how to achieve a goal. Measurable does not refer to a timeline; it means determining a way to measure your success in completing the long-range goal.

**ACTION-ORIENTED** – Be proactive in taking action that will result in reaching the desired goal.

**REALISTIC** – Strive for attainable goals; consider the resources and constraints relative to the situation.

**TIMELY** – Allow reasonable time to complete each goal, but not so much time that you lose focus or motivation.

**REMEMBER:** *The difference between a goal and a dream is a timeline!*





## Personal Time Demand and Availability

This is the average weekly schedule for: \_\_\_\_\_

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Early Morning							
7:00 a.m.							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
Noon							
1:00 p.m.							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
Late Evening							

## MEETING PLACES

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Discuss the most convenient place to meet. (Rank sites with #1 being most desirable)

- Mentee says: (the best time to reach me is \_\_\_\_\_)  
\_\_\_ Mentor's work place  
\_\_\_ On campus  
\_\_\_ Doesn't matter / will drive  
\_\_\_ Some other specific place \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Mentor says: (the best time to reach me is \_\_\_\_\_)  
\_\_\_ Mentor's work place  
\_\_\_ On campus  
\_\_\_ Doesn't matter / will drive  
\_\_\_ Some other specific place \_\_\_\_\_

When choosing meeting places, try to select a location that will work for both of you. Be flexible. Remember, some conversations can also be conducted by phone or e-mail if necessary.

As a pair, we agree that we will be able to meet at the following place(s)

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Based on answers generated by this worksheet, plan four meetings or conversations that meet mentee needs and mentor availability. Record dates and times on personal calendars or in the space provided below.

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