



Alumni Mentoring Program Mentor Handbook

Mission of the Alumni Mentoring Program

The mission of the program is to foster a culture of mentoring at SUNY Morrisville that encourages productive conversations around academic, professional, and life goals to encourage student enrichment and expand alumni engagement.

I. What is a mentor?

Origins of "Mentor"

The term “mentor” derives from a character in Homer’s epic tale, *The Odyssey*. After leaving to fight the Trojan War, Odysseus, King of Ithaca, leaves Mentor in charge of his household. In this role, Mentor also taught Odysseus’s son, Telemachus. The goddess Athena later disguised herself as Mentor in order to support Telemachus in his quest to reclaim Odysseus’s throne.¹

Over time, the term came to mean an experienced and trusted adviser, especially one who advises those with less experience. Mentors are those who help us move toward our full potential.

The intended outcome is that the mentee gains greater insight and is better prepared to make informed strategic decisions regarding their professional life.

II. Benefits of the program:

For Mentees:

- Gain a wealth of insider knowledge in your fields of interest and the types of jobs and companies in this area.
- Broaden your professional network.
- Learn how someone previously in your shoes has transitioned into the professional world and works on achieving professional goals.

¹ Garvey, B. (2017). Philosophical origins of mentoring: the critical narrative analysis. In D. A. Clutterbuck, F. K. Kochan & L. Lunsford *The SAGE Handbook of mentoring* (pp. 15-33). 55 City Road, London: SAGE Publications Ltd



- Foster a sense of professionalism.
- Focus on career plans and career exploration

For Mentors:

- Make a significant impact on current students
- Impart on students a sense of professionalism and maturity
- Share advice learned from your educational journey and professional career
- Give back SUNY Morrisville in a rewarding and satisfactory way

III. Structure of the Program:

Mentor:

- Complete Mentor Profile Form and return to Institutional Advancement office
- Institutional Advancement office will match mentors with mentees
- Sign Alumni Mentoring Program Agreement once matched with a mentee
- Mentee will initiate first contact with mentors to:
 - discuss and agree on mode of contact (email, phone, face to face)
 - agree on a plan for monthly contact (what time, how often etc.)
 - discuss goals for the program
- Communicate monthly with mentee on agreed dates and times (see Monthly Discussion Topics Appendix I)
- Attend Alumni Mentoring launch event (TBD- November 2018)
- Complete half-way point check-in with program directors.
- Complete evaluation sheet at the end of the program.
- Attend Alumni Mentoring wrap-up event (TBD- May 2018)



IV. Expectations and Responsibilities:

- To participate, mentors and mentees are expected to commit to at least one school year contract (November 2018 – May 2019)
- Each pair is expected to meet in person at least once. (This will most likely be at the initial program launch event)
- Commit to one to two contacts per month via pair's agreed mode of contact.
- Respond to mentee in a respectful and timely manner (within 5 working days).
- Complete half-way point check-in with program directors
- Attend Mustang Mentoring Program launch and wrap-up events.
- Be professional and helpful
- Be a good listener and offer constructive criticism
- Report any issues from the first instance to the Alumni Relations Coordinator
- Complete evaluation sheet at the end of the program.

V. Mentor Success Strategies:

Recommend strategies for the mentee to develop specific skills and habits, nurture confidence, encourage reflection and self-awareness, and offer sincere honest feedback while providing support, encouragement and positive reinforcement.

The mentor is encouraged to:

- Ask questions meant to provoke deep and critical thought, reflection, and discussion.
- Facilitate career planning and development skills (targeting, networking, resume building)
- Help the student externalize classroom education
- Share your SUNY Morrisville experiences



Monthly Discussion Topics:

November – Introductions

- Discuss both of your career and educational backgrounds
- Discuss your goals and objectives for the mentoring program
- Decide on the best forms of communication for scheduling future meetings and staying in touch (e.g. telephone, e-mail)

December – Career Planning

- Discuss short term and long term career planning and how you both plan to achieve your goals
- Discuss skills and on-going professional training necessary to achieve these goals
- ❖ Discussion Question: What skills and abilities do you believe are essential to have in your career field?

January - Resumes/Cover letters

- How to write a resume and cover letter: what employers look for, ask for your mentor to critique of your resume/cover letter
- LinkedIn: Connect with your mentor/mentee on LinkedIn and ask for feedback
- ❖ Discussion Question: How has networking been useful for you in your career, and/or meeting your goals?

February- Interviewing Skills

- Discuss way to prepare, answer questions, and follow up with interviews. Request a mock interview for practice



- ❖ Discussion Questions: How do I make myself stand out as a candidate in the job search, how to target companies/jobs?

March- Industry Advice

- Discuss projects, developments, ethics and trends of the mentors and mentees career industries.
- ❖ Discussion Question: What has changed in your industry over the years?

April- Upcoming Professional Challenges

- Discuss issues you have faced over the course of this year and any you see on the horizon
- Discuss lessons that you each have learned from challenges met
- ❖ Discussion Question: If you could start all over again launching your career, what steps would you take?

May – Wrap-up

- Discuss what you have learned and re-evaluate your goals and career plans.

While an important objective of the program is to help mentees prepare for the search, interview, and acceptance of a career position following graduation, please note this program is not intended to secure jobs or internships for the mentees.

As an outcome of the mentorship experience, it is our expectation mentees will be more self-aware of their interests, their skills, and their skill gaps when deciding their future career goals. They are therefore more likely to be successful sooner in their transition to career or post-graduate studies. Our mentors will gain the satisfaction of making a rewarding impact on the future generation of their career field, and the current student body of SUNY Morrisville.