



Business Alumni Mentors Program Handbook

Business Alumni Mentors Program
www.business.illinois.edu/mentoring
BusinessMentors@illinois.edu
External and Alumni Affairs
College of Business at ILLINOIS

WELCOME

Thank you for participating in the Business Alumni Mentors Program. Mentoring, from an educational perspective, is “the fundamental form of human development where one person invests time, energy, and personal know-how assisting the growth and ability of another person” (Gordon Shea). 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 become whoever you wish to be.”

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

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The goal of this program is to bring together students and alumni for an exchange of information on education, professionalism, aspirations, and ideas. These relationships provide 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 explore the possibilities that lie before them through the experiences of their mentor.
- offer an opportunity for professional development, networking, and an exchange of ideas between experienced professionals and the next generation of leaders.
- help mentors enhance their leadership and coaching skills.

EXPECTATIONS

Mentor

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

Mentor and Mentee

- **Respect confidences and trust each other.**
- Keep high personal standards
- Discover common ground and respect your differences.
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Be yourself and be flexible.
- Be a good listener.
- Be available – meet or talk 1-2 times per month.

QUESTIONS TO ASK A MENTOR

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?
- What are the opportunities for advancement in your field?
- What is a typical timeline for advancement?

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 are the typical hours that your job requires?
- 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?

QUESTIONS TO ASK A MENTEE

- What are your plans for your professional future?
- Do you need help in learning how to network?
- What kind of network would you like to develop?
- Are there any specific contacts that you would like me to initiate?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

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.
- Invite the mentor to attend one of your classes.
- Investigate career-related student clubs.

Creating Professional Networks

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

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

“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**

The primary goal of networking 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.

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.
- **Do** not 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.

For more information please e-mail

BusinessMentors@illinois.edu



COLLEGE of BUSINESS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

This program was designed by the office of External and Alumni Affairs,
College of Business.

In creating this document we referenced resources from other similar university mentoring programs including, University of Minnesota, DePaul University, Cornell University, and Stanford University.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The commitment of the University of Illinois to the most fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity requires that decisions involving students and employees be based on individual merit and be free from invidious discrimination in all its forms.

The University of Illinois will not engage in discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, order of protection status, genetic information, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharge from the military or status as a protected veteran and will comply with all federal and state nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, orders and regulations. This nondiscrimination policy applies to admissions, employment, access to and treatment in the University programs and activities.

University complaint and grievance procedures provide employees and students with the means for the resolution of complaints that allege a violation of this Statement. Members of the public should direct their inquiries or complaints to the Office of External and Alumni Affairs, 218 Wohlers Hall, 1206 S. Sixth Street, Champaign, IL 61820 (http://www.uihr.uillinois.edu/panda-cf/eo/index.cfm?Item_ID=641&rlink=1)

STATEMENT ON 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.