



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
WHITEWATER

Alumni Mentor Program Handbook

Alumni Mentor Program Handbook

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Our privacy policy prohibits using alumni mentors contact information for commercial, political, or solicitation purposes. Violating this policy or the guidelines found in this handbook will result in forfeiting future access and participation in the UW-Whitewater Alumni Mentor Program without an explanation.

Mission and History

Mission: To bring together current students with alumni through informative friendships; to offer students a link between academic study and the realities of the professional workplace, as well as access to valuable advice and professional networks.

History: The Alumni Mentor Program originated as a recommendation by the Letters & Sciences Dean's Advisory Board which is made up of alumni, emeriti, and friends of the college. It began in 2005 and was based on other programs at prominent universities across the country. In 2008, the College of Business & Economics started a pilot program based on the advice of its Dean's Advisory Board. That program consisted of approximately 10 matches.

University-wide rollout: Based on the success of the Letters & Sciences and Business & Economics programs and encouragement from the University's Alumni Advisory Board, University Alumni Relations and Development invited Arts & Communication and Education & Professional Studies to join the program in 2011. These programs typically start small and grow over time. Students are invited to apply through the Dean's List letter and faculty recommendations. Directors of Development invite alumni to participate. Often those involved in the program represent our most dedicated alumni supporters who serve the university in multiple capacities, giving of their time, talents and resources.

Program Structure

- The Alumni Mentor Program targets:
 - UW-Whitewater alumni, emeriti, and friends, who are engaged or wish to reengage with the University.
 - Students who make the Dean's List or are referred by faculty.
 - Students who will dedicate time and energy to the mentoring process and are interested in respectfully gaining insight from alumni.
- Each student and alumni mentor will be contacted yearly to ensure participation for the following school year.
- Depending on the number of students and alumni interested in the program everyone may not be matched at any given time although the goal is to match all mentors.
- Student protégés are required to attend a training/orientation session to be eligible for participation. If a student has previously completed training and their previous match wishes to continue with them the orientation requirements are waived.
- After matches are made, participants will be notified by email.
- All participants are encouraged to on the UW-Whitewater campus at one of the organized meeting times as a way to kick off a year of mentoring.
- Communication between mentors and student protégés may occur in whichever form is agreed upon by the pair (phone, email, video chat, face to face, etc.).
- Participants are encouraged to connect at least once a month.
- Participants assume responsibility for their own mentoring relationships however UW-Whitewater staff representatives are available as needed.
- Participants will be surveyed on a yearly basis. Surveys are designed to evaluate the individual relationships and identify areas of growth for the program.
- An end of the year reception will offer mentors and protégés a time to gather with other members at the conclusion of a successful year of mentoring. It will also give new members a chance to meet participants.
- At the conclusion of the program year (each summer), participants have the option of continuing their relationship, applying to be matched with a new student/mentor or exiting the program.

Participant Benefits

Alumni Mentor Benefits

- Share knowledge about your education, career path, successes and failures, and what your experiences have taught you
- Acquire experience in coaching and fostering the talent of current Warhawks
- Increase the value of your UW-Whitewater degree by investing in future alumni
- Cultivate a stronger connection with UW-Whitewater
- Deepen your knowledge of the current student body and campus community
- Network with other alumni participants
- Experience renewed pride and excitement for your work
- Gain a heightened sense of purpose and belonging

Student Protégé Benefits

- Grow in self-awareness and self-discipline
- Deepen your knowledge of a specific industry, employer, organizational culture, and/or job function
- Test ideas and construct a personalized development plan with the help of a real world professional
- Learn to receive and accept both praise and constructive feedback
- Sharpen your active listening skills
- Improve your job search and networking skills
- Enhance your overall professional effectiveness
- Expand your existing network
- Gain a heightened sense of belonging and purpose

Application and Matching Process

Student applications are sent with Dean's List letters and may be obtained at various locations across campus and online. Student applications are also obtained through faculty and staff members. Students are required to complete on-campus training in order to be fully vetted into the program.

Alumni who express an interest in mentoring are invited to participate.

Once accepted into the program, students are thoughtfully paired with alumni based on a variety of factors including course of study and career aspirations. It is important to note that student protégés and alumni mentors may not have the exact major or career but we believe our alumni mentors have much more to offer than just career advice! All professional, personal, academic and life experiences are valuable to share. We ask that both parties be open to this relationship even if it does not seem ideal on paper.

Match information is recorded and provided by the program coordinator who distributes match information to participants. Each participant receives an email providing the name of their match, contact information (in most cases both an email and phone number) and a brief introduction such as major and career goals or major and current position.

At the end of each school year students and mentors are provided an opportunity to continue in the program or withdraw. At that time participants are also allowed the opportunity to continue with their current match or be re-matched. If either party wishes to be re-matched both individuals will be re-matched.

Program Guidelines

- Matched participants are notified via email and together build mutual expectations for their relationship based on respect, professionalism, trust, and confidentiality.
- Communication is determined by the pair and based on their preference (e.g., phone, email, video chat, instant messaging, face-to-face meetings).
- It is suggested that pairs make contact on a monthly basis to check in and discuss topics outlined in the Alumni Mentor Program e-newsletter.
- Participants assume responsibility for their individual relationships.
- Participants will be surveyed in summer. Participants may also be asked to complete brief checkpoint surveys throughout the year to assess their relationship progress and provide program improvement feedback.
- Participants will be contacted in summer of each year to gauge their interest in continuing in the program the following year. If a participant does not respond by the stated deadline, they will be removed from the program and will need to reapply for the next year should they wish to continue. Consistent lack of contact may result in removal from the program as well as future participation.
- All participants are encouraged to attend the face-to-face meeting opportunities on campus organized by the office of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement as well as the end-of-the year reception celebrating a year of successful mentoring.

Roles, Responsibilities and Structure

There is no right way to mentor or be mentored. Every mentoring relationship is as unique as the individuals involved in it. No matter whom the individuals are or what shape the relationship takes, setting goals and expectations can help create a stronger and more productive relationship. Mentoring can be difficult at times and doesn't just happen; it takes work. As the relationship progresses there are several things that can be done to help it work smoothly. These include: strong communication with candid feedback, being open minded, willing to learn, and proactively working to overcome obstacles. By listening, providing or accepting guidance, and being a positive role model you can share wisdom and encourage the potential of the relationship.

Shared roles:

- Share knowledge about your education, career path, successes and failures, and what your experiences have taught you.
- Engage in regular contact with your assigned student or mentor: follow through with any commitments you make and hold your student accountable for contributing equally.
- Take time to get to know each other and allow time for him/her to get to know you.
- Be open to learning and listening and encourage two way communication.
- Invite ideas and suggestions to engage each partner in making decisions in the relationship.
- Create open and supportive environments to help promote a trusting relationship.

Mentor

Mentor role and responsibility

A mentor can help in clarifying direction, developing focused goals and making the student's transition from college more effective. Your participation helps student protégés link their classroom experience directly with real world situations, gain insight into the value and practical use of their education, and benefit from career development advice.

A good mentor is one who:

- Is a good listener
- Is willing to be open and share experiences and views
- Is willing to commit time and effort to the relationship
- Provides an open door to questions and problems
- Points out both strengths and opportunities for improvement
- Encourages the student objectively
- Allows freedom in the relationship
- Leads by example

- Demonstrates a strong commitment to ethics
- Is able to learn from experiences and mistakes.

The role of the mentor:

- Build confidence
- Role model
- Coach
- Share experiences as learning tools
- Encourage professionalism
- Proactively maintain contact and encourage open communication
- Help problem solve
- Facilitate career planning and development skills (targeting, networking, resume building)
- Help the student externalize classroom education
- Encourage introspection
- Facilitate goal-setting and being goal-oriented
- Maintain privacy/confidentiality

Mentor Responsibilities

For the program to succeed, both student protégés and alumni mentors must commit to establishing a partnership based on open communications and productive and proactive interactions. This requires the following:

- Be available, as your schedule permits, to work with the student
- Consistent communication via phone, email or other media choice
- Establish regular “meeting” times; readjusting as at the start of a new semester
- Active listening
- Guidance to help the student achieve goals
- Provide insights, input and feedback to the program coordinator to provide continuous assessment and improvements to the program

Mentor Success Strategies: Recommend strategies for the student 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.

When appropriate, challenge your student with contradictory ideas, exploring alternatives and questioning their assumptions.

As a mentor remember that you are a role model not a peer. A mentor is under no obligation to hire or place a student in an internship or any other position within any organization. The program is not meant to be a recruitment or job placement service.

Protégé

A good protégé is one who:

- Is a good listener
- Contributes equally to the conversation
- Accepts constructive feedback
- Is willing to be open to shared experiences and views
- Is willing to commit time and effort to the relationship
- Has a clear understanding of expectations for your mentor
- Is consistent and reliable
- Is flexible in changing expectations and plans
- Is realistic about setting timelines
- Is able to learn from experiences and mistakes
- Demonstrates a good work ethic

The role of the protégé:

- Share class schedule and activities
- Maintain communications
- Demonstrate accountability
- Set goals
- Direct the relationship

Protégé Responsibilities

Protégés are required to attend two on-campus program events per year. For the program to succeed, both student protégés and alumni mentors must commit to establishing a partnership based on open communications and productive and proactive interactions.

This requires the following:

- Be available
- Be engaged
- Consistent communication via phone, email or other media choice
- Establish regular “meeting” times; readjusting as at the start of a new semester
- Active listening
- Have clear goals and expectations

Student Success Strategies: determine your interests, goals, skills and share these with your mentor.

- Ask for guidance and come to the discussion prepared for open conversation.
- Express appreciation for your mentor and accept both praise and constructive criticism.
- Be honest – what are your goals? Limitations?
- Respect your mentor’s time.

- Recognize that your mentor DOES want to hear from you! Be bold but patient in your contact. Find a balance between not giving up and allowing time for a response.

Program Coordinator

- Ensure each match is communicated.
- Be available to mentors and protégés as needs arise.
- Ensure that every effort is made to create a productive and positive experience for both parties
- Send periodic e-newsletters and correspondence
- Send invitations to the annual Alumni Mentor Reception and in-person meetings
- Provide opportunities for program feedback

Action and Assessment

Taking time to write and reflect on your career and personal goals can increase your self-awareness and help you organize and synthesize your thoughts and plans of action. We ask that this is a priority for both the mentor and student protégés.

Things to consider:

- What are recent developments in my field or organization that interest me the most?
- What are my current skills and strengths for pursuing these interests?
- What are my limiting factors? Health concerns, geography, extensive travel, advanced degree etc.

Maintain confidentiality of the relationship:

Participants in the UW-Whitewater Alumni Mentor Program should consider any personal information shared between mentor and protégé to be confidential unless both parties agree that the information can be shared and with whom it can be shared.

Mentor-Protégé Agreement

The goal of this agreement is to set objectives for our mutual effort. It is mutual in that both parties should benefit in satisfaction and happiness.

We are voluntarily entering into this mentoring relationship we expect to benefit both us and the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. We want this to be a rich, rewarding experience and understand that setting some ground rules will help. We fully understand that either the mentor or the protégé can elect to end the relationship on a no-fault basis for any reason or no reason.

Ground rules for our successful partnership:

We will work to establish trust, confidentiality and candor.

We will manage our own expectations and responsibilities as partners.

Mentor Name: _____

Protégé Name: _____

Date: _____

How often will we connect? _____

How will we contact each other:

Mentor: _____

Protégés: _____

Who will be responsible for setting up meeting/connection times?

What can I do to make sure we start out on the right track?

What are the first topic(s) we would like to cover?

How will we proceed should one of us needs to withdraw from the program?

If one of us is unhappy in how the relationship is going, what is the best way to deal with it? _____

If someone needs to break a scheduled meeting time who is responsible for rescheduling? _____

Mentor Action Strategy

1. Mentor's goals and expectations from this mentoring relationship:

2. Student's goals and expectations from this mentoring relationship:

3. Student Protégé's contact information

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Preferred method of contact: Email Phone Skype Other

Preferred response time: _____

Check in Dates/Times: _____

Locations: _____

4. Goals:

Actions Mentor will take:

Actions Student will take:

5. Student Protégé's development assessment

a. Review

b. Feedback

6. Complete Alumni Mentor Program survey(s)

Student Protégé Action Strategy

1. Protégé's goals and expectations from this mentoring relationship:

2. Mentor's goals and expectations from this mentoring relationship:

3. Mentor's contact information

Name _____

Email: _____

Phone _____

Preferred method of contact: Email Phone Skype Other

Preferred response time: _____

Check in Dates/Times: _____

Locations: _____

4. Goals:

Actions Student will take:

Actions Mentor will take:

5. Discussion notes or topics

6. Share completed Student Protégé Action Strategy your mentor.

7. Develop a personal and professional development assessment to include goals and action plans with your mentor.

8. Complete Alumni Mentor Program survey(s)

9. Express appreciation for your mentor regularly. Send a formal thank you note in May.

Student Protégé Development Assessment

Five Main Strengths:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Five Areas for Improvement:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Five Personal/Professional Development Goals with Action Plan(s)

1.

Action Plan(s)

2.

Action Plan(s)

3.

Action Plan(s)

4.

Action Plan(s)

5.

Five Primary Areas Requesting Mentor Assistance

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Progress Review Dates with Mentor

Initial Review _____

Second Review _____

Final Review _____

Suggested Activities and Topics

Activities and Activity Goals

Create learning experiences: as needs are identified, look for innovative ways to strengthen or develop knowledge and skills

Provide personal support and reinforcement

Share college culture

Evaluate characteristics and abilities: identify strengths and build on areas of improvement

Coach to improve specific skills (technical, interpersonal) and behaviors

Be a sounding board: listen, probe, understand and help to clarify

Share personal work experiences: share highs, lows, success, failures and what was learned

Interact face-to-face at the annual Alumni Mentor Reception in November

Connect and discuss the Alumni Mentor Program e-newsletter topics

Meet at or attend conferences and networking events

Chat via Skype, Google Hangout, Apple FaceTime

Possible Topics to Discuss

Special training or advanced degrees required

Career tracks

Career exploration

Types of businesses/employers in chosen field

Current issues in the profession

Job market trends

Organizational culture

Professional organization membership

Quality of life in the profession

Work/life balance

Management issues

Approaches to ethical or professional dilemmas

Business attire

Study/travel/employment possibilities abroad

Campus involvement opportunities

Professional dinner etiquette

Online or social media etiquette

Internship search advice

Job search advice

Resume and cover letter review

Interviewing and networking skills

Volunteer/extracurricular activity benefits

Interview process/questions

Feedback form

Are you a mentor? Or a student protégé?

Do you believe that you and your partner are a good match? Yes No

Please explain: _____

Do you feel there is a mutual concern for the protégé's growth? Yes No

What would you describe as being the most meaningful benefit from this relationship?

In what ways has this relationship helped you?

What is the most important thing you have learned from this relationship?

Have your expectations been realized? Yes No

Please explain _____

Is any element missing from this relationship? Yes No

If so, what? _____

Do you anticipate continuing to participate in this program? Yes No

If no, why not? _____

What recommendation would you make to the UW-Whitewater Alumni Mentor Program? _____

Did you receive adequate assistance from staff at UW-Whitewater? Yes No

Did anything stand out as especially helpful? _____

Please rate the amount of information you received on the following components

Information about the program
 Not enough Just right Too much

Information about my match
 Not enough Just right Too much

Training
 Not enough Just right Too much

Support
 Not enough Just right Too much

Interactions with program coordinator
 Not enough Just right Too much

Networking opportunities with peers
 Not enough Just right Too much

Timeline

Matches are made after student orientation(s) to encourage and help ensure student participation.

Applications are open on a continuous basis however those received after the match date are put on hold until the following fall matching sequence.

June/July/August

- Participants contacted regarding continuation of their current relationship, applying to be matched with a new student/mentor, or exiting the program.

September

- Student protégé training/orientation sessions.

Note: students who do not attend one training session will be removed from participation (unless you have been approved by waiver).

- Students work through assessments and handbook to prepare for email contact and face-to-face meeting with mentor.

October

- Match letters are sent to participants via email mid-October.
- Student protégés make initial contact with alumni mentors within one week of receiving their match email.

November – January

- Protégés and Mentors meet on campus at least one organized meeting, details of dates/times in match letters.

November – May

- Protégés and Mentors meet and communicate as mutually determined.

April – May

- Protégés and Mentors meet at the close of the school year reception to celebrate a successful year of mentoring.