



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 Philanthropy 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 and have a strong desire to make a real impact on the success of current students.
 - 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 students.
- 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 meet during a gathering, held either virtually or on campus, 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.
- A year-end 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 student success
- 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 professional network
- Gain a heightened sense of belonging and purpose

Application and Matching Process

Student applications are sent with Dean's List letters. Student applications are also obtained through faculty and staff members and online at www.uww.edu/alumni/mentor. Students are required to complete a training orientation in order to be accepted 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 learning opportunities and 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 at the end of each school year. 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 surveyed each summer to understand their feedback and interest in continuing in the program the following year. If a participant does not reply to the survey, it could impact being able to participate the following year.
- All participants are encouraged to attend virtual or face-to-face meeting opportunities 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 are. 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; readjust as needed 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 virtual or 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
- Keep consistent communication via phone, email or other media choice
- Establish regular “meeting” times; readjusting as at the start of a new semester
- Prepare questions and follow-up discussions for your meetings
- Active listening
- Have clear goals and expectations

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

- Research your mentor, their company and industry before your first meeting.
- 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. They are busy executives and may take a few days to get back to you. 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 virtual or in-person kick off 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.

xz

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 a mentoring relationship that we expect to benefit both the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and us. 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 this?

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

3. Student Protégé's contact information

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Preferred method of contact: Email Phone WebEx/Zoom 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 WebEx/Zoom 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 WebEx/Zoom, 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 need to attend one training/orientation session to be matched with a mentor (unless you have an approved 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 at one organized meeting held either on campus or virtually. Details of dates/times will be in the 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.