



MENTORSHIP PROGRAM HANDBOOK



2017 – 2018



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Thank you!

On behalf of the Minnesota Contractors Association and Construct*ium, we want to extend our deepest gratitude for your participation in the Construct*ium Mentorship Program at the University of Minnesota. This program would not be possible without your commitment and enthusiasm to connect with students, and your willingness to share your life experiences.

As we work together to develop the program throughout this year, we welcome your suggestions for improving our written materials as well as our program. Please contact the Construct*ium Mentorship Committee at mentor@constructium.org with any suggestions.

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**In preparing this mentoring handbook, we used materials from the University of Minnesota Alumni Association Mentoring Handbook and the University of St. Thomas Student-Alumni Mentoring Handbook.*

Construct*ium Mentorship Program: An Introduction

What is a mentor?

As a mentor you are a guide, role model and resource. By taking this opportunity to share your education and your professional experiences, you have the chance to advise, influence and support students on their journeys from school to the professional world. As student mentors, you will derive satisfaction from helping students recognize and fulfil their potentials.

As a mentor, you assume many roles:

- **Motivator:** Expresses belief and confidence in the mentee's abilities, and encourages the mentee to try new things.
- **Resource:** Teaches and advises the mentee how to make professional contacts, and introduce the mentee to new people, work places, or ideas.
- **Supporter:** Encourages open and honest dialogue, and listens to and respond to the needs of the mentee.
- **Coach:** Helps the mentee to develop, and work to achieve realistic, meaningful goals.

The mentoring relationship

For mentoring to be successful, there must be a reciprocal and comfortable relationship between the mentor and mentee. As with any important relationship, BOTH parties must work to make it successful by being open-minded and respectful, and fulfilling the expectations that they have set for the relationship. Ideally, the mentoring relationship will be a mutually beneficial one, as the mentee learns from the mentor and the mentor from the mentee.

Benefits and Expectations for the Mentor

How will I benefit as a mentor?

We believe that mentoring will be a positive and enriching experience for you. Specifically, we hope that you will:

- Develop meaningful connections with students.
- Refine your coaching and mentoring skills.
- Learn more about the University and the next generation of professionals.
- Utilize and expand your professional network.

What is expected of me as a mentor?

Mentors say that one of the best aspects of volunteering with the program is that it is flexible – you and your mentee can decide how the relationship will work. We do have some expectations of mentors, however.

They are:

- **Patience** – Let your mentee be the driver of the relationship. Allow (and encourage) him/her to initiate contact and to lead discussions.
- **Consistency** – Communicate (in person, via phone, or via email) at least one time per month. (2-4hrs)
- **Guidance and Support** – Help your mentee to set, track and adjust his/her goals.
- **Responsiveness** – Respond to all communications within a few days at most.
- **Professionalism** – Approach the mentoring relationship with an open mind, professionalism and respect. If you have any problems or concerns about your mentoring relationship, please contact the Construct*ium Mentorship Committee staff at mentor@constructium.org.

What is NOT expected of me as a mentor?

- To offer jobs or internships
- To initiate all contact
- To have all the answers

How to Build your Mentoring Relationship

Some suggestions for the Mentor

Every mentoring relationship is unique. We offer the following guidelines to help you in creating a satisfying relationship with your mentee.

Get to know your mentee.

- Ask thoughtful questions about your mentee's interests, experiences and background.
- Follow up on any important steps that the student has taken, such as a job interview or a leadership experience, and ask what he/she learned.
- Be an active listener by giving feedback to what the mentee says. Avoid interrupting and show interest through your voice and posture.

Set goals with your mentee.

- Setting goals with your mentee at the beginning of the relationship is critical because it gives direction to the relationship and guides you as to how to help your mentee.
- If your mentee doesn't know his/her goals, this can be your first mentoring moment. You can ask questions such as, "What made you sign up for the mentoring program?" or "What are your specific concerns and questions right now?" or simply "How can I help you?"
- Remember, goal-setting can be a process, so make a point to check in and ask your mentee if his/her priorities are changing or evolving.

Set expectations with your mentee.

- Determine how and when you will communicate with each other. Renegotiate as needed.
- It might be difficult to find the time to talk or meet with your mentee, so schedule your next meeting time – if only tentatively – at the end of each meeting.
- Keep the relationship a priority and ask your mentee to do the same.
- If your mentee remains unresponsive for a prolonged period of time, initiate contact. If he/she doesn't respond after a few attempts, please contact the Construct*ium Mentorship Committee at mentor@constructium.org and we will assist you and repair you with a student.

Share and relate.

- Tell your mentee about yourself and your experiences. Share the lessons that you learned as a student, as well as any others that you have learned since graduating.
- Think about how you have learned from your mistakes and how your mentee might be able to learn from them, too.
- Ask about your mentee's current college experience.

Offer options, not solutions.

- Avoid offering quick solutions. Ask the mentee what he/she is thinking and help him/her process his/her own ideas.
- Suggest things that the student might try. For example, "Have you looked into ...?" or "Something that I found helpful when I was in college was...", "not "You should..." or "You need to ..."
- Your advice is valuable and appreciated. Even when a mentee doesn't take action in the way suggested, do not be discouraged. Part of maturing is making one's own decisions.

Be a coach!

- Encourage your mentee to take reasonable risks, if proper circumstances present themselves. He/she might need a little push, but it will help him/her in the long run.
- Remember, students have much to learn from a professional like you – even things as simple as how to dress and how to be on time.
- Don't hesitate to give your mentee helpful feedback if he/she is not acting in a professional manner – it could make a positive difference in a first interview, a job, and other life experiences.

Suggested Mentoring Activities for the Mentor

Need some ideas for what to do? The following is a great place to start!

Career conversations

- Discuss your educational background and the role of educational preparation in your field.
- Share information about a current event or issue in your field.
- Schedule a site or office visit, if appropriate.

Job-search process

- Critique your mentee's resume and/or cover letter.
- Lead your mentee through a mock interview.
- Offer guidance on where best to look for jobs/internships in your field.

Tell your story

- Tell your mentee how you prepared for your transition from school to professional world. Share how you have balanced your personal and professional life obligations.
- If you could do it over, discuss what you would have done differently and what you would have done again in college.
- Walk about how you have dealt with personal or professional challenges.

Networking pursuits

- Introduce your mentee to colleagues or other contacts.
- Attend a professional-association meeting or conference together. Examples could be with the Minnesota Contractors Association (MCA), Construct*ium, Builders Exchange, Association of General Contractors (AGC), etc. (see tentative calendar)
- Attend a University/College networking event.
- Check the MCA website, www.mnconstruction.org, or the Construct*ium Mentorship webpage, www.constructium.org, for a complete list of upcoming events.

Topics of the Month

- Near the first of every month, we will be issuing a “topic of the month” for you and your mentee to discuss. These are suggested topics relative to the industry that might help your mentee when they apply or enter the workforce. These will be optional, but we will require at least 2 of these to be completed and signed by the end of the school year.

Benefits and Expectations for the Student

How will I benefit as a mentee?

We hope that you will benefit from your mentoring relationship and be able to:

- Build a professional network.
- Develop and enhance professional and communication skills.
- Connect academics and career as well as acquire advice on experiences and courses that would be of greatest benefit.
- Explore new ideas and areas of interest within the construction field.
- Gain exposure to career options, advice and job-search tips within construction.

What is expected of me as a mentee?

As a mentee of the Construct*ium Mentoring Program, you're encouraged to think about what you would like to gain from this mentoring opportunity. There will also be a kickoff event where you will meet your mentor for the school year and be informed of expectations which include:

- **Responsibility** – Be the driver of the relationship. Initiate contact and respond within a few days. Lead the discussions during meetings.
- **Consistency** – Communicate (in person, via email, or phone) at least 1 time per month. (2-4 hrs)
- **Accountability** – Agree and commit to expectations and goals, and complete at least 2 “topics of the month”.
- **Professionalism** – Approach the mentoring relationship with an open mind, professionalism and respect. Please do not ask for a job or internship.
- **Receptiveness** – Be receptive to suggestions and feedback.

If you have any problems with or concerns about the mentoring relationship, please contact the Construct*ium Mentorship Committee at mentor@constructium.org.

The First Conversation: A Guide for the student

Begin your mentoring relationship with an in-person meeting, phone call, or Skype chat so you can have a more personal connection.

The most important thing to do in your first conversation is to introduce yourself and begin to build a good rapport. Building a rapport simply means getting to know someone on a personal level. Think about what you might like to share with your mentor – your background (hometown, where you grew up, what high school or college you attended, etc.), extracurricular activities, hobbies, etc.

Setting Goals

We encourage you and your mentor to start discussing your goals for the mentoring relationship as soon as possible. Goals are important because they provide direction and clarity, and help to improve the success of the relationship. Before your first meeting, think of two or three things that you would like your mentor's assistance with over the coming months.

Plan ahead and make a great first impression:

- Ask your mentor what he/she looks like so you can identify him/her.
- Be early to the meeting.
- Dress in business casual attire.
- Approach him/her with a smile, shake his/her hand and introduce yourself.
- Thank him/her for being your mentor.
- Bring your resume. If you do not have a resume, don't worry. Create a profile of your current activities. Include things such as your major(s), minor(s), research projects, student activities, and recent jobs or internships.

The following are some good examples of questions to ask. Choose a few beforehand and then let the conversation flow.

- Where are you from originally?
- Tell me about what you do for a living.
- What jobs have you had in the past?
- What did you like best about college?
- What do you wish you had done while you were in college?

Rest assured, you both have attended college to some degree, so you will be able to relate on that level. Your mentor will be excited to talk with you – he/she volunteered to be a part of the program! Don't worry too much about saying the right thing. Remember to communicate your enthusiasm and gratitude about working with your mentor.

How to Build Your Mentoring Relationship

Some suggestions for the Student

Every mentoring relationship is unique. We offer the following guidelines that we hope will help you in creating a satisfying relationship with your mentor.

Get to know your mentor.

Be sure to get to know your mentor on a personal level. While mentors are excellent career resources, you can learn a lot from their personal stories as well. For some good examples of questions to ask, please refer to “The First Conversation: A Guide for the Student” (p.8).

Set goals with your mentor.

- Setting goals with your mentor is critical because it gives direction and clarity to the mentoring relationship. It also increases the likelihood of a successful relationship.
- Think about what you hope to gain from this experience and what activities you might be interested in doing with your mentor. Following are some ideas:
 - Attending a professional meeting or program
 - Reviewing and updating your resume
 - Getting tips on job and internship searches
 - Preparing for interviews
 - Discussing how to balance personal and professional priorities
 - Discussing graduate school or other additional educational endeavors
 - Remember, goal-setting can be a process – priorities can and will change/evolve

Set expectations with your mentor.

- Determine how and when you will communicate with each other. Renegotiate as needed.
- It might be difficult to find the time to talk or meet with your mentor, so schedule your next meeting time – if only tentatively – at the end of each meeting.
- Keep the relationship a priority. Even if you cannot meet or talk with your mentor very often, at least try to keep communication consistent (e.g., send an email message every couple of weeks).
- Be proactive. If your mentor has not responded to you in a while, do not be shy about sending another email message or calling him/her again. He/she simply may have gotten busy or missed your previous message. If you don’t receive a response after a few attempts, please contact the Construct*ium Mentorship Committee at mentor@constructium.com.

The Purpose of Goal-Setting

Setting goals helps people strive to achieve. Although goal-setting might be challenging, it is worthwhile. The intention is to increase efficiency and effectiveness by specifying desired outcomes. Goals are important because they:

- Guide and direct behavior.
- Provide clarity.
- Reflect what the goal-setters consider important
- Help to improve performance
- Increase the motivation to succeed.
- Instill pride in and encourage satisfaction with achievements.
- Provide challenges and standards.
- Increase self-confidence and decrease negative attitude.

Goal-setting model

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

SMART stands for:

Specific – A goal of graduating from college, for example, is too general. Specify how this will be accomplished (e.g., study more in order to earn better grades).

Measurable – Establish criteria for how to achieve a goal. “Measurable” does not refer to a timeline; it refers to determining intermediate steps to measure success in achieving a 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.

Setting Goals and Expectations

To get the most out of your mentoring experience, we strongly recommend that you discuss expectations and goals for both the mentee and the mentor.

Agree on expectations: How will the relationship work?

1. What format works best for meetings?
 - In Person
 - Skype
 - Phone
 - Email
2. In general, how often would we like to meet/interact (e.g., once a week, every other week, once a month)? Renegotiate as needed.
3. What is the preferred method of communication?
 - Phone
 - Email
 - Text
4. What is the best time to reach each other?
 - Weekdays
 - Weekends
 - Morning
 - Afternoon
 - Evening
5. If we cannot make it to an expected meeting/interaction, how will we get in touch?
6. When will we meet or talk next?

Agree on goals: What do you hope to gain from the relationship?

1. What are the mentee's goals for the mentoring relationship?
2. What are the mentor's goals for the mentoring relationship?
3. What actions can both the mentor and mentee take to achieve these goals?

Notes:

2017/2018 - Tentative Event Calendar

September

9/5/17-9/11/17 – In class Construct*ium introductions by Construct*ium board and CFMSA Board.

9/13/17 – MCA Breakfast – “Do they deserve to work with you? Attract the right clients”

9/15/17 – Registration Applications for Mentors and Mentees Due.

9/22/17 – CFMSA Resume Review – Mentee Attendance Strongly Recommended

9/25/17 – Construct*ium meet and greet at Coffman Union.

October

10/1/17 – Construct*ium Topic of the Month – “Resume and Interview Prep”

10/6/17 – Career Fair – Mentee Attendance Strongly Recommended

10/16/17 – Construct*ium Jobsite Visit – Kraus Anderson Block

10/21/17 – Gopher Football – CFMSA and Alumni Tailgate – Mentor and Mentee Attendance strongly recommended.

10/25/17 – MCA Breakfast – “Multi-Housing Madness: Navigating the Web of Obligations”

10/31/17 – Topic of the Month – Sign off sheets due.

November

11/1/17 – Construct*ium Topic of the Month – “Technical Writing”

11/11/17 – Construct*ium Jobsite Visit – US Bank Stadium

11/30/17 – Topic of the Month – Sign off sheets due.

December

TBD – Construct*ium Jobsite Visit – Location TBD

Date TBD – MCA Presentation on Forensic Engineering

12/1/17 – Construct*ium Topic of the Month – “Meetings and Meeting Minutes”

12/31/17 – Topic of the Month – Sign off sheets due.

January

TBD – Construct*ium Jobsite Visit – Location TBD

1/2/18 – Construct*ium Topic of the Month – “Submittals”

1/31/18 – MCA Awards of Excellence Gala

1/31/18 – Topic of the Month – Sign off sheets due.

February

TBD – Construct*ium Jobsite Visit – Location TBD

2/1/18 – Construct*ium Topic of the Month – “Estimating/Scheduling”

2/28/18 – Topic of the Month – Sign off sheets due.

March

TBD – Construct*ium Jobsite Visit – Location TBD

3/1/18 – Construct*ium Topic of the Month – “Bid Evaluations”

3/31/18 – Topic of the Month – Sign off sheets due.

April

TBD – Construct*ium Jobsite Visit – Location TBD

TBD – Construct*ium Closing Social – Location TBD

4/18/18 – MCA Leadership Academy and Pentathlon – Mentors and Mentees strongly advised to attend.