Mentorship Program

Northern Michigan University
College of Business

Helping today’s students become tomorrow’s business leaders
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Welcome

Welcome! The College of Business thanks you for volunteering your time to being a mentor, and congratulates you in taking the first step to making a difference in a student’s life. As a mentor you have the opportunity to provide guidance and have a real impact in a student’s life. Your mentoring helps today’s students become tomorrow’s business leaders.

Mentoring is about building strong futures and relationships between students, new graduates, alumni, and community members. Mentorships further prepare students for a competitive job market and successful career. A mentor provides insights and shares experiences that can never be learned in a classroom. The one-on-one guidance mentors provide give students the opportunity to ask questions and share concerns in a non-threatening, supportive, environment; often not readily available to students and young adults.

Mentorship programs bring students and business professionals together for an exchange of information on education, aspirations, and professionalism. A mentor makes a difference in a student’s life. The most valuable asset a student can have is a mentor. Differing from a student/teacher relationship, a mentee/mentor relationship is much more personal with less formal structure and more practical applications.

According to Robert Lewis, author of the book “Quest”:  

- Mentoring is a story about life – everyone has to leave home, or leave college; these are good things. They must be handed off to people who are specialists, to carry on the training.
- Mentoring has a unique power; it has the power to unleash the best in a man or woman.
- A mentor is one who supports rather than competes and is primarily a cheerleader.
- A mentor is one who seeks to encourage the development of your gifts while seeking to protect you from costly mistakes.
- Mentors admire and delight in you because they instinctively recognize your value and untapped potential.
- A mentor is not necessarily a close friend, but is a close confidant; safe people that you can say things to that you cannot with other people.
What does a mentor bring to the table?

A mentor brings wisdom through experience, provides warnings, a belief in mentees, and cheers for their mentee’s achievements. At times, mentors are proven heroes. Young people need older people that they can have belief in. Dr. Howard Hendricks, in his book, “Ten Marks of a Good Mentor”, explains:

- Mentors have what a mentee needs. They choose to cultivate a relationship and are willing to take a chance on the mentee.

- If their lifestyle is in order the mentee will know that the mentor has his or her best interest in mind. Mentors are able to diagnose the mentee’s real need and will be concerned with his or her interests.

Lewis states “Every man and woman should become a mentor at least once in their lifetime...the mentee gets wisdom and the mentor gets a sense of purpose and added dimension.” The relationship allows the mentor to teach naturally, and from experience, which young people desperately need and want. Mentors do not have to be experts in everything, just willing to share experiences and lessons learned.

In our lives, many of us may have had people for whom we will be always grateful for their selflessness to assure success as a professional and as an individual. Simple words of hope, wisdom, encouragement, and friendship will go a long way.

Mentoring Statistics:

Individuals’ Perceptive Needs of Mentors.

In 2006-07, MentorNet surveyed approximately 2,500 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics undergraduates, graduate students and postdoctoral scholars about their perceptions of the value and need for mentors. Of the surveyed respondents, 98% reported having a mentor (of some type) was important to them. When NMU business students were asked about the importance of a mentor, they responded in a similar manner. However, even though students know or feel they should have mentor, it was discovered students don’t know why they should have a mentor. Students don’t understand why a mentorship is such a beneficial relationship and the importance of a mentor to help coach and guide them to reach their career goals.

What are the benefits (the big picture)?

It’s about stepping in when you don’t have to...it’s about giving back. It’s about friendships and relationships. It’s about building a legacy and changing a life. Mentors receive satisfaction from knowing they helped guide a younger individual as well as respect and appreciation for their volunteerism. As role models, mentors
are more likely to self-evaluate their own performance and become more productive or efficient business professionals.

What do mentors do?

- Mentoring is about someone helping another to achieve a certain goal, something that is important to them. It is about giving help and support in a non-threatening way, in a manner that mentees will appreciate and value and that empower them to move forward with confidence towards what they want to achieve. Mentoring is also concerned with creating an informal environment in which mentees can feel encouraged to discuss their needs and circumstances openly and in confidence with another person who is in a position to provide guidance.

- The need or even the necessity to achieve is present in life, employment, and the development of a fulfilling career. When one starts work he/she needs to know the ins and outs of the job, as well as the expectations of that particular job. In time, career prospects that exist in the current job may be considered in addition to aspirations of a different career. On a personal level, goals are set for achievement in the short and long term. To support goal achievement, help, advice and support is needed in many aspects of life. The formal structures within education, for instance, are designed to help students complete their studies successfully, whereas the structure of a mentorship program helps students acclimate to the professional world successfully.

- Mentoring is an approach to personal development that introduces an independent and objective source of help outside and independent of the teacher-student relationship. It is being introduced, increasingly, into many different business norms and circumstances.
College of Business Mentorship Program

The mission of the College of Business is to deliver high quality academic and related programs that prepare students for successful careers and responsible engagement in a pluralistic, global society. The Mentorship Program is designed to help prepare students for successful careers and introduce them to a global society while overcoming the remote geographical location. Mentors play a crucial role in connecting and exposing students to opportunities and life outside Northern’s smaller community.

The overall goal of the College of Business Mentorship Program is to provide business students the opportunity for guidance from a business professional to prepare them for a competitive job market and a successful business career. Mentors help students (mentees) transition to the business world by providing guidance and expertise that cannot be learned in a classroom. A mentor is one of the most valuable resources a mentee can have. Mentors should share insights, expertise, and experiences with mentees, as well as be available to answer questions or address concerns a mentee may have. It is the College of Business’ goal that the mentorship experience is mutually rewarding and relationships established last beyond a college career.

How it works

Mentors are paired with mentees that have the best “fit”, determined by interests, major, career goals, etc. Alignment by these characteristics leads to a more valuable, rich, and meaningful relationship as well as more exposure to an industry the mentee is interested in exploring or pursuing.

Ongoing support of participants will be vital to the College of Business Mentorship Program’s success. To support mentoring, mentors and mentees will be periodically given suggested topics to discuss as well as suggested tasks to complete, such as resume critiquing and interviewing skill building. In addition, mentors are encouraged to share what is working well, not working so well, questions, comments, and concern they have at any time during mentoring.

Expectations of Mentor and Mentee

Mentor

Mentors are expected to act in a professional manner and keep the mentor/mentee relationship career and academically focused. To foster the guidance process mentors should share experiences, advice, and knowledge freely. Mentees look up to their mentor as an example of a business professional. Mentors should attend School of Business events with mentees or encourage mentees to attend. Although mentees are expected to initially
reach out to connect with their mentor, mentors are still expected to help provide direction to the relationship.

**Mentee**

Mentees are expected to act in a professional manner that nurtures their mentorship. It is the responsibility of the mentees to initially reach out to their mentors. We provide mentees their mentor’s name, title, organization, and the phone and email address provided as the preferred contact information. While it is expected that the mentees will drive the process, the reality is that their expectations and understanding of the experience may be limited. This is where a mentor’s expertise and professionalism come into play to help the student become a better mentee. In addition, mentees are expected to ask mentors any questions they have and initiate conversation with mentors such as “suggested topics.”
Getting started

Meeting a mentor for the first time can be an intimidating and uncomfortable experience for many mentees. Many mentees know the benefits of having a mentor and are enthused about the idea, however, do not know entirely what to expect or how to act. As a mentor and a professional, the mentor can take the reins in the development stage of the relationship. Having never had a mentor or business career, mentees may look to their mentors to facilitate the beginning stage of the relationship. Once a mutual relationship is established, the mentee should feel more at ease and comfortable with the relationship. Although mentees are expected to initially reach out to connect with their mentor, moving forward the mentor should help provide direction to the relationship.

Getting started check list

- □ Reply to mentee’s introduction email
- □ Provide a warm and detailed introduction of yourself
- □ Recommend setting up a phone call in the near future to discuss expectations, etc.
- □ Share interests, profession, company, hobbies, contact information, etc.
- □ Take a lead role at first to get the relationship started
- □ Set expectations for the relationship
  - ▪ i.e. how often to communicate, how to communicate, what is expected from the relationship, etc.
- □ Set goals
Tips to being a successful and supportive mentor

- Regularly check email
- Be helpful
- Share experiences
- Be understanding
- Meet as often as possible
- Answer questions honestly
- Maintain professionalism
- Give feedback about resume, interviewing skills, etc.
- Talk about “suggested topics”
- Be respectful
- Create a meaningful relationship
- Show enthusiasm for mentee’s progress
- Stay career and academically focused
- Create a relationship that lasts well beyond a college career
- Be active in relationship
- Ask about classes
- Ask about career goals
Things to do with mentees

- Discuss Expectations
- Set goals
- Answer questions
- Discuss their resume/give feedback
- Discuss classes
- Share any advice
- Share any relevant stories/experiences from work
- Meet for coffee
- Discuss how classes are going
- Attend School of Business events (Networking, Speakers, etc.)
- Encourage mentee to join a student organization
- Discuss summer plans
  - Graduating
  - Internship
- Encourage mentee to look for a job/internship early
- Discuss “suggested topic”
- Invite mentee to your work for a meeting or to shadow you for a day
- Discuss mentee’s job/internship search
  - Recommend places to look/apply
  - Suggest search techniques
- Meet for lunch
- Discuss interviewing tips and techniques
- Attend a sporting event (i.e. hockey, football, volleyball, etc.)
- Mock interview your mentee
  - Give your mentee a feel of the questions he/she will be asked in a real interview
  - Critique performance
  - Discuss how interview went
  - Make sure mentee knows what he/she should work on for next time
- Discuss current events
- Discuss plans for after graduation or summer
- Discuss plans for staying in touch over summer or after graduation
Frequently Asked Questions

How much time will be involved as a Mentor?

The total personal time involved will be determined by mentor and mentee. Mentors are expected to communicate (email, phone, meet, Skype, etc.) at least once per month. Each relationship will develop differently and require a different amount of time and commitment. For instance, some mentors have found a monthly phone call along with weekly/biweekly emails to be a good mix, while others communicate on the phone weekly.

Who can participate?

Any alumni or community business professional interested in helping a business student prepare for their future.

How do I sign up?

Interested mentors can learn more about the program as well as register at www.nmu.edu/bizmentor.

I have a colleague that is interested in being a mentor. How can get more information or sign up?

The School of Business is always looking for new, quality mentors for its mentorship program. Mentors with interested colleagues can direct them to check out the mentorship webpage www.nmu.edu/bizmentor or contact Tony Plemmons (aplemmon@nmu.edu) for more information.

How am I paired with a student (mentee)?

A mentor and mentee will be paired following the completion of the online profile questionnaire found at www.nmu.edu/bizmentor. Mentors will be paired based on: interests, passions, professional field, and major.

Will there be evaluations of mentors and mentees?

Yes, periodically mentors and mentees will be asked about their experience, to track the effectiveness changes, as well to collect feedback. The goal of evaluations is to continually improve the program and respond to suggestions or concerns mentees and mentors have.
How long does the mentor/mentee relationship last?

For many universities, mentor/mentee relationships could last a lifetime because the time shared, the need to stay tuned to the progress of the mentee, and the bonding of friendships that take place during the mentoring period. It is the College of Business’ goal that the mentorship experience is mutually rewarding and relationships established last beyond a college career.
Example Schedule

The following is an example schedule of a mentorship. This is simply a guideline; mentors are NOT expected to do all the activities on the schedule, or even follow this schedule if they choose. This is just one example of how a relationship may transpire. Mentors are more than welcome to use this as a guide as little or as much for their mentee/mentor relationship. Because each relationship is different and develops at its own pace, it is not crucial to follow this schedule exactly. This example was developed to give you some suggestions of activities to do with mentees, and to provide some guidance as to how a relationship may look. Please contact Tony Plemmons (aplemmon@nmu.edu) with any questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions.

| Month 1 | • Mentee contacts you  
|         | • Mentee introduces themself  
|         | • You introduce yourself  
|         | • You and your mentee arrange to meet in person (when possible) or by phone  
|         | • Discuss:  
|         |   ▪ Expectations  
|         |   ▪ Goals  
|         |   ▪ Questions mentee has  
|         |   ▪ Classes  
|         |   ▪ Importance of joining a student organization (preferably a business organization)  
| Month 2 | • Discuss “suggested topic”  
|         | • Attend a School of Business event with mentor  
|         |   ▪ Networking Event  
|         |   ▪ Speaker  
|         | • Share any relevant experience  
|         | • Invite mentee to your work for a meeting or to shadow  
| Month 3 | • Encourage mentee to look for a job/internship early  
|         |   ▪ Suggest search techniques  
<p>|         | • Discuss interviewing tips and techniques |</p>
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|  | ▪ Interview your mentee as you would a new hire  
  ▪ Give your mentee a feel of the questions he/she will be asked in a real interview  
  ▪ Critique your mentee’s performance  
  ▪ Discuss how interview went  
  ▪ Make sure mentee knows what he/she should work on for next time  
  ▪ Discuss “suggested topic”  
  ▪ Attend a School of Business event with mentor  
    ▪ Networking Event  
    ▪ Speaker  
  ▪ Interview mentee again looking for improvement |