MENTOR PROGRAM

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

Below are some sample questions and topics to discuss with your mentor, as well as suggestions for activities you can do together. Remember, the purpose of your meeting is to gain information, advice, and contacts.

Tell your mentor some background information about you:
• What activities are you involved in
• What industry/industries interest you
• What companies are you interested in learning more about
• Are you considering study abroad or grad school
• How do you keep yourself organized
• How do you work toward your goals

Find out some background information about your mentor:
• Length of time in current position/organization
• Major job responsibilities
• Organizational structure
• Aspects he/she likes best about the profession
• Past career path and how he/she got to the position he/she is in today. How did he/she learn about this career?
• Types of courses that best prepared him/her for this career
• What student groups or activities was he/she part of, and have those experiences been helpful in his/her career?

Find out more about the profession:
• Description of a typical day
• Likes and dislikes of the job, and rewards of the profession
• What forms of communication are most common in the mentor’s workplace
• Challenges in the profession or recurring problems within the occupation
• Employment trends
• Professional associations, networks, online resources that the mentor would recommend
• General salary information and benefits for the profession
• Aspects of his/her education or other skills that help most in the job
• Technological advances that have affected the job
Get some advice:

• Obtain advice about your job or internship search or career path
• Ask for advice about the courses you should take to better position yourself to achieve your career goals
• Request resume advice
• If you would like more information on the mentor’s company/organization, ask for literature or a possible tour
• Ask for advice about how to effectively network
• Ask for a referral to another contact person to continue networking
• Ask for job search advice and tips
• Discuss different workplace cultures. What are the benefits and drawbacks of each? Which might suit your personality and work style best?
• Ask about different supervisor/leadership styles. How do you know what kind of supervisor you prefer, and what do you do when your supervisor has a different style?
• Discuss what professionalism in the workplace means today
• Discuss how you know when something is “good enough” in the workplace
• Create a one year and five year strategy to achieve your goals

Do some activities together:

Running out of things to talk about? Try an activity. Here are some ideas:

• Job-shadow at your mentor’s place of work
• Practice a class presentation and get feedback
• Get feedback on a class or work project
• Conduct a mock informational interview or practice interview
• Practice your 30 second “elevator speech” for job fairs or interviews
• Review and critique your resume, cover letter, or personal statement
• Get help setting up a LinkedIn profile
• Have an informational interview with your mentor’s colleagues, classmates, or friends
• Practice professional etiquette for an interview, business lunch, or networking opportunity
• Invite your mentor to attend a class
• Participate in a webinar together, then discuss it at your next meeting
• Attend a professional association meeting, community technology meeting, or conference together
• Attend a public lecture or university or college event
• Tour an industrial facility of interest to you both
• Do something just for fun! Visit a museum, cultural site, attend a sporting event, or do an activity you both enjoy.