



Baylor ECS Alumni-Student Mentoring Program

Tips for Mentors

- 1) **Honor your commitment.** Your mentee has taken on the commitment of a mentorship relationship with you in addition to school work, internships and jobs, extracurricular activities, and other relationships. Please honor your mentee's time and investment; respond in a timely manner to your mentee's questions and comments. If you don't have the time to respond at length, send a short message letting your mentee know you will be in contact when you have the opportunity.
- 2) **Set clear goals.** Discussing and establishing clear goals and expectations at the beginning of the mentoring relationship will provide you with a clear idea of how you can help your mentee and will provide your mentee with reasonable expectations.
- 3) **Listen deeply and ask powerful questions.** The two skills that are essential for successful mentoring are (a) in-depth listening, that is, suspending judgment, listening for understanding and providing an accepting and supportive atmosphere; and (b) asking powerful questions, that is, questions that are challenging in a friendly way and questions that help your mentee talk about what is important to them. It is always easier to build rapport with someone you know when you know more about them personally. Don't be afraid to ask about their family, hobbies, and their Baylor experience!
- 4) **Focus on wisdom.** As a mentor, you can provide support and advice to your mentee, but you can't solve their problems. Perhaps the most valuable quality you can offer is an alternative point of view. Put the situation in perspective, offer feedback, serve as a sounding board, and identify other people that your mentee can turn to, activities they can engage in, or small ways they can position their work to meet their goals. You can also help your mentee identify resources that may be helpful for their academic and career success. The best mentors see themselves as a resource, catalyst, facilitator, idea generator, and networker. They freely share what they have done (or have learned), not as a prescription, but more as an example of something from which they gained some wisdom. They also feel comfortable contributing ideas or suggestions, not as a sage, but as a collaborator.
- 5) **Maintain and respect privacy, honesty, and integrity.** Your mentee may feel more comfortable discussing their academic struggles or working through a difficult career decision with someone outside of their authority structure. As a mentor, you have a unique opportunity to guide your mentee through academic challenges, career uncertainties, and their college experience. Maintain a high level of integrity in your communications and interactions with your mentee. In order to build trust with your mentee, it is important that they know that you respect their honesty and will keep their confidence.
- 6) **Plan ahead for meetings.** Are there any days you know that you'll be offline, traveling, or ultra-busy? If so...let your mentee know, so that if s/he doesn't hear from you, s/he knows it's because you're away or you're busy. When we come to the end of a meeting, review your mentee's goals to determine their progress. Ask your mentee what might be beneficial for your next meeting. I also usually ask for an impression of how this meeting went and what we might be able to do (or stop doing) next time to make the next meeting as good or better.
- 7) **Experiment with process.** Over a period of several meetings, you can use a variety of mentoring techniques to help your mentee reach his/her goals. Coaching, simulations, role rehearsals, experiential learning activities, brainstorming, and mind-mapping are just a few techniques that you can try with your mentee. Mix up oral and written communication to gauge your mentee's communication strengths and weaknesses. Don't feel confined to a single way of mentoring.
- 8) **Follow the ground rules.** We ask that mentors do not give gifts, loan money, provide travel or accommodations, or become involved in dispute resolution. Talking with your mentee about ethical or moral issues is permissible. If you have any questions or concerns about what is permissible as a mentor, please contact Kate Amaya at (254) 710-6826 or Kate_Amaya@baylor.edu.
- 9) **Correct misunderstandings when they happen.** Get in touch with your mentor before a concern becomes a problem.
- 10) **Have fun!** We want this program to be beneficial for you and the student you will mentor, but we also want this to be fun. This is a great opportunity to reminisce about your college days or suggest items for your mentee's Baylor Bucket List!