



University of Wisconsin
Whitewater

Alumni Mentor Program Quick Guide

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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 guidebook will result in forfeiting future access and participation in the UW-Whitewater Alumni Mentor Program without an explanation.

Mission

Our mission is to bring together current students with alumni through mutually beneficial partnerships. These connections will increase the student's personal and academic success along with engaging alumni with current students and the university. Providing personal development opportunities to the student is a key goal along with giving them the support and confidence they need to complete their degree and transition to the professional workplace.

Timeline

Applications are open on a continuous basis. We will do our best to make additional matches throughout the year. However, some may be held until the following matching sequence. Matches are made after a student orientation phone call to encourage and help ensure student participation.

November

- Student and Mentor Application Deadline: **November 17, 2023**

December

- Student will participate in orientation phone call with program coordinator to be matched with a mentor.
- Students review quick start guide, tools, and handouts to prepare for connection with mentor.

January

- Match letters are sent to participants via email mid-January
- Students make initial contact with alumni mentors within one week of receiving their match email.

January-May

- Students and mentors meet at least once per month either in person or virtually. Date and timeframes should be discussed within partnership.
- Mentors are encouraged to drive the relationship. Mentors can reach out to mentor coordinators for additional support as needed.

May-August

- Participants decide if they would like to continue their current relationship, apply to be matched with a new student/mentor, or exit the program.
- Complete program feedback survey

Program Outline

- Students and mentors complete an online profile form that provides details about themselves and their goals that will be used to match people together.
- Depending on the number of students and alumni interested in the program we will make our best effort to match all students.
- New students to the program will participate in a phone orientation session with the program coordinator.
- Matched participants are notified via email and together build mutual expectations for their relationship based on respect, professionalism, trust, and confidentiality. UW-Whitewater program coordinator and mentor coordinators are available for support as needed.
- Communication is determined by the pair and based on their preference (e.g., phone, email, video chat, instant messaging, face-to-face meetings).
- Participants are encouraged to connect on a monthly basis.
- Alumni Mentor Program tools/handouts are available on the website to help define goals for the teams and structure your conversations.
- Participants will be surveyed annually to evaluate the individual relationships and identify areas of growth for the program. Participants have the option of continuing their relationship, applying to be matched with a new student/mentor or exiting the program.
- An annual reception will offer mentors and students a time to gather with other members to celebrate a successful year of mentoring. It will also give new members a chance to meet fellow participants.

Roles, Responsibilities and Success Strategies

There is no right way to mentor or be mentored. Every mentoring relationship is as unique as the individuals involved in it. 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, willingness 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:

- Work together to augment and strengthen an intentional inclusive campus culture where all individuals feel valued.
- 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 each other accountable for contributing equally.
- Take time to get to know each other and allow time for them 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 responsibilities

A mentor can help in clarifying direction, developing focused goals and making the student's college experience more effective. Your participation helps students link their classroom experience directly with real world situations, gain insight into the value and practical use of their education, and benefit from personal and career development advice.

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

For the program to succeed, both students 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; re-adjust 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.

Student

Student role and responsibilities

Students involved in the mentoring process are interested in respectfully gaining insight from alumni. Be true to yourself by identifying the goals you have for participating in the Alumni Mentor Program. This can be based on personal and leadership growth, relationship building, career exploration and much more.

For the program to succeed, both students 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 needed 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

- Match students and mentors using their profile details and further conversations with the participants. Communicate matches.
- Be available to mentors and students as needs arise.
- Ensure that every effort is made to create a productive and positive experience for both parties.
- Send periodic correspondence.
- Send invitations to any additional program meetings/receptions.
- Provide opportunities for program feedback.

Maintain confidentiality of the relationship:

All participants in the UW-Whitewater Alumni Mentor Program should consider any personal information shared between mentor and student to be confidential unless both parties agree that the information can be shared and with whom it can be shared.