

## MENTOR FAQ

### **What kinds of things are we supposed to do with our student?**

There's a tremendous variety of things to do around the professional development theme. A few examples are listed on the info page. So, for example, after your student has filled out a career interest inventory and e-mailed you the results, you could schedule a phone meeting to talk about it—give them your insights and interpretations. Encourage your student to sign up for a résumé-writing workshop at Career Services, and again, have them send the draft to you for feedback and edits. Arrange for your student to shadow you at your worksite for a day or several days, or arrange for your student to visit a colleague.

### **What if the student needs guidance in an area in which I'm not familiar, or knowledgeable?**

There are many resources available to both you and the student, through Career Services, the LSER Alumni Program Group, as well as the Liberal Arts Alumni Society. If you need assistance at any time in the program, you can contact the coordinator who will direct you to a resource that can support your needs.

### **What's the preferred way for mentors and students to contact each other?**

You will decide on a method of communication with your student at the initial meeting event. Many pairs communicate via e-mail and/or telephone. You may even decide to meet your student at your workplace during the course of the program. The preferred method of contact is whatever works best for you and your student. The important thing is that you reach and maintain an understanding about contacts from the outset.

### **How often am I expected to be in contact with my student?**

Students and mentors are expected to communicate in order to make substantial progress on the goals they set at the beginning of the program. While the actual number of times that you are in contact with your student is your decision, we expect that you will need to communicate with them at least once a month in order to reach your goals. You will probably find it helpful to be in contact more often however.

### **What's the general time commitment over the course of the program year?**

This somewhat depends on the quality of the relationship you establish with your student. A once-or-twice-a-month phone call is a good starting point. Again, you may find that additional meetings on campus, having the student job-shadow you at work, or other experiential learning opportunities make sense and would require additional time.

### **How do I establish goals with the student?**

You will establish goals with your student at the orientation meeting. While establishing goals, try to help your student figure out how they can best benefit from the program. Consider things that you believe will be helpful for your student to know before they graduate. If you have trouble coming up with goals, there will be a list of examples in the guidelines, such as résumé and cover letter writing.

**What's covered at the orientation?**

One of the key ingredients to the mentor program is the face to face meeting at the outset. Other student–alumni mentor programs that start the relationship with someone initiating a phone call or meeting via e-mail are missing an important component. At the orientation meeting you will meet your student in a casual setting, and you will meet other alumni and students as well. Short workshops for mentors and for students will address program expectations, provide information on what's available to students through Penn State Career Services, provide guidance on establishing goals and next steps with your student, and answer common questions. Most important, the event will include each mentor–student pair meeting to establish their goals and agreeing to next steps.

**Can I still participate if I can't attend the orientation meeting on campus?**

Maybe. It is essential that you meet your student in person and work with him or her to develop individual goals for the program. If you cannot attend a meeting at the outset, or cannot come to campus, an alternative meeting time or place may be considered. Contact the program coordinator.

**If my student and I really hit it off, do we continue next year?**

If you really hit it off with your student, the two of you may decide to informally strengthen your relationship and broaden the scope of your networking. However, the mentor program is a one year commitment, and there should be no pressure on anyone for a longer one.