

UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND ARTS OF OKLAHOMA



**PATHWAYS**  
ALUMNI MENTOR PROGRAM

## Table of Contents

Mission	3
Overview	3
Expectations	
Mentor	5
Mentee	5
The First Meeting	7
After the First Meeting	8
Recommended Topics for Discussion	9
Suggested Mentoring Activities	9
Mentee Goals/SMART Goals/Reflection	10

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## MISSION

The Alumni Mentoring Program and the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma supports the principals of co-curricular learning by connecting mentees with established alumni who serve as mentors and guides for professional career development.

At Science & Arts we define mentoring as:

A learning partnership where both the mentor and mentee explore a shared vision of mentoring defined by respect, openness and understanding.

Mentors relate their professional knowledge and skills to guide their mentee in professional development.

Mentees take an active role in their learning and development through questions and reflection.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Alumni Mentoring Program is designed to match current students with established alumni from the Science & Arts community who serve as mentors in their mentee's professional development. The program is facilitated through a partnership between the Student Success Center and Alumni Development at the University. Applications for both mentor and mentee positions open in August. Matches will be made and notified in September and the program calendar runs from October to April.

Matching Process: Alumni and students complete online applications located on the Science & Arts Alumni Website.

Matches are based on a variety of components including, but not limited to, college major/industry preferences, hobbies and interests, location, and desired method of communication. Efforts will be made to find participants the most compatible match; however, there is no guarantee. Matching preferences are made based on availability of interested participants. Matching will be performed by the Alumni Director with support from the Mentor Program Committee of the Alumni Board of Directors.

Communication Process/Guidelines: The mentor and mentee pairs meet (in person or virtually) on their own at least once a month between October and April. Mentors are not responsible to pay for their mentee's meal, nor vice versa. This goes for any expenses that might occur; though you are welcome to treat if you wish.

The mentor and mentee pairs must meet **in person** at least once during the duration of the program.

Continuing communication after the program ends: Students and mentors are required to communicate once a month, but are welcome to communicate as frequently as they choose. Participants are encouraged to maintain their partnerships from one year to the next, or they may choose to be matched with someone new.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

### Role of the Mentor

All mentors participating in the program are required to abide by the expectations listed on the Mentor Agreement received during enrollment.

If mentors are local to the Science & Arts area, they should strive to attend the kickoff reception in October.

Mentors and mentees should strive to attend the Homecoming Hall of Fame awards ceremony (usually a brunch or a luncheon) in November.

Mentors should utilize the monthly Curio newsletter for suggested topics and upcoming events.

Once a month, mentors will receive a short survey to report on the number of hours donated and topics covered during mentoring sessions. The survey will take a few minutes to complete and gives credit for the time spent mentoring.

The mentor is responsible for dispensing general career advice and guidance in any form appropriate for the mentee. In situations where professional experience and goals may not be aligned, the mentor should still share their perspective.

The mentor is NOT responsible for conducting a job search for the student or offering the student an internship or full-time position with the company for which the mentor works or is associated.

If possible, the mentor may choose to allow the mentee to shadow them on a work day.

Just as mentors come from all walks of life, mentees in this program represent a variety of experiences and may have limited professional experience. We encourage you as the mentor to use this opportunity to challenge your mentee to build on their professional acumen. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

### Role of the Mentee

All mentees participating in the program are required to follow and abide by the expectations listed on the Mentee Agreement form received during enrollment.

It is mandatory to attend the kickoff reception in October.

Mentors and mentees should strive to attend the Homecoming Hall of Fame awards ceremony (usually a brunch or a luncheon) in November. *(Registration fee provided by the Alumni Association)*

Mentees should utilize the Science & Arts news section on the website for suggested topics and upcoming events.

Mentees should take an active role in the relationship by preparing to discuss what will be most beneficial to their career development. Mentees should prepare to ask questions, reflect on their experiences, share their Science & Arts experience with their mentor and show appreciation for their mentor's time.

Mentees should understand that a mentor can give general career advice and guidance, and this program offers networking opportunities as well. A mentee should also understand that it is NOT the purpose of the program for a mentor to conduct a job search for the mentee, nor to offer the mentee an internship or full-time position.

## **THE FIRST MEETING**

It is the mentee's responsibility to initiate the first step by contacting the mentor to schedule the first meeting in person or virtually. Topics of conversation for the first meeting will vary. Try to accomplish these goals during the meeting:

- Become acquainted
- Establish communication expectations
- Discuss goals

### **Potential areas of focus for mentee goal setting:**

- Develop professional expertise in a specific area of focus
- Develop leadership abilities
- Explore personal interests and abilities
- Learn how to handle school-life/work-balance
- Explore majors/career paths and opportunities

### **Questions to establish clearly defined expectations:**

- How/when will you meet?
- Who will be responsible for making the arrangements for the meetings?
- What will your "ground rules" be for how the time will be spent and how you will communicate?
- What does confidentiality mean to you and what does it mean to your mentor?

## **Suggested discussion topics for the first meeting**

### **Mentees**

- Your career path/your intended major and why you chose this path
- Your hobbies and interests
- Your student experience at Science & Arts
- Why you chose to attend Science & Arts

### **Mentors**

- Your career path/college major and why you chose this path
- Your current job and your path to your current job
- Why you chose to attend Science & Arts/USAO/OCLA/OCW
- What it was like when you were a student at Science & Arts/USAO/OCLA/OCW

## **AFTER THE FIRST MEETING**

Though it is the responsibility of the mentee to contact the mentor, more often than not, both parties reach out equally. You are welcome to communicate more than once a month in person, over the phone or through any other form of communication that is most convenient for you and your partner. Your communication style should fit the needs of your partnership.

- Additional questions to ask your mentor and spark conversation
- What inspires you? How do you find inspiration?
- What qualities do you look for in people you hire?
- What characteristics or skills set you apart from your peers and enable you to be successful?
- Who had the most impact on your life?
- How do you handle obstacles, roadblocks and setbacks?
- How do you set goals? Advice on this process?
- What are your values and have you lived them out?
- How do you approach the unknown?
- What dreams and goals inspired you to succeed? Have they changed since your time on campus?
- What are upcoming trends in your industry?
- What courses, experiences or skills would be helpful to gain while in college?
- How did your experience at Science & Arts/USAO/OCLA/OCW help you advance professionally?
- How would you describe the culture/atmosphere of your workplace?
- What do you know now that would have been helpful to know when you were a student?



## **RECOMMENDED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

- Career development: Discuss potential majors, ask questions about career options, seek guidance in crafting goals and identify interests.
- Resumes/cover letters: How to write them, what employers look for; review your current resume and cover letter.
- Interviewing skills: How to prepare, answering behavioral questions, advice for follow-up, and request a mock interview for practice.
- Networking: Why it is so important and how to use social media professionally.
- Job strategy/branding: How to make yourself stand out as a candidate, how to target companies and find jobs.
- Goal Setting and Decision-Making Skills: Practice setting SMART goals, and a process for decision making.
- Work/life balance and time management: Finding the sweet spot between work and personal life, seeking suggestions to find the right balance.
- Graduate/professional school options: Navigating admissions requirements, writing personal statements and finding opportunities for continuing education.

## **SUGGESTED MENTORING ACTIVITIES**

- Mentees can shadow their mentor at work or mentors can connect their mentee to other professionals in the field, virtually or by phone for an informational interview.
- Mentors can invite mentees to professional networking opportunities at their place of work or in the community.
- Mentees can invite mentors to relevant events such as a concert, lecture or sporting event.
- Other Science & Arts events and activities can be found in news and events on the Science & Arts website and in the monthly CURIO newsletter.

## **MENTEE GOALS AND REFLECTION**

### **SMART Goals**

The SMART goal worksheet is intended to help mentors and mentees focus their relationship on setting and achieving professional goals. Review this worksheet with your mentor early in your relationship and refer back to it as you move through the program.

### **Reflect**

Reflect on your past and present in order to create a roadmap for the future. Consider keeping a journal or document of what you discussed and what you learned from your mentor. Use these tools to complete the post-program survey in April.