

# School for Resource and Environmental Studies Mentorship Program



## Tips for Mentors

*The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.*

*– Steven Spielberg*

Mentoring is a way for the experienced to guide the less experienced in an attempt to improve understanding. As a mentor you can be a resource, a helping hand, a sounding board and a referral service. Although “chemistry” or making a personal connection is useful in developing a long term relationship, it is not a mandatory requirement to achieving a great mentoring experience. For both participants, it’s important to remember the focus is less on personal connection and more on career objectives including professional advice, career guidance and access to a broader network.

### *In the beginning*

Focus on getting to know each other, some suggested topics for the first email/call:

- Find out why each person is participating
- Ask questions about past experience (education, work experience, personal interests/activities etc.)
- Logistical information (determine how you will communicate – over email, phone calls, frequency and confirm contact information)

### *Build from your previous experience*

- Looking back on your career, what do you wish you would have known?
- What did mentors do to help you in your career progression?
- Think about both the good and bad mentoring you have received.

### *Share from your experience*

- Help translate unwritten rules in the workplace and explain how information can be communicated informally
- Share your successes and lessons learned
- Discuss work-life balance issues
- Be candid
- Help your student recognize challenges and successes
- If appropriate, provide professional contacts to the student that would be helpful for their specific interests
- Remember to take advantage of the two-way relationship and gain perspective from the student

### *Understand the limits of mentorship*

- Remember conversations are confidential
- Know that you won't always have all the answers
- Keep in mind, that at some point, it's ok to say good-bye. Your student mentee will eventually move on – particularly if you have been a good mentor!

### **What Next?**

- Your student mentee has been asked to contact you immediately via email. Please contact us if you do not hear from them within two weeks of receiving the matching notification.
- Student will contact you to schedule your first conversation to occur before the end of November. Meetings can be in person if you are in the same city, or by phone or by video chat (Skype, Facetime etc.).
- Schedule your additional conversations in advance.

When it comes time to end the formal relationship through the program, make sure to discuss the overall experience and next steps:

- What worked/didn't work in the relationship?
- What has been gained through the program?
- What are the lessons learned?
- Will you stay in contact?