Mentor Tips and Insights
November 1st, 2016

Defining Mentoring

• How would each of us define Mentoring?
  – Some think it happens every day
  – Others are more structured in definition
The Mentoring Experience

In an ideal match, Mentoring hits on three levels, *this is determined by each pairing*:

- Professional Level
- Social Level
- Emotional/Personal Level

The Mentoring Experience

Professional Level:

- Networking
- Resume/cover letters
- Career path discussions
- Mock interviews/discussions
The Mentoring Experience

Social Level:

• Lunch or dinner discussions
• Attending University of MN events
• Touring plants/farms/businesses

The Mentoring Experience

Emotional/Personal Level:

• Family connections
• Significant others
• Roommate or co-worker
• School/course load and how to handle
Top 10 Tips

• Commit to spend the time with them
• Like a teacher, guide and facilitate
• Give them respect and listen well
• Be authentic – tell them about your less-than-successful attempts at learning in life
• Be honest/manage expectations/know your limitations
• Provide opportunity
• Encourage them
• Remember – it’s a shared experience
• Take time to appreciate your efforts
• Get them to set goals for the year*

Setting Goals

Provides:

• A Plan – focus and purpose
• Sets expectations
• Provide sense of accomplishment, positive, motivating
• Lets you know how you did at the end of the year
• Lets the student know how the program benefited them
• Submit S.M.A.R.T. Goals by first week in December 2016
Past Mentor Experiences

• My student was not engaged in starting conversations or planning meetings, so I drove the mentorship and set up the meeting times/topics through the year. I would tell students to be engaged, and for mentors to hang in there if students are not fully engaged.

Past Mentor Experiences

• She did make attempts to cancel on me at the very last minute a couple times. I personally felt the excuses were not legitimate and her overall dedication to the program was less than desirable. I even encouraged her to plan at least one of our meetings and decide on what she wanted to learn, accomplish, etc, and she didn't do anything at all. I received an email the day of her flight back home to China. My advice to future mentors/students in the future is to establish parameters in the early stages. We all have busy lives, but communication is also key. If there is not accountability, then what you put into the program is not going to be of complete value.
Past Mentor Experiences

• My mentee was a freshman so he was exploring what opportunities were available in agriculture. It became clear to him that ag was not his passion and he ultimately switched his goals to pursuing a nursing career. He will transfer to Eau Claire in the fall. The challenge was that I do not have any experience in the health industry so my coaching had to become more broad. I believe that he felt good about the progress that we made and that he got through the decision to make the change.

Past Mentor Experiences

• The main challenge we faced, if you could call it that, is that my mentee was very unsure as to her path. Typically I hope students were interested in environmental education, but this time it was a lot more about listening to her life experiences and sharing my life experiences that could inform her future decisions. My advice for future mentors: the student might not need what you think they need from you at the start, so be sure to listen and be open to all the ways that you two can connect. Follow this, and you will both gain from the relationship.