one-2-one mentoring
>>
>> adds people to the learning equation
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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The ICS Mentor Program was created to foster the interaction between students and alumni of the Donald Bren School of Information and Computer Sciences at UC Irvine. Students network with alumni to explore career interests and engage in mutually beneficial, professionally oriented relationships. Unlike other programs, ICS’ Mentor Program is flexible and loosely structured, allowing the mentors and students to interact at a pace comfortable for both parties and based on each individual’s needs.

The ICS Mentor Program is administered out of the ICS Office of External Relations. Questions and comments about the program can be directed to Lara Farhadi at (949) 824-8971 or lfarhadi@uci.edu.

By definition, a mentor is an advisor who may provide academic or career guidance, networking opportunities, and insights into the working world. Similar career goals, shared interests or common academic backgrounds provide the foundation for the mentor/student relationship. The word mentor originates in the "Odyssey" by Homer, who describes the character, Mentor, as a "wise and trusted friend."

Successful mentoring involves initiative on the part of both the mentor and the student. Some of the things to keep in mind when building a mentor/student relationship are:

• Maintain regular contact by e-mail and/or telephone
• Participate in activities related to common interests
• Find ways to exchange information if your mentor is not local

Sample activities to consider in building your mentor/student relationship include:

• Attend an on-campus event together (if mentor is local)
• Ask your mentor to do an informational interview with you
• Show your mentor your resume for feedback
• Invite your mentor to view your research or attend a student group event (if mentor is local)

Benefits of Mentoring

While the advantages of a mentoring program to our undergraduate students are obvious, alumni also benefit from the program by:

• Enriching their lives by making a difference in someone else's
• Reconnecting with the School of Information and Computer Science on a personal level
• Gaining new skills as they advise and counsel students
TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

As a student, you have a unique opportunity to learn from someone who, like you, has experienced life as a student in ICS and is now a professional in the field you plan to pursue.

The partnership between a mentor and a protégé is built upon trust, respect and professionalism. Specifically, your mentor's role will be one of guide, motivator, advisor and role model. Here are some tips to help you establish successful and rewarding mentoring relationship.

1. **Maintain regular contact**
   Consistent contact builds dependability and trust. A minimum commitment of one weekly e-mail is strongly encouraged.

2. **Open up**
   Feel free to share with your mentor issues you may find sensitive or embarrassing. He or she can help you find a solution or a new perspective.

3. **Build a relationship**
   Simple joint activities—walks across campus, informal conversations over coffee, attending a lecture together—can help to develop rapport.

4. **Always be honest**
   Trust and respect are the foundations on which mentoring is built.

5. **Share yourself**
   Invite your mentor to see what you do. Let your mentor see your human side.

6. **Share your doubts**
   Share your concerns and doubts about specific jobs, career paths, organization cultures and industries.

7. **Avoid being judgmental**
   Acceptance without conditions communicates that your concern comes without strings attached.

8. **Be self-sufficient**
   And don't expect your mentor to do things for you that you can do for yourself. Your mentor's greatest gift is to help you discover your own solutions to problems.

9. **Don't expect your mentor to have all the answers**
   Sometimes talking things over can help you look at things from a different angle and find your own answers.

10. **Be open to constructive criticism**
    Critical feedback is essential to your own improvement and development.

11. **Accept guidance**
    Ask for and listen to your mentor's advice about how to conduct yourself in different settings
(business, when interviewing, when building a network.)

12. Respect confidentiality
   Good friends do.

13. If the relationship seems to stall, hang in there

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

• Prior to your first meeting, write down three things you would like to achieve through mentoring and rank them in order of importance to you. Also, write down three things that concern you about meeting with your mentor and rank them in order of importance.

• Write down three things you would like your mentor to provide, if not included in your previous list.

• Prepare a brief autobiography including your vision, mission or life goals and share it with your mentor at your first meeting.

• Dealing with time is a key aspect of the success of mentoring. Make sure you are clear about your needs.

• Be prepared to do some homework in order to show initiative, leadership and self-reliance. Explore alternative options for asking questions or gaining information other than just relying on your mentor.

• The focus of most successful mentoring is mutual learning. Feel free to explore what you have to offer the mentor. A sense of humor and a sense of enjoyment of your time together are essential as well.

• If your needs are not being met, make sure to discuss this with your mentor. Recognizing your changing needs and finding a respectful way to meet your learning goals are some of the keys to successful mentoring.
THE MYTHS OF MENTORING

Many people make assumptions about mentoring or just have reactions when they think of the term mentor. The following list represents commonly held (and sometimes humorously expressed) ideas about mentoring. Let’s debunk a few of these myths and provide a more accurate reflection of contemporary trends in mentoring.

• **You need a toga to be a mentor**
  Gone are the days of protégés sitting at the feet of the wise one; you never know who might be a powerful learning influence.

• **Mentoring only happens on a one-to-one, long-term, face-to-face basis**
  With modern technology mentoring can take place by e-mail, telephone, or fax and may only need a few hours.

• **A mentor needs to be 5-10 years older than the person he/she mentors**
  Innovations happen so rapidly or personal experience is such a great teacher, that younger people often have opportunities to mentor older people. Peers are often effective mentors.

• **Mentoring is a rare experience and only occurs for a few great people**
  Informal mentoring is probably the most frequent method of transmitting knowledge and wisdom in society; virtually everyone has experienced it.

• **Young people who have poor attitudes, minimal work habits or few skills do not need mentors**
  Many successful people started this way, but virtually all of them needed an older guide that listened to and respected them.

• **The person being mentored is the only one who benefits from the relationship**
  For mentoring to be effective, all parties must perceive benefits; this is the principle of mutuality.

• **The best mentors are those who set out to be mentors**
  The majority of mentoring occurs without conscious knowledge of either party, but it does help to cultivate key mentor attitudes and behaviors.
DO’S AND DON’TS – A SIMPLE GUIDE

A protégé is someone who is motivated to assume responsibility for her/his own professional and personal growth and development. You stand to benefit immensely from having a mentor, if you follow a few simple guidelines.

DO:

• Make every effort to keep your appointments with your mentor
• Share your questions and concerns and communicate your needs/interests/problems clearly
• Set realistic expectations of your mentor
• Accept mentor advice and constructive feedback without becoming defensive
• Approach discussions with an open mind
• Appreciate the mutual respect, trust and openness between you and your mentor
• Contact the Office of External Relations if you are having trouble connecting with your mentor
• Thank your mentor for her/his time

DON’T:

• Close your mind to constructive feedback about areas for personal and professional development
• Hesitate to contact your mentor if you have not heard from him or her in awhile
• Ask for or expect a job or internship from your mentor
• Neglect contacting your mentor to set up meetings
SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

The following suggested activities will help you lay the foundation of the mentoring partnership, as well as make the most of the mentoring experience. Use your creativity and add to it!

- Meet for an informal breakfast or lunch to learn about each other's backgrounds and interests. Focus on a protégé learning and development plan and discuss specific goals.
- Review career plans, selection of classes and electives, participation in workshops and internships to facilitate preparation for the industry.
- Invite your mentor to campus to attend a lecture, symposium, seminar.
- Ask your mentor if it would be possible to shadow him and/or one of his team members to learn firsthand what a "typical day in the life of..." is.
- Arrange for you and your mentor to attend an industry-related function, seminar or professional association meeting and be open to interacting with industry professionals.
- Participate in an informal fun outing (UCI sporting event, something related to common interests, etc.)

Things to consider throughout the year

- **Prepare for the Meeting**
  After your initial contact, prepare a list of questions you would like answered at your first meeting and a list of things you would like to accomplish during the academic year.

- **Set Goals**
  Ask your mentor to help you set goals for the academic year according to the list you prepared in advance. This will help you both gain a clear understanding of your relationship.

- **Follow Through**
  Establish a timeline and intermediate steps required to reach your goals and follow through with those objectives. This will help you stay on track to reach your goals.

- **Celebrate!**
  Celebrate with your mentor every time a milestone is achieved and thank him for his guidance. This will help you both identify the success of your relationship and stay motivated throughout the year.
MENTORING LIFE CYCLE

Most mentor/student relationships eventually pass through these four phases:

- Learning to communicate
- Bridging differences
- Planning initial meetings

- Setting goals
- Choosing activities
- Celebrating accomplishments

- Reaping the rewards
- Keeping the momentum as you set new goals

- Knowing your limits and understanding theirs
- Remaining committed
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Why should I have a mentor?
A: As a student, having a mentor will give you the opportunity to seek advice and guidance about your career, and develop personal and professional skills by having a relationship with an experienced industry professional.

Q: Will this program take up a lot of my time and is it a long-term commitment?
A: The level of involvement is determined by your and your mentor’s time availability and the nature of the mentor/student relationship. We strongly encourage a minimum commitment of one e-mail per week. Mentors and students are matched for the academic year with the option to continue the relationship during the summer or be matched with someone new in the fall.

Q: What type of activity is conducive to establishing a good mentor/student relationship?
A: Consistent communication is key. Workplace visits, resume review, informational mock interviews, conversations about life after college or attending a school event are also appropriate activities that help establish the mentor/student relationship.

Q: Who makes the initial contact?
A: You are encouraged to make the first contact, but both mentor and student are asked to contact each other as soon as contact information is made available.

Q: Can I have a successful mentor/student relationship even if my mentor doesn't work/live close to UCI?
A: Yes, you can have a mentor who is very dedicated to the relationship, even if he does not live or work close to UCI, or if he travels frequently. As long as you and your mentor remain committed to the relationship and maintain contact via e-mail and/or telephone, you should have a positive experience.

Q: What is the Office of External Relations’ role in the Mentor Program?
A: The Office of External Relations at ICS provides the opportunity for mentors and students to interact with each other. Guidelines for the program and mentor/student matches are set through this office, and the program administrator organizes the first reception where mentors and students get a chance to meet. Problems and concerns should be directed to the program administrator. The structure of the relationship and frequency of interaction is left to the mentor/student team to accommodate individual preferences and a variety of mentoring needs.

Q: Whom can I contact if I have any questions?
A: Both mentors and students are strongly encouraged to contact the ICS Office of External Relations at (949) 824-8971 or lfarhadi@uci.edu about questions or concerns regarding their mentoring relationships.

The ICS Mentor Program is not intended to be a career placement service, and mentors are not required, nor expected, to provide job placement for students participating in the program.
RESOURCES

Some Useful Campus Web sites

Visit the following sites to find out what’s new on the UCI campus, to search for UCI events including lectures, shows, and athletic events:

- Campus News: www.today.uci.edu
- Campus Events: www.today.uci.edu/calendar
- UCI Athletics: www.athletics.uci.edu
- UCI Alumni Association: www.alumni.uci.edu
- Claire Trevor School of the Arts: www.arts.uci.edu
- Career Center: www.career.uci.edu
- Counseling Center: www.counseling.uci.edu
- Suicide Prevention/Project Courage: donteraseyourfuture.org
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REFERENCES

1. “Mentoring Myths and Tips” by Nancy Henry, Northwest Regional Educational Library.
5. Mentor Handbook, UCI Graduate School of Management.