

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION MENTORING PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

The F&A mentoring program is a strategic initiative developed by the Office of the Vice President for Finance & Administration to build and develop future leaders.

What is the purpose of the F&A mentoring program?

The purpose is to foster the development of future leaders and to pass critical information and skills from one person to another.

Who is this program intended for?

The program is for F&A exempt and non-exempt staff.

What is mentoring?

“Mentoring is a relationship between an experienced person and a less experienced person for the purpose of helping the one less experienced. The mentee seeks the advice and support of the more experienced person. Mentors answer questions concerning the tasks that their protégés need to succeed in reaching their goals. The mentor provides wisdom, guidance and counseling as mentees advance their lives, careers, or education.” Cecily Richard

The Mentor role:

A mentor is someone who can focus on supporting the growth and development of a mentee. The mentor because a source of wisdom, work and life experience, and support; but not someone who observes and advises on specific actions or behavioral changes in daily work. A mentor understands that his/her role is to be engaged and authentic and tuned into the needs of the mentee as established at the beginning of the relationship. Mentoring involves a relationship of finite duration, offering high level guidance for long term development.

The Mentee role:

A mentee is the ‘student’ who seeks to absorb the mentor’s knowledge, growing both personally and professionally. The mentee decides upon the amount of guidance he/she needs, and determines the goals, pace, and capacity of the mentoring relationship. It is the mentee’s responsibility to identify the skills, knowledge and/or goals that he/she wants to achieve and communicate them to the mentor.

Is mentoring the same as succession planning?

No, mentoring should not be confused with succession planning. Succession planning is a systematic process for identifying and developing internal people with the potential to fill key business leadership positions in the University. The mentoring program is not preparing individuals for specific positions. Rather, it is enhancing leadership development which could lead to a number of career opportunities or improvement within one’s existing position.

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What is the process?

The mentoring relationship will be initiated by an application endorsed by the supervisor and a non-binding Mentoring Program Participant Agreement which includes the specifics on the relationship, including confidentiality, time commitments and expectations.

Mentoring partners will be matched based on the content of their application/questionnaire, their employing department, work experience, and other relevant factors. A significant effort will be made to match a mentor and mentee to provide maximum opportunity for a successful mentoring relationship.

Is there an orientation or training component?

Both mentor and mentee will participate in an orientation and training session launching their formal mentoring relationship.

What is the length of the program?

This voluntary program was launched in the summer 2012 and runs every fall. The program duration is 9 months, though mentors/mentees may decide to extend the relationship beyond 9 months.

What is the expected time commitment?

The amount of time a mentor and mentee choose to invest in the relationship varies based on needs, expectations and desires of both parties. Most mentoring pairs meet every three to four weeks, often over coffee, via zoom, or scheduling some form of mutually convenient break during the typical work day.

What are the benefits to the mentor?

Mentors will receive significant benefits through the relationship. Being recognized as a role model by peers is motivating for many. Mentors will be able to use this relationship to expand their own knowledge by gleaning from the experience, talents and skills the mentee brings to the partnership. They will also be able to enhance their own interpersonal communications and coaching skills. Mentoring should be a reciprocal partnership where each party learns from the other.

What are the benefits to the mentee?

Mentees will identify a specific professional developmental need, knowledge, skills, insights, etc. and will tap into the experience, talents and skills of the mentor to address this need. Mentees who have a commitment to personal accountability for their own growth and development will benefit from a reciprocal partnership where each party learns from the other.

5 Things Mentoring is NOT:

Mentoring is not a passive endeavor.

Good mentoring doesn't just happen; it requires conscious effort and commitment on the part of all parties involved: the program committee, the mentor, and the mentee. You can't expect great output with poor inputs.

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Successful mentoring involves initial goal-setting, frequent communication, and a consistent desire on the behalf of the mentee and mentor to learn and connect.

Mentoring is not therapy.

A mentor is not a therapist. While a great mentor will help advise you through tough professional (and potentially personal) situations like job struggles and troubles, it's important not to treat a mentor like a counselor.

There should be a constant undercurrent of positivity in mentoring; you should be talking about moving forward and making progress, not dwelling on your issues and troubles in a way that bogs the mentorship down. While many of us do need a therapist type person in our lives (someone who listens to us non-judgmentally), it's not the role of your mentor. In fact, it's not productive or inspiring for the mentor or the mentee.

Mentoring is not a one way street.

Historically, mentoring has been a pretty hierarchal affair. A relatively senior mentor would pass on their knowledge, expertise and experience to a more junior/younger mentee. However, as the world has changed and evolved, so has mentoring. And today, mentoring is more of a two-way street than ever before in the sense of both mentor and mentees must come to the table to share and connect, and both the mentor and mentee have valuable information to share. A rapidly evolving business landscape, as well as the incessant march of technology means that we all need to lean on each other for specific knowledge, expertise, networks, and increasingly important soft skills.

Mentoring is not a cure-all.

Mentoring can do amazing things for organizations including:

- Increase leadership development
- Improve culture
- Recruit better talent
- Increase employee retention
- Promote diversity and inclusion

It can also do amazing things for individuals:

- Increase the likelihood of getting a promotion
- Increase confidence
- Help with a career change/transition
- Increase leadership skills

But no matter how good a mentoring program, or how great your mentor is, progress and success are a product of all of the ingredients in your life – guided by the desire to change and progress.

Mentors are there to guide you and help you, but it's still down to each individual to take this advice, understanding and knowledge, and apply it to their own endeavors through task-setting, goal-setting and activity

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in general. The F&A mentoring program can help drive real business results, but it is just one component of a great developmental and inclusive culture.