

Knowlton School Mentor Program – Mentor Overview

The mission of the Knowlton School Mentor Program is twofold:

1. to create an environment of guidance, growth and development for Knowlton students as they pursue their career aspirations
2. to foster strong and trusting professional relationships between experienced practitioners (mentors) and future leaders (mentees).

The Knowlton School Mentor Program matches Knowlton School students with alumni and friends who have established careers in architecture, city and regional planning, or landscape architecture. The program is designed to give students access to an experienced individual to turn to for guidance, advice and direction, and to help students broaden their professional networks, enhance their classroom experience, and prepare for and acquire insights into the job search process. The official program will conclude at the end of the academic year; however, we hope that the program will provide the foundation for an on-going professional relationship.

IMPORTANT: *The Knowlton School Mentor Program is NOT a job placement program. Mentors will not be expected to open doors to specific jobs (or any job) for their Mentees.*

REQUIREMENTS FOR MENTORS:

- Commit to the time and communication requirements as mutually agreed upon between mentor and mentee. At a minimum, there should be five virtual or physical face-to-face meetings per academic year.
- Attend the virtual Knowlton School Mentor Program Kick-Off, scheduled for Thursday, November 4, 2021, 5-6 PM EST (or, if unable to attend, coordinate with your mentee to arrange a different time to meet).
- Attend the Closing Event, held in Spring 2022 (*date TBD*).
- Complete program surveys at various intervals throughout the year.

MATCHING PROCESS:

Knowlton School staff, with the help of the Knowlton School Alumni Society, will review student applications and mentor profiles, and will work together to make the mentor/mentee matches. Matches will be based on availability, career goals/interests of the student, and the professional experience of the mentor. It may happen that your valued experience and expertise is not the right match for a student in the given year. That does not mean you will not be a best match for a student the following year. We hope you will be patient and understanding with the process.

THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP:

The Mentorship Program affords both alumni and students of the Knowlton School the opportunity to develop a dynamic relationship from which both participants benefit. The ideal mentoring relationship is one that exceeds fact-finding and delves into personal knowledge and experience. Good mentoring relationships do not just “happen;” they take effort, patience, and planning. But the returns are great and will have a positive impact on you and your mentee for many years to come.

BENEFITS OF MENTORING:

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

- Connection with the Knowlton School in a deeper, more meaningful way.
- Encourage your own personal and professional growth.
- Exposure to the emerging talent pool.
- Professional distinction as someone who can serve as an example and role model for others.
- Enhancement of coaching, leadership and management skills.
- Develop a lasting career network.
- Provides intrinsic satisfaction by helping an emerging professional develop to his/her potential.

If at any point you have questions, concerns, or feel your mentee is not cooperating, please contact Alumni Engagement and Operations Manager Doug Sershen (614.292.9811 or email sershen.2@osu.edu).

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MENTORING

DO:

- DO make every effort to keep your appointments with your mentee.
- DO actively listen to questions and concerns.
- DO encourage discussion.
- DO attempt to meet your mentee's needs.
- DO assist your mentee in expanding her/his support network. Discuss the importance of maintaining positive relationships and help your mentee broaden her/his professional network and build a community of mentors.
- DO look for opportunities that your mentee should explore and encourage her/him to explore them.
- DO communicate your expectations of the mentee clearly at the beginning of the relationship.
- DO create an environment of open communication and active listening.
- DO invite the mentee to see what you do, both on and off the job. Share your own successes and failures. Let the mentee see your human side and encourage her/him to reciprocate.
- DO share what you have learned about specific jobs, career paths, organizational cultures and industries.
- DO use email when requesting, scheduling and verifying plans with your mentee, posing non time-sensitive questions to your mentee, and to maintain a sense of contact when one or both partners are finding it difficult to schedule mutual time.

DON'T:

- DON'T use email to give critical feedback, exchange impressions on sensitive issues or communicate an issue that can be "read" in more ways than one.
- DON'T become overwhelmed with your mentee's problems. Remain calm and dispassionate.
- DON'T give up if the relationship seems to stall.
- DON'T hesitate to provide your mentee with constructive feedback about areas for personal and professional development.
- DON'T hesitate to contact your mentee if you have not heard from her/him in a while.
- DON'T hesitate to contact the alumni relations coordinator if you are having trouble connecting with your mentee or if work pressures prevent you from fulfilling your mentor commitment.
- DON'T hesitate to provide candid feedback to the alumni relations coordinator regarding your satisfaction with the mentoring program and opportunities for improvement.
- DON'T expect to have all the answers. In most cases, it helps your mentee just to know and feel as though she/he has been heard and supported.