

# Knowlton School Mentor Program – Mentee Guide

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).

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

The Knowlton School Mentor Program matches Knowlton School students with alumni and friends with established careers in the fields of architecture, city and regional planning, and 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.

## **The Mentoring Relationship**

The Mentor Program affords both mentors and mentees 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.

Students who participate in the Mentor Program will gain valuable insight to their prospective industry through a one-on-one mentorship with a current professional.

You should have a clear idea of what you want to achieve through the mentor program, and are encouraged to discuss these expectations with your mentor. During your first meeting, you should both set your expectations for the coming year. Clear and consistent communication is the key!

If it becomes clear at the first meeting that the expectations of the mentor and your needs do not align, please notify the program coordinator (Louisa Morris) and we will do our best to re-assign you.

## **Structure and Time Commitment**

Each mentor and mentee is asked to complete an application form in order to participate in the program. The information gathered from these forms is used to pair mentors and mentees with similar interests.

Mentors and mentees are expected to meet face-to-face a minimum of five times during the school year (September-April). Engagement beyond the five required meetings will be established by the mentor and mentee. It is important that both parties have a clear understanding of the expectations.

Each participant must be committed to the program in order to create the atmosphere necessary for success. Attendance and participation for a full year is expected. If a mentee fails to complete the required commitments, they will be disqualified from further participation and any future programs.

## **Matching Process**

Mentors are required to submit a profile of their educational and professional backgrounds. Mentees are also required to submit a profile of their educational professional interests, as well as a personal statement that describes your career aspirations, why you would like to participate in the Mentor Program and what you hope to gain personally and professionally from the program.

Knowlton School staff will review student applications and mentor profiles and 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. The number of students accepted into the program is not guaranteed, and is dependent upon Mentor registration. Preference will be given to Honor's students and students in their final year at Knowlton when making matches.

## **Requirements for Mentees:**

- Must be a Knowlton School student, in a graduate program or in their junior or senior year of an undergraduate program. To be considered for the Mentor Program, a student must be in good standing.
- Commit to the time and communication requirements mutually agreed upon in your Mentor Program Pledge. At a minimum, there should be five face-to-face meetings per academic year.
- Emails and phone calls should be responded to within a 48 hour period. This expectation is true for your mentor as well.
- It is expected that as the mentee, you will take the lead in communicating with your mentor. Having a professional mentor is a valuable opportunity. Demonstrate your appreciation for your mentor's time and energy by demonstrating that building the relationship is important to you. Follow up with your mentor frequently and initiate those face-to-face meetings by suggesting activities, times and places.
- Attend a Mentor Program Info Session.
- Attend the Knowlton School Mentor Program Kick-Off.
- Complete program surveys at various intervals throughout the year.

## Tips for Mentees

1. **Initiate.** In order to sustain the mentoring relationship, take the initiative to ask your mentor a question, to let him or her know your educational and professional interests and objectives, and to ask about his/her own experiences.
2. **Honor your commitment.** Your mentor probably has a very demanding job. He or she has volunteered to take on the added responsibility of mentoring. Please be appreciative of your mentor's time and investment; respond in a timely manner to your mentor's questions and comments. If you don't have the time to respond at length, send a short message letting this person know you will be in contact when you have the opportunity.
3. **Help Your Mentor Help You.** Tell your mentor how she/he can be most helpful to you.
4. **Expect Support, Not Miracles.** You can expect a certain level of support and advice from a mentor, but he or she can't solve your problems for you. Perhaps the most valuable quality a mentor can offer is an alternative point of view. A mentor can put the situation in perspective, offer feedback, serve as a sounding board, and identify others whose brain you might pick or activities you can engage in or small ways you can position your work to meet your goals as well as resources that may be helpful to you.
5. **Communicate clearly.** Initiate contact with your mentor if you have questions or would like to discuss something. Identify your needs and communicate them as clearly as possible to your mentor. It may be helpful to put some focused energy into organizing your thoughts and concerns before talking to your mentor, so that the time is spent wisely.
6. **Be Teachable.** Be willing to learn new things, obtain another perspective, and be responsive to suggestions and constructive criticism.
7. **Keep Up Your End.** Work hard at being a good mentee.
8. **Follow Through.** When you decide to act on your mentor's suggestions, act in a timely manner and then report back to him or her.
9. **Look ahead at your calendar.** Are there any days you know that you'll be offline or ultra-busy? If so...let the other person know, so that if the mentor doesn't hear from you, she or he knows it's because you're away or you're swamped.
10. **Correct Misunderstanding When They Happen.** Get in touch with your mentor before a concern becomes a problem.

## Reasonable Expectations for Mentors and Mentees

Mentors and mentees typically enter their relationships with assumed expectations of each other. At times, some can experience disappointment because expectations weren't met or even discussed. To prevent this and help you with your planning, the table below lists some common, reasonable expectations. In many cases, the expectations are similar or the same. A mentoring relationship is a partnership, with both people showing respect and support for each other.

Discuss these expectations early in your mentoring partnership. You may want to add other expectations the two of you identify.

MENTORS	MENTEES
Meet as often as your schedules permit.	Meet as often as your schedules permit.
Provide help by answering questions. Serve as a learning broker, and be a sounding board for issues relating to the mentee's career goals and development. Talk about skills mentee could acquire to add value.	Take initiative to drive the relationship and be responsible for your own career development and planning. Ask questions.
Discuss eliciting getting feedback and help mentee look for information on impact he/she is having.	Focus and be interested in getting feedback and measuring how you are perceived.
Provide suggestions and advice on goals and activities that lead to effective and rewarding work. Tell stories about how others made their way that might be relevant to the mentee.	Ask for suggestions and advice early in the relationship. When advice is given, listen to the mentor, apply at least some of their ideas, and let him or her know the results.
Be a catalyst for mentee developing his/her own network. Point to others he/she might reach out to and engage.	Elicit Mentor's advice on developing other informal mentoring relationships
Keep any commitments made.	Keep any commitments made.
Work out any minor concerns about the relationship.	Work out any minor concerns about the relationship.

## **Unreasonable Expectations for Mentors and Mentees**

There are some common unrealistic expectations of mentors that can cause irritation and disappointment on both sides. As a general guideline, the mentor should not be expected to:

- Provide the mentee with personal introductions to other people unless they're comfortable doing so.
- Spend more time on the relationship than he or she is able to give.
- Take the lead in the relationship, setting up every meetings or driving the mentee's career development.
- Continue the relationship beyond the agreed-upon time period.

## **Specific Tips for Mentees**

These practical strategies can help mentees build a relationship with their mentors:

- Remember that you own your development, your mentor doesn't. It's up to you to identify objectives as well as keep the relationship focused and moving forward.
- Use active listening skills in discussions with your mentor.
- Be prepared to ask for specific advice on your skill set, ideas, plans and goals. The more specific you are, the easier it will be for your mentor to respond.
- Be complete yet succinct in your comments and explanations.
- Make it easy for your mentor to give you honest, specific feedback. Ask for it early in your relationship

If you have any questions or concerns along the way, please contact the Alumni Relations and Events Coordinator, Louisa Morris at [morris.1597@osu.edu](mailto:morris.1597@osu.edu).