Mentors’ FAQs

How frequently should we meet?

We recommend meeting no less frequently than once per quarter. However, a majority of previous participants have indicated that monthly meetings worked well.

Where should we meet?

Flexibility and ability to coordinate busy schedules is the key. Most participants meet with their students on campus, but some choose to meet at their place of business or other convenient locations.

Note: Students selected to participate in the program are strongly reminded that having a mentor is a privilege that bears responsibilities … one of which is to be respectful of their mentor’s time. Our experience has indicated that students take this responsibility seriously and keep their scheduled appointments.

How long should meetings be?

Participants report that the most productive meetings are one to one and one-half hours long.

How should subjects to be discussed be selected?

It is important that the student take a proactive role in determining the content of the meetings. As the mentor, it is impossible to “guess” what will be most relevant to the student.

Who should lead the discussion?

Again, the student should take a proactive role in leading the mentorship session discussions.

If my student is interested in an internship or job prospects what do I do?

The mentorship program is not intended to meet job-placement or internship requirements of the student. However, these are subjects that are frequently addressed during mentor meetings. The Department and University provide in-depth services to students seeking employment or internships and we recommend that you urge your student to confer with their department advisors and seek assistance at the Career Center located in Mary Gates Hall. If you are comfortable doing so, we also urge mentors to assist the students by identifying any opportunities of which they may be aware through their personal network connections.

Should we set an agenda in advance of our meetings?

It is highly recommended that mentors and their students agree on an agenda for their meetings a few days in advance of the meeting. This provides the student the opportunity to focus their thoughts to ensure a productive session and allows the mentor to prepare specific recommendations.

How many students will I mentor?

A: We recommend that each mentor work with at least two students in order to maximize the number of students that are able to participate in the program. However, it is entirely up to you how many students you mentor. During our pilot program, some mentored as many as three students. Results of the post program mentor and student survey indicate equal levels of satisfaction, regardless of how many students per mentor.

If I work with more than one student, should we meet jointly or separately?

Scheduling practicalities and the needs/interests of the students determine whether joint or separate meetings are preferred. Joint meetings have the advantage of a variety of perspectives when discussing any subject, while separate meetings may stimulate more open discussion of topics with which the student is uncomfortable or feels are confidential.
What kind of subjects are normally covered in mentoring sessions?

Anything goes. Students and mentors have reported a wide range of subjects, including:

- Career Advancement and skills
- Networking Advice
- Conduct codes in working environment
- Live decisions and work-life balance
- Mentor’s rich life experience
- Career Advice
- Goals in Life
- Mock Interviews
- Time Management
- Business Management Issues
- Jobs / Internships
- Resume Preparation
- Grad School vs. Employment
- Business Etiquette
- Managing Interpersonal Business Relationships

What is the most important thing to keep in mind while working with my student/mentee?

Have fun! Mentoring a student is a rewarding and enjoyable way to reconnect with the University and the Department. In the words of past mentors:

“Even the brightest students find it challenging to manage the jump from school to the professional world. Through the mentorship program, economics department alumni can reach across to the student and help with this transition by providing professional guidance, contacts, and experience in working with a degree in economics. Students who use this program will have a huge advantage in starting a career path post graduation.”

“A great way for us to get involved meaningfully on campus, and a great way to reconnect with the younger generation, the experience taught me a lot when I wasn’t expecting it!”

If I have questions about the program, whom should I contact?

Any of our current mentors can provide you with some insight into how the process works. You may also contact Department of Economics Outreach Coordinator Ellen Brown at browne5@uw.edu or 206-616-8024.

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