Department of Leadership Studies

Leadership Mentor Program
Student Guide
2014-2015
Congratulations!

Choosing to participate in the Leadership Mentor Program is a great step toward your career success. As with most things in life, you will get out of this professional mentorship what you put into it. This guide will provide you with advice for making the most of your experience with your mentor.

General Guidelines

1. Be ready to work at the relationship. Initiate contact with your mentor at least once per month (including summers).

2. Respond to your mentor’s communications in a timely manner (typically within 24 hours, unless more or less urgency is indicated).

3. Set aside time in your schedule to meet with your mentor and defer to your mentor’s schedule whenever possible.

4. Use your mentor’s time well – be prepared for meetings and ask questions.

5. Thank your mentor often. S/he is volunteering his/her time to help you.

6. Contact the Leadership Mentor Program office with questions or concerns at any point. tvanhorn@sandiego.edu or 619-260-4760

QUICK TIP #1

Good mentoring relationships don’t just happen; they take work. It takes time and effort to get to know each other and build trust.
Activity #1

Preparation for Mentoring

Have you ever had a formal or informal mentor before (coach, family friend, etc. who took you “under their wing”)? If yes, in what ways did this individual help you?

What are the specific expectations you have of your Leadership Mentor?

List three things you would like your Leadership Mentor’s assistance with:

1. 
2. 
3. 

First Contact

After you have received your placement, it is your responsibility to make the first contact with your Leadership Mentor. Call or send your mentor an email in order to set up your first meeting. Here’s an example of an email or conversation:

Dear Mr./Ms. (Mentor),

Thank you for taking the time to be my Leadership Mentor. I am really looking forward to working with you. I’d like to find a time when we can meet in person or talk over the phone within the next two weeks. What is your availability? I am available…

Sincerely,
Diego Torero

QUICK TIP #2

Be open-minded and willing to learn. No matter who your mentor is, s/he has experience and expertise to share with you. You and your mentor may have a lot in common or very little. Remember that the mentor picked you, so he/she has indicated an interest in you. Regardless, if you remain open-minded and want to learn, you will learn and become a better professional as a result.
First Meeting

Your first meeting is an opportunity for you to get to know your mentor and get your relationship off on the right foot. Here are some tips:

Soon: The sooner you can meet the better. Your first meeting should occur within 2-3 weeks of your program orientation.

In-person: An in-person first meeting is ideal. If this is not possible, a phone meeting or video chat is also fine.

Casual setting: Choose a meeting site that is comfortable and neutral. Meeting at a Bert’s, La Paloma, Aromas, or at a coffee shop or restaurant close to USD are good options, but be prepared to meet your mentor some place that is convenient for him/her.

Get to know each other: Learn about your mentor’s professional and personal background. Ask questions. Listen. Share your own stories and have fun getting to know each other.

Set expectations: Discuss your expectations of one another. What does your mentor expect of you? What are you hoping to gain from working with your mentor?

Discuss communication: In-person meetings, phone calls, emails, video chatting, texting? Once a month communication? Once a week? Discuss the methods you will use and how often you want to communicate.

Agree and sign: Complete your mentoring agreement. Do not forget to bring a copy with you to the meeting. It is found online at http://www.sandiego.edu/leadershipmentorprogram

Set your second meeting: ALWAYS leave a meeting knowing when you plan to meet next.

Activity #2

Mentoring Agreement

The Leadership Mentor Program encourages all program participants to complete a mentoring agreement when they first begin working together. The form below can be found on our website http://www.sandiego.edu/leadershipmentorprogram and modified as each mentoring pair sees fit. Each participant should keep a copy of the signed form.
Activity #3

Getting to Know your Mentor

Ask the following questions of your mentor during your first meeting or over the course of a few meetings.

For what company/organization does your mentor or did your mentor most recently work and for how long?

How large is the company/organization, what type of product or service does it provide, and what area/region does it serve?

What is/was your mentor’s role within the company/organization?

What are the major responsibilities of your mentor’s current, or most recent, position?

What does a typical day look like for your mentor?

What are the most satisfying aspects of your mentor’s work?

What are the most dissatisfying aspects of the work? Is this typical of the field?

What is one of the most challenging situations your mentor has had to resolve in her/his work?

What is the toughest decision your mentor has had to make?

Ask your mentor to describe the culture of his/her workplace.

What experiences or opportunities did your mentor have in college or earlier in life that had the most significant impact on his/her life and/or career?

QUICK TIP #3

Be forward-thinking. Talk to your mentor about where you are presently but focus your energy on building for the future. Define your goals for the semester, year, graduation, or career. In conversation with your mentor, determine the skills sets, knowledge, and abilities you need to acquire in order to achieve these goals.
Do and Don’ts

DO
• Ask questions when you are unsure
• Put time and effort into working with your mentor
• Expect your mentor to be honest with you
• Share your own feedback and ask for regular feedback from your mentor
• Challenge yourself by working to improve your skill sets in areas in which you feel less comfortable
• Use your mentor to build your own professional network
• Get the most you can out of this experience
• Treat your mentor and this relationship like you would a supervisor and job – with respect and a sense of responsibility and commitment

DON’T
• Expect your mentor to be an expert in everything
• Think that having a mentor entitles you to an internship or job
• Be afraid to make mistakes - this is a learning experience
• Fall into the “I’m busy” trap – regardless of how busy or challenged you are at the moment, you can make the time to stay in communication with your mentor
• Judge your mentor based on their company/organization or job title
• Let embarrassment or fear of criticism keep you from working with your mentor

QUICK TIP #4

Be honest and real. Your mentor will be better able to help you if you are open and honest about who you are and what you want professionally and personally from your life. Talk about your background, current status, hopes, fears, and goals for the future.
Talking Points
Not sure what you and your mentor should talk about? Read through the lists below to identify questions that appeal to you and use them as jumping-off points for further conversation.

1. Career exploration
   • How can I make use of internships to help decide my career path?
   • Would it be possible for me to shadow you in order for me to learn more about your business/organization?
   • What did you like most/least about the different professional positions you have held over the course of your career?
   • Which career fields do you see growing, and which do you see shrinking?
   • What are your goals and values, and how do they fit with the career path you have chosen?

2. Academic performance
   • How large a factor is GPA in your company’s hiring process or in the career path in which I am interested?
   • What courses did you find most valuable during college?
   • What are non-academic college-related activities that you think contributed to your success?

3. Extra-curricular involvement
   • What organizations or affiliations might be helpful to my professional development?
   • How soon should I start seeking out leadership opportunities?

4. International Requirement
   • Which countries would be best for me to maximize my knowledge of international affairs?
   • What are some effective ways for me to demonstrate what I learned during study abroad or other international travels to potential employers?
   • What are your experiences with international travel, and what have you learned and how did you use it?
   • How can I be best prepared for my international experience?

5. Applying for jobs
   • What is an effective format for organizing my resume?
   • How can I accentuate my best skills and experiences on my resume and cover letter?
   • How can I make my resume and cover letter stand out?
6. Interviewing skills
   • What are qualities you look for in candidates you’ve interviewed?
   • How does my body language affect someone else’s perception of me?
   • Would you share some examples of questions that are good to ask employers during an interview?
   • How do I sell my capabilities effectively during an interview?

7. Internship search
   • Which companies will give me the best chance to learn more about the industry?
   • What should I be doing now to make myself appealing to companies who hire interns?
   • What is expected of interns at your company?
   • Can you provide any tips on how to maximize my internship experience?

8. Job search
   • What companies/organizations do you think treat their employees well and why?
   • What things should I be looking for in order to understand a company/organization culture?
   • What should I take into consideration when evaluating a job offer?
   • What are some absolutes dos and don’ts?

9. Networking/Connecting with other professionals
   • What are some good ways to start a conversation with a professional I have just met?
   • What is the best way to follow-up on a conversation I had with another professional or recruiter?
   • What is an “elevator pitch”? How do I create one?
   • How can I use a LinkedIn account more effectively?

10. Communicating in a professional way
    • How can I appear confident without seeming overconfident?
    • Based on my communication with you thus far, how can I improve?
    • In what situations is it appropriate to send an email rather than giving a phone call or sending a letter/note?
    • What are some typical communication mistakes you see new professionals make?
    • What tips would you give me on using technology appropriately in the workplace?

11. Transitioning from school to career
    • How can I prepare myself for the transition to the workplace from the classroom?
• How do I set realistic expectations?
• What are the best ways to “hit the ground running” in my career?
• What are some ineffective habits for the workplace that I may have developed in the classroom?

12. Moving up the ladder
• What are the best ways to distinguish myself from other employees?
• How should I approach my work if I hope to become leadership for an organization some day?

13. Starting a new business or venture
• What factors do I need to consider before investing in a new business or venture?
• How can I differentiate my business from others?
• What are the most effective ways to market a new business?

14. Personal life experiences
• Which challenging situations in your life have facilitated the largest personal growth?
• Would you share an example of when you feel you failed and how you moved forward after that experience?

It is your mentor’s job to give you honest feedback and advice, some of which will be positive and some of which will be constructive. Rather than ignoring your mentor’s criticism or constructive feedback, or letting it make you feel bad, listen to what your mentor has to say and consider how you can use that information to improve yourself. Regardless of whether you choose to take your mentor’s advice, listening to what your mentor has to share with you is important.

15. Personal finance and investing
• How can I come up with realistic savings goals as a new professional?
• What tips would you give to a new professional on saving for retirement?

16. General topics
• How can I continue to learn every day, even outside of the classroom?
• What books do you recommend I read, either for knowledge or leisure?
• What are some strategies you use to help you with time management?
• What methods are best for me to distinguish myself in the workforce?
• What suggestions do you have for managing stress?
• What suggestions do you have for balance work, career, and life?

**QUICK TIP #6**

**Be proactive and take initiative.** Mentoring should be an active and engaging experience for both student and mentor. Even though you are a student, you should take the lead in the relationship. Make sure that you are in frequent contact with your mentor and that you are initiating most of that contact. Let your mentor know when you need help. Ask questions. Follow-through on items the two of you discuss.
Activity #4

Goal Setting
In most cases, you are not going to fall into a great career. Building a career that suits you takes time, effort and a steady progression toward your goals. Your mentor will be skillful in helping you to create and evaluate potential goals as well as provide an extra source of support and accountability. Use the worksheet below to get started, and then discuss these goals with your mentor.

List one career, academic or personal goal you have for each of the following time frames:

This semester:

This year:

Two to five years from now –

Determine whether your goals are SMART and if not, modify them to make the more reasonable to achieve.

Measurable – Ask yourself: How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?
Action-Oriented – Ask yourself: How can the goal be accomplished? What action should be taken?
Realistic – Ask yourself: Am I willing and able to work toward this goal?
Timely – Ask yourself: When? What can I do today? Six weeks from now? Six months from now?
Handling Challenging Situations
In most cases, work with your mentor should go very smoothly, but occasionally a situation may present itself that you feel unsure how to handle appropriately.

Listed below are some possible situations that could arise and suggestions for how to deal with them. You are, of course, always encouraged to contact the Leadership Mentor Program office at 619-260-4760 or tvanhorn@sandiego.edu for assistance when needed.

ANY SITUATION INVOLVING HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION OR MISCONDUCT SHOULD BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY.
Even if you simply feel uncomfortable about any situation that may involve harassment, discrimination or misconduct, please contact us ASAP.

Situation: Communication with your mentor seems awkward or impersonal.
Possible solution: Try a different method of communication. You might find that you or your mentor would be more comfortable talking by phone than emailing or vice versa. If you find that your conversations don’t delve into anything more than small talk, you should work harder to plan for your meetings. Use this guide and the internet to develop questions and topics that you want to discuss with your mentor. If after several attempts at trying to improve the relationship, it still continues to be a challenge, please contact the Leadership Mentor Program office.

Situation: Your mentor has given you advice you don’t agree with.
Possible solution: Regardless of whether you agree with your mentor or not, it is always worthwhile to take your mentor’s advice into account when making a decision. At the very least, you have thought through the situation from another perspective. When you choose not to take your mentor’s advice, let your mentor know that you appreciate their perspective but felt that the decision you made was a better choice given your situation and the information you have available to you. Arguing with or ignoring your mentor when you disagree is never productive or helpful to either of you.

Situation: Your mentor didn’t show up for a meeting you had scheduled and didn’t notify you.
Possible solution: Follow-up with your mentor. Rather than saying, “You missed our meeting yesterday,” approach the situation from a position of curiosity. You might say, “I had a note on my calendar that we were going to meet yesterday. Did I get confused and have the wrong day or time? I would still like to meet. Is there another day that would work well for you?”

Situation: Your mentor does not respond to your phone call or email.
Possible solution: If you have not heard anything from your mentor after several days, follow-up with another email or phone call. If you receive no contact after the second attempt, please contact the Leadership Mentor Program office.

Situation: You change your program or career path, and it is no longer in an area in which your mentor has professional expertise or connections.
**Possible solution:** When you change your program or direction even if it is out of the Department of Leadership Studies you are always welcome to continue working with your mentor. Whether you want to continue working with your mentor or not is up to you and your mentor. A mentor, regardless of professional expertise, can still teach you a great deal about professional life. However, if you find that your conversations are no longer productive or helpful to you, you are not required to continue working with your mentor. Please contact the Leadership Mentor Program office to let us know of your plans, one way or another. We can match you with a new mentor when appropriate.

**QUICK TIP #7**

In challenging situations, it is always best to take the “high road.” Be respectful, considerate and professional in all communication with your mentor.
STATEMENT ON RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP MENTOR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS AND NOTICE OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

University of San Diego School of Leadership and Education Sciences
Department of Leadership Studies
9/2/2014

The purpose of the Leadership Mentor Program ("Program") is to give University of San Diego ("University") School of Leadership and Education Sciences ("School") Department of Leadership Studies ("DLS") students ("mentee") the opportunity to learn from Leadership ("mentor") (mentees and mentors collectively referred to as "participants") through a professional relationship outside the educational environment at the University. The University's limited role in the Program is to collect and disseminate resumes and biographies of potential participants, facilitate communication between participants, and provide nonbinding suggestions that may enhance a mentor/mentee relationship. A mentor/mentee relationship is in effect from the time the match is made (by a mentor selecting a mentee) until a mentor or mentee terminates his or her involvement or the student graduates or otherwise is no longer an enrolled student at the University.

The participants are solely responsible for the worth and value they derive from the Program. The University encourages participants to initiate communication about once per month. Notwithstanding the foregoing, participants are solely responsible for maintaining and carrying out any communication and other activities with their matched participant, as the participants deem appropriate in their discretion. Likewise, the participants are solely responsible for their own actions and inactions related to the Program, as well as the accuracy and truthfulness of their representations to the University and other participants. The University will not provide supervision of any participants, nor conduct any background checks; the University relies on communication and information from the participants and any checks or verifications are the sole responsibility of the participants.

The participants should communicate to the DLS if there are any perceived or actual problems or issues related in any way to the Program as immediately as practicable. Participants also should notify the DLS if their matched participant is nonresponsive, or if a participant believes that he or she is no longer able to adequately participate in the Program. Any communication to the University is not a substitute for the participants’ responsibility to act in their own best interests and use their own independent judgments in making decisions, including but not limited to whether or not to continue with a particular matched participant and/or participating in the Program.

It is the policy of the University that participants of University-sponsored programs are free from discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment and sexual violence), and retaliation. Discrimination based on race, color, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, ancestry, disability, genetic information, military status, or veteran status is prohibited. Participants are responsible for reading and complying with the policy at the University. Participants involved in the Program who believe that they are victims or have been negatively impacted by such discrimination or harassment are encouraged to follow the procedures set forth in that policy.
ASSUMPTION OF RISK, RELEASE, AND UNDERSTANDING OF RESPONSIBILITIES

University of San Diego School of Leadership and Education Sciences
Department of Leadership Studies
9/2/2014

I understand and acknowledge that my participation in the Leadership Mentor Program is entirely voluntary, is not required by the University, and may involve certain risks including but not limited to professional liability claims, personal injury, property damage, vehicular or other accidents, and injury or harm caused by the acts of others. I knowingly and freely assume all risks associated with participation in the Program, both known and unknown, and assume full responsibility for my participation in the Program.

In consideration for my participation in the Program, I (for myself, my parents, legal guardians, heirs, executors, administrators and assigns) hereby release, indemnify and hold harmless the University, its trustees, employees, agents and volunteers (collectively “Releasees”) from and against any blame and liability whatsoever for any property damage, property loss, property theft, personal injury, death, claim, or any damage of any kind whatsoever, whether arising from the alleged negligence of the Releasees or otherwise, which may arise out of or relate in any way to my participation in the Program, to the maximum extent permitted by applicable law. I agree to be solely responsible for any medical, health or personal injury costs relating to my participation in the Program.

I acknowledge that I have received the Statement on Responsibility of Leadership Mentor Program Participants.

I have read the Statement, understand it, and know that it is my responsibility to follow it. If I have any questions about the Program, I understand that it is my responsibility to contact the DLS.

I have carefully read this Release, fully understand its terms, and sign it freely and voluntarily.

Date Signature of Participant

Printed Name

Address

___________________________________________________________________________
References and Further Information:


