SPH Mentor Program 2016-17

A Guide for Mentees

The SPH mentor program connects students with alumni and other public health professionals to provide students with the opportunities to explore career possibilities, network and enhance their professional skills.

University of Minnesota

School of Public Health

Driven to Discover℠

About the SPH Mentor Program

Background Information

Our mentor program connects public health students to public health professionals to help with career and professional development. Mentoring relationships can benefit both mentors and mentees. For mentees, the program can have a key impact on future career choices. For mentors, helping the next generation of public health leaders can be rewarding and impactful.

The School of Public Health boasts the largest mentor program of any school of public health, serving approximately 400 students and mentors with special events and helpful resources for mentor pairs.

We work to provide students with diverse professional experiences and recognize the role that mentors have in training future public health leaders. These relationships have proven to be enriching and longstanding.

In 2014, *Minnesota Business Magazine* awarded the School of Public Health Mentor Program with its Leaders in Health Care honor for Education and Workforce Development.

Matching Process

Most mentoring groups will consist of one mentor and one mentee. to allow for a close mentor-mentee relationship. However, some mentoring groups will have one mentor and two mentees. During the application process, students indicate a commitment to initiating, developing and maintaining a mentoring relationship. When making matches based on the available pool of mentors and mentees, the Matching Committee does its best to make appropriate matches based on interests, experiences and preferences selected on the applications. ***However, it is important to note that all individuals in the Mentor Program have a passion for public health, and this alone is enough of a similar interest to build a mentoring relationship.***

Historically, approximately 30% of our mentors work and live across the country and the world. On the application, you must indicate whether or not you are willing to be paired with a long-distance mentor. If you are not, we cannot guarantee that you will be matched with a mentor.

Mentees will be notified via email by Thursday, September 29 with mentor contact information.

What is Mentoring?

What Mentoring Is and Is Not

Mentoring IS:
- a commitment,
- being open minded,
- sharing experience,
- improving communication skills,
- increasing networking opportunities,
- strengthening professional skills,
- expanding one's worldview.

Mentoring IS NOT:
- a guarantee of a job, internship or job recommendation for the mentee,
- therapy,
- supervision,
- tutoring,
- effortless.

What is a Mentor?

A mentor is an informal coach who provides guidance while assisting a mentee to reach specific goals. Mentors are usually able to:
- take time and provide attention,
- be a role model and an informal advisor,
- demonstrate commitment, competence and a willingness to extend knowledge and serve as a resource,
- offer suggestions and feedback, and communicate input respectfully, and
- maintain open and honest lines of communication with the mentee.

Mentoring Dos and Don'ts

Do:
- set specific goals.
- use the Action Plan template.
- be explicit about your own needs, limits and time constraints.
- be receptive to constructive feedback and advice.
- show appreciation for your mentor's time.
- ask permission to stay in contact after the formal program ends, or, be prepared to end the relationship at the end of the program.
- stay in touch with the Program Coordinator if the relationship is not going well.

Don't:
- ask your mentor for a job, internship, or job reference.
- assume your mentor has unlimited time for you. If you need feedback by a specific date, provide that date in your communications.
- be defensive when receiving constructive feedback.
- end the mentoring relationship prematurely.

Managing the Mentor Relationship

During your first meeting (at the welcome breakfast or during your first conversation), it is suggested that you clearly define the relationship to meet the needs of both your mentor and yourself. Use the Action Plan Template as a mutual contract for managing the relationship. Taking the time to discuss and determine the following will help to ensure a successful mentoring relationship:

Time Commitment:
For most mentor pairs, a successful relationship is built by meeting or conversing 1-2 hours per month. ***However, the time commitment should be determined by the pair.***

Goals and Activities:
Establish goals for the relationship and how you will achieve those goals. For example, if your mentor is local, ask your mentor if you can attend a meeting with him/her at his/her place of employment. If your mentor is long-distance, a practice interview could be done via Skype or FaceTime.

Advice for mentees from previous mentees (taken from "Leading the Way")
- It's your job to reach out to the mentor. They're waiting to help you. Make the connection.
- Be open to your mentor's schedule and communicate with them
- The program is what you make of it. Have goals and a plan, and you're more likely to have a rich experience.
- Be honest and straightforward. Your mentor isn't grading you!

What happens if the relationship isn't going well?
The unexpected happens. If you feel you aren't able to continue the mentor relationship for any reason, let your mentor know. Discuss the situation. Your mentor may be willing to agree to a new meeting schedule.

If you are not able to resolve a specific issue, contact the Program Coordinator at phmentor@umn.edu. Or, you may find it helpful to contact the Career & Professional Development Staff to come up with a strategy for resolving the issue.

Suggested Activities/Topics

First Meeting: Getting acquainted

- Discuss your backgrounds, interests.
- Discuss your goals and expectations.
- Establish a schedule for future meetings and discuss preferences for communication in-between (phone? email? Skype?).

Conversation Topics

- Talk about your skills and talents and how these can be applied in the industry.
- Explore the needs and current trends of the industry and discuss qualifications for different types of positions in the field.
- Talk about how your mentor's values have impacted his/her academic and career choices.
- Discuss work/life balance.
- Talk about the training and skill development that would be helpful.
- Explore professional associations and relevant organizations.
- Discuss employers and work environments.
- Talk about the transition from school to work.
- Discuss professional standards and workplace etiquette.

Networking Opportunities

- Attend a conference or professional association meeting together (such as the MPHA Policy Forum series).
- Ask for help arranging meetings/coffee/lunch with your mentor's colleagues, either informally or as informational interviews.
- Attend a lecture or event on-campus.

Professional Skill-Building

- Conduct an informational inte55rview and/or a practice interview.
- Ask for feedback on resume or cover letters.
- Practice proper professional etiquette for an interview, business lunch, or networking opportunity.
- Participate in a webinar.
- Search the internet together for job resources and other information related to your field.
- Ask your mentor to review a class project or assignment and talk about applying the content or skills to the workplace.

Action Plan

Time commitment of the mentoring relationship (ex: meet once/month for one hour):

- _____

Communication preferences (email, cell phone, work phone, etc):

- _____

What are the student's goals this year?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What resources can the mentor provide to assist in reaching these goals?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Plan your next two meetings:

1. Date/Time: _____
   Location: _____

2. Date/Time: _____
   Location: _____

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Mentor Program Dates

These dates are tentative. Please check sph.umn.edu/current/mentor for the most updated information.

Monday, September 15: Mentor and mentee applications close at 11:59 p.m.

Wednesday, September 21: Match Night

Friday, September 30: Matching Notification

Thursday, October 6, 7:30-9:00 a.m.: Mentor Program Kick-off Breakfast

Saturday, October 15, 9:30-11:00 a.m.: University of Minnesota Day of Service

Friday, November 4, 7:30-9:00 a.m.: MPHA Policy Forum Series

Thursday, November 17, 7:30-9:00 a.m.: Alumni Leadership Forum

Friday, January 20, 7:30-9:00 a.m.: MPHA Policy Forum Series

Friday, March 24, 7:30-9:00 a.m.: MPHA Policy Forum Series

Thursday, April 6: Mentor Appreciation Dinner

Friday, May 12, 7:30-9:00 a.m.: MPHA Policy Forum Series

Contact Information & Resources

Mentor Program staff

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  Mentor Program Coordinator
  612.626.3586
  phmentor@umn.edu

- Tara Anderson
  Director of Alumni Relations
  612.626.5536
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Mentor Program website

- http://www.sph.umn.edu/current/mentor/

Career and Professional Development Center

- http://www.sph.umn.edu/careers/students/

Student Resources (including major guidebooks and University resources)

- http://www.sph.umn.edu/current/resources/

SPH Staff Directory

- http://www.sph.umn.edu/about/contact-us/

Gold Mind (a collection of University faculty and expert talks)

- www.minnesotaalumni.org/goldmind

Adapted from the Emory Rollins School of Public Health Mentor Program Mentor Guide.