



# SPH Mentor Program 2017-2018

## A Guide for Mentors

*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.*



SCHOOL OF  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

# 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 500 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. In 2017, the SPH Mentor Program was named Program Extraordinaire by the University of Minnesota Alumni Association.

## 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 indicated 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. During the application process, we try to ensure that our students understand that their commitment to their mentors remains the same, even if the mentor is not local or lives in a different time zone.

# 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 your mentee
- therapy
- supervision
- tutoring
- effortless

## What are the expectations of a mentor?

Mentors are expected to be 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;
- maintain open and honest lines of communication with the mentee;
- contact Mentor Program staff if there is a concern with the mentoring relationship.

## Mentoring Dos and Don'ts

### **Do:**

- Help your mentee take initiative with the mentoring relationship.
- Be open to the mentee's ideas and discussion topics.
- Be explicit about your own needs, limits and time constraints.
- Ask before making a suggestion or giving feedback.
- Be prepared to end the mentoring relationship at the end of the program, unless you both agree to continue another year.
- Keep the door open for your mentee in the future.

### **Don't:**

- Assume your advice will be followed.
- Expect that the mentee will be enrolled in the major or program you graduated from.
- Expect that the mentee hopes to have the job or exact career path that you have or have taken.
- Assume your mentee does not need encouragement or reinforcement.
- Avoid discussion of touchy subjects.
- 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 mentee and yourself. Use the Action Plan Template on the next page 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 mentee is local, a good activity for networking could be to invite your student to a meeting at your place of employment. If your mentee is long-distance, a practice interview could be done via Skype or FaceTime.

## **Advice for mentors from previous mentors** (taken from “Leading the Way”)

- Ask mentees what they want out of the experience.
- Listen to your mentee’s dreams and identify ways to you can help advance them.
- Respond to your mentees when they reach out. Even if it’s outside of the regularly scheduled meeting.
- Suggest meeting in interesting locations, such as a brewery or a sporting event.



# Suggested Activities/Topics

## First Meeting: Getting acquainted

- Discuss your backgrounds, interests, and the student's career goals
- 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 the student's 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 values have impacted your 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)
- Help arrange meetings/coffee/lunch with your colleagues, either informally or as informational interviews
- Attend a lecture or event on-campus

## Professional Skill-Building

- Conduct an informational interview and/or a practice interview
- Provide 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
- Review a class project or assignment and talk about applying the content or skills to the workplace
- Help mentee practice for a class presentation



# 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: \_\_\_\_\_

# Contact Information & Resources

## Mentor Program staff

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## Mentor Program website

- [www.sph.umn.edu/current/mentor/](http://www.sph.umn.edu/current/mentor/)

## Career and Professional Development Center

- [www.sph.umn.edu/careers/students/](http://www.sph.umn.edu/careers/students/)

## Student Resources (including major guidebooks and University resources)

- [www.sph.umn.edu/current/resources/](http://www.sph.umn.edu/current/resources/)

## SPH Staff Directory

- [www.sph.umn.edu/about/contact-us/](http://www.sph.umn.edu/about/contact-us/)

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

- [umnalumni.org/Goldmind](http://umnalumni.org/Goldmind)