SPH Mentor Program 2020-2021
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.

SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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 program runs from October through April of each academic year.

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. Many of 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.

Commitment to Diversity

The SPH Mentor Program aims to create an inclusive climate that's open and welcoming to everyone. The program is committed to providing additional support and resources to mentees and mentors as needs emerge. For more information regarding this please see the resource section located on page 8 or contact Sara Pennebecker, Mentor Program Coordinator at phmentor@umn.edu or 612.626.7405.

Important Dates

Mentee Recruitment	August 27 - September 17
Matching Selection Period	September 23 – October 9
Match Notification	October 12
Kick-Off Breakfast	October 27
Mentor Appreciation Dinner	March 31
Program Wraps Up	April 30

Matching Process

Most mentoring relationships 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 volunteers do their 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/or healthcare, and this alone is enough of a similar interest to build a mentoring relationship.***

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

How can mentors help their mentees?

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;
- 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.
- Contact 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 event 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 on page 7 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. If your mentor is long-distance, a practice interview could be done via Skype, Google Hangouts, FaceTime, or phone.

Mentees' Best Experiences with Mentors (ideas from previous mentees)

- Receiving career advice, preparation and planning from mentor
- Receiving academic planning advice and course feedback
- Discussing public health topics
- Discussing workplace related topics
- Attending professional development opportunities together

Virtual Mentoring Relationships

- Pick your technology. Use video such as Google Hangouts or FaceTime if possible
- Set times to connect (remember time zone difference if applicable)
- Collaborate on a project using internet collaboration tools such as Google Drive
- Attend a webinar together offered by the SPH Alumni Society (sphalumni.umn.edu), UMAA (umnalumni.org/UMAA-learn-grow), or APHA (apha.org/events-and-meetings/webinars)
- Ask your mentor if they have colleagues you can connect with virtually on topics or fields you're interested in learning more about

Suggested Activities/Topics

First Meeting: Getting acquainted

- Use the action plan on page 7 to develop goals and set expectations for the mentoring relationship together. This includes how often you will meet, what you each hope to get out the relationship, and how to contact each other.
- Establish a schedule for future meetings and discuss preferences for communication in-between such as phone, email, Skype
- Share your story and background
- Discover common interests
Discuss your career goals and interests

Conversation Topics

- Talk about the 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 values have impacted your academic and career choices
- Discuss work/life balance
- Talk about 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
- Ask your mentor if they have colleagues that you can connect with related to topics or fields you're interested in to expand your professional network

Professional Skill-Building

- Complete an informational interview 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 such as through SPH Alumni Society (sphalumni.umn.edu), UMAA (umnalumni.org/UMAA-learn-grow), or APHA (apha.org/events-and-meetings/webinars)
- 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
- Practice for a class presentation with your mentor
- Read a book or article and discuss together
- Check out SPH Career & Professional Development Center website (sph.umn.edu/current/careers/students/)

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I get a mentor/student?

- All mentors and mentees (even those who participated last year) must apply by the application deadline to be considered for participation in the program this year. The program is open only to participants who sign up by the deadline.

What is the time commitment?

- The time commitment is determined by the mentor and student during initial meetings. Most mentor pairs choose to communicate approximately 1-3 hours per month, using the communications tools that work best for them or by meeting in person. The program officially runs from October through April.

What is expected of mentor pairs?

- Mentors and students who apply should be committed to engaging with their match and developing a professional mentor/mentee relationship. This includes communicating on a monthly basis. The mentor program is NOT a job placement program for students. There are no expectations that a job or internship will develop out of this experience.

Can I participate as a mentor or mentee if I don't live locally?

- Yes. Many of our mentees and mentors do not live locally in the Twin Cities. Mentors who live outside of the state of Minnesota, or even outside of the United States, are encouraged to apply.

I haven't heard from my mentee. What should I do?

- Mentees are strongly encouraged to initiate the relationship with their mentor. It is up to the mentor if they would like to reach out to initiate the relationship. If you have tried to connect with your mentee and they haven't responded, please reach out to us at phmentor@umn.edu.

I just received my mentee/mentor information. I don't think I have anything in common with them. What do I do?

- When making matches based on the available pool of mentors and mentees, the matching volunteers do their 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/or healthcare, and this alone is enough of a similar interest to build a mentoring relationship. We encourage matches to go in with an open mind and see what you might have in common.

I'm having problem with my mentor/mentee. What should I do?

- If you're unable or uncomfortable having a conversation with your mentee/mentor about the situation, please reach out at phmentor@umn.edu or 612.626.7405 to discuss the situation.

Contact Information For Mentee/Mentor:

Name: _____   Email: _____   Phone: _____

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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Contact Information & Resources

Mentor Program Staff

- Sara Pennebecker
  Assistant Director of Alumni Relations,
  Mentor Program Coordinator
  612.626.7405
  phmentor@umn.edu

- Heidi Mastrud
  Director of Alumni Relations
  612.625.2443
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Mentor Program website

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

Career & Professional Development Center

- www.sph.umn.edu/current/careers/students/

Student Resources (including major guidebooks and University resources)

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

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

- umnalumni.org/Goldmind

Health Equity Work Group

- www.sph.umn.edu/research/hewg/

Graduate School Diversity Office

- www.grad.umn.edu/diversity

Office for Equity and Diversity

- diversity.umn.edu/