



UNIVERSITY *of* WEST FLORIDA

# **Best Practices Guide *for Mentors***

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**Industry Mentoring in STEM Program**  
**Hal Marcus College of Science and Engineering**  
*HMCSEmentor@uwf.edu*

## The First Meeting

Although technology makes getting in touch from a distance easy, we encourage you to meet your student mentee for the first time face to face.\* Given your schedule and geographic proximity, this may or may not be possible. If you are unable to have your first meeting in person, a phone call or video chat is also perfectly acceptable.

If it is convenient for you, meeting your mentee on UWF's campus will set them at ease. This first meeting should be casual and relaxed. Students meeting on campus could dress more casually for the first meeting (unless the first meeting is at your place of work), which will also help them be more at ease the first time you meet. A first meeting usually lasts an hour, and many opt to meet over lunch or a cup of coffee.

The Pensacola Campus Commons has **[lunch spots](#)**: The Nautilus Market ([Commons, Bldg 22](#)), Argo Express ([Hal Marcus College of Science and Engineering Bldg. 4](#)), in addition to Chick-fil-A® Which-Wich® ([Commons, Argo Galley](#)). Also, there is a Starbucks coffee shop in [Pace Library](#).

The primary goal for the first meeting is getting to know each other. To make this easier, we suggest the following:

- Talk about yourself. While you have been able to review your mentee's application, your mentee will not know much about you until the first meeting. Talking about your career and personal life, when applicable, will allow the student to get to know you, and will often start other topics of conversation.
- Ask about their fears, whether in college or beyond graduation. Knowing what your student is afraid of will give you an idea of the areas in which he or she may need more coaching.
- Ask your mentee if there is something you can assist them with. They may be afraid to ask you if you don't let them know that you are there to help them.
- Ask about their career aspirations.

*\*As COVID-19 continues to impact our communities, we encourage you to choose your method of communication with your Mentee based on each person's comfort level – following the lead of the person who would like to take the more conservative approach (i.e. You may prefer to meet in person, but your Mentee may request more comfort meeting virtually or over the phone).*

## The Most Common Issues Addressed

The most common requests students have, in no particular order, are:

- Networking contacts and help
- Resume building - in terms of content, style and experience
- Identifying a career/industry to target
- Having someone they can go to for general professional advice

*Remember, many students "don't know what they don't know."*

## On-going Professional Relationship

Your mentee is expected to take initiative in this relationship. They should contact you at least once per month and follow-through on items the two of you discuss. Some mentees are better than others at this and might need extra prompting from you at first.

As a mentor, you should feel free to reach out to your mentee as well. Our office will also help facilitate communication by sending emails alerting you of key times in the year and events of interest, to help assist you in maintaining a positive and consistent flow of communication between you and your mentee.

While the academic year will perhaps be the time when you will be most active with your mentee, it is a good idea to maintain contact during breaks. Summer jobs and internships bring questions for your mentee as well as many opportunities to learn from you.

Your professional relationship will consist of at least one interaction per month. The pairing lasts for at least one academic year.

*\*Video calls are an acceptable replacement for face-to-face meeting.*

## Questions? CONTACT:

Industry Mentoring in STEM Program  
Hal Marcus College of Science and Engineering  
Building 4, Room 423  
11000 University Pkwy  
Pensacola, FL 32514  
[HMCSEmentor@uwf.edu](mailto:HMCSEmentor@uwf.edu)