

Student Career Mentoring Program

Inspiring futures

Mentor Information 2011

A Student Enrichment Program
Supported by Alumni and Advancement

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Aims and objectives of the Student Career Mentoring Program

- To expand the mentee's understanding of the world of work
- To enhance the professional abilities of the mentee
- To aid the mentee's career development process
- To enable the mentee to network with and learn from an interested professional

Eligibility Criteria

The La Trobe University Student Career Mentoring Program welcomes professionals who have 2 years or more experience in the workforce.

Stages in the program

March 18	Mentor applications close
March 31	Mentee applications close
May	Initial meeting and program launch events Melbourne (Bundoora) - May 2 Bendigo - May 5
July - August	Mid-program events Melbourne - July 26 Bendigo - August 18
July - August	Speed mentoring events Shepparton - August 9 Mildura - August 23 Albury Wodonga - August 30
October	Final Celebration Mildura - October 5 Melbourne - October 12 Albury Wodonga - October 19 Bendigo - October 24 Shepparton - October 29

Why get involved?

- It will give you the opportunity to further develop your leadership and communication skills
- It will give you an insight into the concerns faced by those about to embark on their careers. This in turn should assist you and your organisation to anticipate and address those issues with new employees
- You may meet a potential employee
- There is an intrinsic satisfaction in knowing that you have assisted a young person at an important stage of their lives
- Many organisations expect their employees to do some form of community service

Guidelines & Expectations

In order to make the mentoring program a success for all, we ask you to endeavour to:

- **participate in an initial meeting and program launch event** at the beginning of the program
- attempt, wherever possible, to meet face-to-face or **have contact with your mentee at least five times during the program**
- arrange, as an alternative to a face-to-face meeting, a **scheduled exchange of emails or a scheduled phone conversation**
- consider contributing to the La Trobe University Student Career Mentoring Group on **LinkedIn**
- **keep appointments** with your mentee wherever possible, rescheduling at least two working days beforehand if a meeting/email/phone conversation can't be kept
- attend the **final celebration event** at the conclusion of the program, and participate in evaluation activities
- **advise the Coordinator Student Career Mentoring Program should any significant problems arise** in your mentoring relationship
- **respect the range of views, experiences and backgrounds of the various participants** in the program and share your own with others wherever possible

Agreements

Agreements for each mentoring partnership will need to be signed by both mentee and mentor and retained by each party for their own reference. Confidentiality clauses may need to be drawn up to protect the works and intellectual property of both parties.

What Career Mentoring is:

Career mentoring is a one-to-one, non judgemental relationship in which an experienced individual voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. The relationship focuses mainly on the mentee's career development. A good career mentoring relationship is professional and equal, recognising that both mentor and mentee can grow from the experience.

Good mentorship is about empowering your mentee to:

- **Become self aware** - evaluating themselves, developing awareness of their personal strengths and weaknesses, their skills, their values, their interpersonal relationships
- **Become self directing** - following their own noses, going where their instinct and intuition take them, choosing the directions they want to take.
- **Develop a sense of their own purpose** - understanding their personal needs, what interests them, what they want, where they are going in life.
- **Experience their own success** - the reward from feedback from accomplishments in which they have shared, to learn from their mistakes and to gain deeper insights into themselves and others through "doing"

(# Source – A Guide for Mentees and Mentors, Women's Leadership and Advancement Scheme, Monash University)

At previous program launch events, mentees and mentors brainstormed their ideas of what career mentoring is:

- Sharing life experiences, skills and knowledge
- Exploring career paths – broadening horizons
- Building relationships
- Personal and professional development for both
- Providing options and guiding towards a successful career path
- Sharing job interview tips
- Learning from mentor's experience & knowledge of world of work
- The development of an understanding of different worlds
- Transition into the workforce – understanding workplace culture

What Career Mentoring is(cont):

- Networking
- An opportunity for the mentee to learn what's available and explore what they're interested in and suited to
- Learning what employers want
- Learning from and sharing with each other
- Encouragement
- A two-way relationship that has benefits for both parties
- Learning what to expect after uni
- How to handle new situations
- How to apply knowledge from uni in the workplace
- An opportunity to think laterally
- Learning how to go about getting a job
- Coaching; career counselling
- Assisting in mentee's decision-making about their future and career planning
- Addressing / clarifying mentee's goals
- Helping mentee identify and address their weaknesses
- Potential for long-term connection
- Providing guidance
- An insight into someone's field
- An opportunity to improve skills
- A relationship with someone who takes an interest in your career
- An opportunity to develop in a supportive environment
- Sharing of broader perspectives than just the course the mentee is taking
- Mutually beneficial
- Providing constructive feedback
- A learning process

What Career Mentoring is NOT

At previous program launch events, mentees and mentors brainstormed their ideas of what career mentoring is not:

- Tutoring
- Asking for a job or work experience
- Mentor making decisions or doing all the work
- To gain permanent residency
- Telling the mentee what they should do
- Completing assignments
- Taking advantage of mentor/mentee
- A social relationship

The role of a mentor may include the following

- actively listening
- providing constructive feedback
- helping the mentee consider options
- referring the mentee to resources
- facilitating decision-making
- sharing your own experiences
- helping identify areas for development
- allowing the mentee an opportunity to practise new skills
- acting as a sounding board
- asking questions that enable further exploration of ideas or that challenge the mentee's thinking
- providing guidance, not direction
- collaborating in problem-solving but not solving the problems for the mentee
- acting as a role model
- supporting the mentee and motivating them to achieve their goals

The rights of a mentor

- To be treated with respect and in a professional manner
- To be informed at least two days before a planned meeting if the mentee is unable to attend
- To be listened to
- To suggest activities for the mentee (e.g. reading, researching information) that is in line with the agreement
- To have your privacy respected

Skills and qualities need by a mentor

- Ability to allow the mentee to guide the process/topics/discussions, and openness to the mentee's wishes and needs (within the framework of the program)
- Ability to provide constructive feedback
- Ability to relate to others
- Confidentiality
- Empathy
- Generosity of spirit, willingness to give time (without monetary payment)
- Non-judgemental; objective
- Positive; encouraging
- Realistic about expectations
- Respectful
- Sensitivity to individual difference
- Strong communication skills including active listening
- Willingness to share; be open

Potential challenges in the mentoring relationship

- Mentee becomes dependant on mentor
- Mentor and mentee don't get on
- The mentee seeks personal advice relating to issues at home, or assistance with academic work*
- Mentor or mentee is too busy to give it the time required
- Mentee or mentor doesn't turn up at the scheduled time
- Mentee is reluctant to talk or engage with you

* *La Trobe University provides a range of support services to students such as Personal Counselling, Language and Academic Skills Units, Chaplaincy, Equality and Diversity and Careers Counselling. If you feel that your mentee requires more in-depth assistance for any personal or academic issues please refer them to the appropriate service (for contact details go to <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/life/support>)*

For further information on how to address these potential challenges or any concerns that you may have about your mentee not working within the Guidelines and Expectations of the program, please contact the Coordinator Student Career Mentoring Program.

Giving effective feedback

Whether it is positive feedback or constructive criticism, giving feedback to your mentee is an important role for the mentor throughout the mentoring relationship.

- Describe the **situation** where the observed behaviour occurred being as specific as possible
- Describe the **behaviour** that you observed, focusing on the behaviour not the individual
- Describe the **impact** of the behaviour on you and / or others that were present

(The Centre for Creative Leadership Situation-Behaviour-Impact Model)

Building the relationship

Your mentee may be a little nervous about commencing communication with you in the first instance. You may therefore find it helpful to initiate the first contact and to drive the first couple of meetings.

The best way to start is by understanding what your mentee wants. They will want you to show empathy, interest and approachability. It is unlikely your career path will match all of their ambitions, but your experience and knowledge will be helpful regardless of the mentee's area of study or career plans.

Forming an agreement on topics for discussion and a schedule of meetings creates a constructive basis for the relationship, and puts emphasis on the commitment of both parties. Equally important is the need to keep to arranged meeting times or contact methods, and to be conscious of the mentee's limited transport, finances and time.

Encourage mutual appreciation. Let the mentee know that you are getting as much out of the session as they are, as this will help to maintain and encourage further open-ended discussion. Look to provide options rather than "the answer". Your role is not to be a parent or to teach, but to expand their horizons, and assist them to consider options they may not be aware of, or feel confident in pursuing.

The first meeting

This is the meeting sets the scene for the remaining meetings. Start by completing or reviewing your Mentoring Agreement. Typical discussion may be about exchanging information about your respective backgrounds and interests. It is also at this meeting that you would discuss each other's expectations from the relationship. If expectations don't match, then negotiate a compromised plan. Ask your mentee to describe in as much detail as possible what their goals are in the mentoring relationship

Maintaining the relationship

Building structure into the relationship, particularly in the early stages, is vital to maintaining the momentum of the mentoring partnership. The structure can be discussed and negotiated explicitly from the outset, or it can be more implicit because at least one member of the pair is driving the process (increasingly the mentee may assume this leadership role, while respecting the needs and time of their mentors). The important principle is that each partner understands and respects what will make the relationship work for both. The level of structure maintained in the relationship will depend on the personal styles of both mentor and mentee, and also on the goals that the mentee wants to achieve.

Activities you can suggest to your mentee

Mentors from our previous programs have utilised some of these activities with their mentee:

Undertake online self assessment:

Suggesting your student carry out an **Online Self-Assessment** is a great way to get them thinking about the skills, interests and abilities they have or need to develop to reach their career goal. Self Assessment tools allow the user to focus on their work values and current skills and interests. A good place to start is the MyFuture website at www.myfuture.edu.au.

Visit the mentor's workplace

- 'shadowing' the mentor
- attending staff meetings
- workplace induction
- work experience*

Attend events and seminars

- industry seminars
- professional association meetings

Practise job search techniques

- arrange an "informational interview" for the mentee with one of your colleagues or networks
- develop a resumé with your help
- have a mock interview
- put together a personal career plan

Research the world of work

- prepare a reading list of careers and industry research and discuss
- put together a career folio with relevant documents, articles, company or industry information
- undertake research and prepare a report on labour market, job prospects, influences etc
- research and identify a list of skills sought by employers and undertake a skills audit

* For information about Voluntary Work Experience and for insurance forms, please go to our website at <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/careers/employers/engage/work-placement-program.html> or for further information contact Val Sandeman, Manager Employer Liaison on (03) 9479 3386.

Further Reading:

If you would like to conduct further research into mentoring or career development practices, skills and techniques, we recommend the following online resources:

Mentoring:

- <http://youthmentoring.org.au/>
- <http://www.adm.monash.edu.au/sss/equity-diversity/wlas/guide-for-mentees-and-mentors.html>
- <http://www.mentoring.org>
- <http://www.mentors.ca>
- <http://www.mentoringgroup.com>

Labour Market:

- www.myfuture.edu.au
- www.jobsearch.gov.au

Graduate Careers:

- www.graduatecareers.com.au
- www.gradsonline.com.au
- <http://www.careerfaqs.com.au/career-paths>

Job search strategies:

- www.graduatecareers.com.au
- www.latrobe.edu.au/careers
- www.seek.com.au

Program Communications

LinkedIn is a professional networking site that enables group conversation and participation between all mentors and mentees. If you are not yet on LinkedIn, please take a few minutes to sign up and to join the La Trobe University Student Career Mentoring Group at

www.linkedin.com

Contact:

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Student Career Mentoring Program

Student Enrichment

La Trobe University

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www.latrobe.edu.au/careers

Action Plan

This form is a sample action plan for the mentor's use when meeting with the mentee. Please use it if you feel it would provide a helpful structure to your meeting.

Meeting date:	
Issues raised by the mentee:	
My suggestions:	
Agreed actions before the next meeting:	
Date of next meeting:	