

Mentoring Resource Guide

UIC Human Resources

Organizational Effectiveness

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Message from the Director of Organizational Effectiveness

The most significant asset of UIC is its people!

Your knowledge, your capability and our combined ability is needed to enhance our world-class university. As a department dedicated to addressing human capital concerns, we have a responsibility to do those things that help you to grow professionally and to achieve your personal and professional best at UIC.

Mentoring is one aspect of a more robust Career Development Model that is encouraged by UIC HR to help you achieve your professional goals.

Mentoring helps to engage and motivate UIC professionals. By mentoring others, we are practicing Stewardship and building a stronger UIC for the future. Using mentoring as a vehicle through which to communicate up, down and across our campus, will help to drive a greater sense of confidence and increased competence in the people working at UIC.

Human Resources is committed to fostering a mentoring culture and building a “learning organization,” through which our people can grow personally and professionally, seek and find job satisfaction, and ultimately, achieve career goals.

Kim Morris Lee

Director of Organizational Effectiveness

What is Mentoring?

Developing effective mentoring relationships is part art, part science. There is not a sure-fire-way to guarantee a successful “mentoring connection.” And, if that weren’t exasperating enough, no two mentoring relationships are alike; so an ideal mentoring model does not exist. But, available tools, techniques, and “best practices” may be referenced as guides.

A bit of creativity and a lot of commitment is needed to develop a mentoring relationship that will meet career and professional development needs.

This Mentoring Resource Guide is designed to provide tips and techniques to set one on the path of developing and maintaining mentoring relationships in support of career and professional goals at UIC. For those already involved in mentoring relationships, this Resource Guide will serve as a refresher to help nurture preexisting relationships. For those seeking a mentoring relationship, this ‘Guide’ may help to develop an appreciation for the mentoring concept and provide a process to create meaningful mentoring relationships.

Mentoring is the partnering of an experienced person with a less-experienced colleague to facilitate personal and professional development for the benefit of the Mentor, the Protégé and an organization. In this ‘Guide,’ mentor is defined as an experienced person or role model, and the protégé as the less-experienced colleague.

A mentor is person-focused, a trusted friend, advisor and teacher. A mentor can enhance a protégé’s career by providing career advice and interpretation of performance feedback; by communicating and discussing organization initiatives and changes; by providing skill development opportunities; and by assisting with integration and expectation setting. Mentors help protégés establish themselves in an organization, “learn the ropes” and prepare for advancement. A mentor also offers support by providing informal counseling and acting as an advocate and role model. Mentors help protégés develop confidence and competence.

The big picture --- Mentors at UIC act as confidants and provide coaching to assist protégés with career and professional development.

What are the Benefits of Mentoring?

Benefits for Mentors

Mentors benefit from the mutual exchange of professional and personal support.

Mentors receive insight into the issues facing other members of the Organization.

Mentors gain the opportunity to share their knowledge and skills in developing others in the Organization.

Mentoring enhances interpersonal and coaching skills that are important leadership success factors.

Benefits for Protégés

Mentoring provides Protégé with enhanced coaching—someone to talk to regarding issues, concerns and developmental objectives.

Mentoring provides Protégé an opportunity to build critical interpersonal skills and it encourages individual career ownership.

Protégés gain a better understanding of what is expected in order to advance (e.g., specific behaviors and skills).

Protégé can gain increased exposure and visibility with executives and organization leaders.

Protégés receive insight into the organization's culture, structure and objectives through their Mentors.

What Should I Look for in a Mentor?

Attributes most often associated with good mentors include:

- High regard and genuine concern for the Protégé
- Desire to see his or her Protégé succeed
- High ethical standards
- Strong communication skills

Protégé's own a significant amount of responsibility in the mentor/protégé relationship. You are ready to assume this responsibility if you are:

- Eager to develop personally and professionally
- Willing to listen and accept coaching points
- Comfortable with open and honest discussion
- Proactive and will actively seek knowledge from a Mentor
- Comfortable sharing your expertise, knowledge and/or experiences with a Mentor

What Role Does a Mentor Play?

A good Mentor will play a variety of roles in the professional life of a protégé. For example:

Career Counselor

As career counselors, a Mentor can work with a Protégé to understand career-related skills, interests and values. They provide information about Organization protocol and relate personal experiences (successes and failures) to help their Protégé evaluate appropriate career options. Mentors may also help their Protégé to plan strategies to achieve their career goals. Mentors can provide a safe forum for the discussion of any difficulties with current assignments and should be able to introduce their Protégé to other individuals who may be able to help resolve problems. Mentors can provide long and short-term career advice, help to confirm expectations and goals are realistic and provide a perspective on performance feedback.

Agent

As agents, Mentors represent their Protégé. This may involve being an advocate – intervening on the protégé's behalf and representing his/her concerns on specific issues. In some situations Mentors should link their Protégé with other individuals who may be able to better assist them in resolving issues either because of their position, expertise or experience. Agents may help a Protégé network.

Coach

Mentors may help protégé clarify goals and expectations for their professional development. As coaches, they share their insights and recollections of how they have set and achieved their goals and expectations and continue to do so. They may also clarify and communicate organizational objectives and goals. Coaches can help the Protégé integrate into new organization sub-cultures. Coaches can communicate timely information on new initiatives and suggest training to improve skills.

What Does a Mentor Do?

Within the various roles a Mentor fills there are many functions that a Mentor might perform. These functions range from giving long-term career advice to managing expectations about short-term professional assignments.

Communication

In an organization as large as UIC, frequent and consistent communication is especially critical to be successful. Mentors should serve as two-way, confidential communication vehicles for the exchange of information.

Long-Term Career Advice

A Mentor can provide guidance and direction to help a Protégé define and achieve long-term career goals. A Mentor can help a Protégé identify skill gaps and identify ways to close those gaps. A Mentor can also help a Protégé define career goals and identify skills and experiences needed to achieve those goals. A Mentor should also help his/her Protégé evaluate various alternatives for achieving long-term success and career satisfaction.

Short-Term Career Advice

A Mentor can provide constructive help and advice to a Protégé on how to maximize the experience gained on various work related assignments. A Mentor provides a risk-free forum and an open ear for the Protégé's concerns about managing career difficulties and navigating the organization's protocol.

Role Model

Mentors serve as role models, demonstrating successful professional behaviors. As a role model, a Mentor is conscious of how his/her actions set an example for her/his Protégé, thereby influencing the Protégé's performance, behaviors and ambitions. Being a role model includes demonstrating leadership behaviors, embodying UIC's Core Values, following university and college/unit policies, adhering to ethical standards and demonstrating a commitment to UIC's success, as well as the Protégé's success.

Expectation and Goal Setting

An important aspect of professional development is being aware of what lies ahead on each step of the career journey. A Mentor is an excellent source for expectation setting because they often have been through similar experiences themselves. It is important for Mentors to share insights and recollections of how experiences have affected them both professionally and personally.

It is also important for Mentors to realize that Organization policies and procedures have changed over time. Mentors should put themselves in the place of the Protégé and set expectations according to the current environment.

Integration

New employees at UIC often need the help of senior employees to understand the UIC culture. A Mentor can assist in this process by providing a Protégé with information about UIC vocabulary, protocol, tools, processes and structures. This information is particularly helpful in the first few months after an individual has joined UIC.

Discussion on Performance Feedback

When a Protégé receives performance feedback from a supervisor, a Mentor can try to help determine how to resolve performance issues or close performance gaps. A Mentor's role in helping a Protégé understand and act on performance feedback is not a substitute for a supervisor's responsibility for delivering direct and candid performance feedback. Performance feedback is a critical dimension of the Career Development Model and should receive significant thought and attention from managers/supervisors. As a Mentor, one can help to interpret performance reviews and develop action plans based on feedback data.

Networking

To help a Protégé develop a sense of belonging within the Organization, a Mentor may introduce a Protégé to other people at UIC and other UI campuses. A Mentor may also be able to advise his/her Protégé regarding the Protégé's involvement or potential involvement in university sponsored initiatives or special programs. Mentors can also be a good resource for identifying appropriate external organizations to further develop the Protégé's skills.

How Can I Get a Mentor?

If you don't already have a Mentor or you feel you need additional Mentors, here are some tips on how to get a mentoring relationship started.

- Make a mental list of the people you know and respect as a starting point to determine who might be a potential Mentor. Include people you view as role models.
- Be proactive. Make contact with one or two people at the top of your list. If you do not have regular contact with these people, consider a social situation such as lunch to help break the ice.
- Get your peers involved if you can't readily identify Mentor candidates. Ask your peers who they trust and respect most deeply and why.
- Talk to your college/unit Human Resources Representative or contact UIC HR to request help to identify potential Mentor candidates.
- Volunteer for an internal initiative or community service project that offers exposure to new people. Someone in or out of your college/unit might take an interest in your work or ideas and initiate a relationship. Likewise, you might want to approach someone you notice.
- Present yourself professionally at meetings. Demonstrate competence and understanding of your role. Ask proactive questions. Offer helpful information. Volunteer to make presentations. Someone may notice you and take an interest in you and your career.

How Can I Get a Protégé?

We should all consider mentoring a fundamental part of our own professional development. As soon as we earn supervisory and management responsibilities, we must also develop skill in developing the careers of others. Here are some tips on how to initiate mentoring relationships where you are the Mentor.

- Use a direct approach. If there is someone that you would like to Mentor, tell that person.
- Express your interest in having a Protégé to others. Someone may suggest a potential Protégé.
- Extend yourself by creating opportunities to get to know a potential Protégé. Invite him or her to lunch to learn about what you can offer each other.
- Create an environment that makes the potential Protégé want to learn from you and makes him or her want to be part of your network.
- Praise, encourage and challenge potential Protégé.
- Initiate relationships based on both common and unique interests. Someone does not have to be your mirror image in order to be a potential Protégé.
- Help new hires get settled in the office and make them feel welcome. When they are more acclimated, they will remember your initial friendliness and may seek you out for a more defined relationship.
- Look beyond new hires and junior staff. Maintain positive relationships with experienced staff and executives. We all need Mentors throughout the life of our careers.

What are Proven Mentoring Behaviors?

Building Trust

The ability to build trust is an essential mentoring skill. It affects how much learning and development will take place during the course of the mentoring relationship. The relationship between trust and learning is captured below in a series of basic formulas:

No Trust	+	No Feedback	=	Minimal or no learning occurs
No Trust	+	Feedback	=	Compliance, but minimal learning
Trust	+	No Feedback	=	Identification with the Mentor, but minimal learning
Trust	+	Feedback	=	Maximum learning and maximum development

Trust is the cornerstone of any good interpersonal relationship. Mentoring is an interpersonal relationship that requires a high degree of trust given the sometimes personal nature of giving and receiving feedback. Generally speaking, there are four types of trust to be aware of:

Contractual Trust: The relationship is marked by a certain amount of predictability and order. For example, the Mentor and Protégé have a standing monthly breakfast meeting to touch base and catch up. The distinguishing characteristic of contractual trust is commitments are made and are consistently honored.

Self-Disclosure Trust: The relationship is marked by a high degree of self-disclosure by both the Mentor and the Protégé. For example, a Protégé shares with his or her Mentor an issue of poor performance. Instead of moving directly to “a solution,” the Mentor recounts a similar experience. Both the Mentor and the Protégé make deposits into each other’s emotional bank account by sharing experiences and feelings.

Competency Trust: The relationship is marked by demonstrated skill. For example, a Mentor has a need for someone with Spanish-speaking skills. He or she recalls that one of their Protégé has said he/she is fluent in Spanish. The Protégé is able to help the Mentor. This type of trust, at its heart, means people can depend on each other to have the required skills.

Trust of Intentions: In this relationship, both the Mentor and the Protégé operate with each other’s best interest at heart.

The purpose of sharing information about “trust” is not to communicate that trust can be broken down into four mutually exclusive categories. This information is shared simply to highlight “trust” as an important element of the mentor/protégé relationship

In a mentoring relationship, one earns TRUST by:

- Sharing goals and objectives
- Doing what one says will be done
- Listening and acting on suggestions where appropriate
- Acknowledging when good ideas and opinions are offered and goals are achieved
- Being open – sharing feelings and thoughts honestly.

Listening

Listening is the premier mentoring skill. When someone has a problem, providing a respectful, listening ear and serving as a sounding board may be all that is needed to help him/her work through the problem. Active listening means hearing what the speaker is saying without inserting personal opinions. By actively listening to the speaker, a mentor helps the protégé take ownership of the problem. By allowing the protégé to think out loud, the mentor may allow him/her to discover the solution on his/her own.

Providing Feedback

When a protégé shares a difficult situation with a mentor, his/her explanation will contain both facts and feelings. Listen closely to distinguish between the two and acknowledge both. This helps the protégé feel that he/she is not alone with the problem. By articulating feelings, he/she can move on to exploring options and working on a solution. After the protégé has worked through their feelings and is at the point of exploring options, he/she may then be ready for the mentor to share information about personal insights.

What are Some Common Protégé Profiles?

Personality Profile: Defensive

Communication challenges:

- Difficult to get to the real issues with this individual
- He or she might not readily admit mistakes or take responsibility for the outcomes of his or her behavior
- He or she will typically disagree strongly
- It might be uncomfortable for you to confront this person
- You might be tempted to be equally defensive and not focus on being fair

Possible Approaches:

- Emphasize that you are trying to help
- Talk very specifically and provide examples
- Ask the person to explain how they perceive the issues and solicit suggestions and how the issues might be resolved
- Empathize, but do not retract if your case is clear
- Shift the context from short-term to long-term implications
- Define the criteria against which you are providing feedback and/or defining success
- Address issues sooner than later. The longer you wait, the more difficult it becomes to get to resolution
- Check and cross check for understanding

Personality Profile: Not Challenged

Communication Challenges:

- General dissatisfaction with current role
- “Ideal job” not available-no vacancy and the individual is in a holding pattern

Possible Approaches:

- Suggest possible “stretch” assignments in current role
- Encourage the recipient to take an active role in cross-college/unit committees as appropriate
- Emphasize (internal and external) training and development opportunities

Personality Profile: Task-Oriented

Communication Challenges:

- Does not see or is not motivated by “the big picture”
- Might view coaching as “Tell me what you want me to do” versus “What goal are we jointly trying to achieve”

Possible Approaches:

- Position yourself and the recipient as a team trying to achieve a goal
- Communicate “the big picture” and why it is important to the individual and the individual’s performance

Personality Profile: Experienced Hires

Communication Challenges:

- Different experience base, particularly if the individual is new to a university work environment
- More often than not, will have the responsibility of retelling his or her prior experience in terms UIC employees may understand

Possible Approaches:

- Help the Experienced Hire define personal expectations and expectations at UIC
- Allow for an appropriate adjustment period and provide support
- Solicit opinions and involvement from our Experienced Hires and draw upon their prior experience and expertise
- Acknowledge that the ‘UIC way’ is not the only way
- Be ‘teachable’ and make it easy for the experienced hire to be ‘teachable’

Personality Profile: Personal Expectations Not Met - Career Dissatisfaction

Communication Challenges:

- Hard to get to real issue (e.g., not being promoted versus not being recognized in general)
- Tough peer group competition

Possible Approaches:

- Focus on building trust at the onset of the relationship. This type of profile requires a lot of potential difficult coaching moments
- Help the recipient define his or her expectations clearly
- Help the recipient create a career management plan

How Should Difficult Protégé Situations be Addressed?

At some point, mentors may need to confront the behavior or plans of Protégés. It is extremely important to avoid criticism that may result in resistance or bruise his/her self-esteem. Communication experts recommend using “I” message confrontation as the most effective way to bring about beneficial change. This approach is effective because it allows your protégé to make his/her decision based on additional information.

The “I” approach is made up of three parts:

- Start with a neutral description of what you perceive are your protégé’s intentions
- Indicate the possible negative consequences that you anticipate as a result of those intentions
- Note the feelings or emotions you are experiencing about the protégé’s plan of action

Scenario:

Your Protégé has stated that he/she has plans to “have it out” with a manager who has been giving him/her a hard time.

An “I” confrontation response would sound like this:

“I’m concerned that you are going to have a major confrontation with Matt and that this will result in a serious disruption to your working relationship and could be damaging to your career.”

How Can I Improve Mentor Effectiveness?

Do's

- Build trust and openness To accelerate development of a positive relationship
- Share weaknesses (e.g., take initiative to share successes, failures, lessons learned)
- Do not advertise how busy I am when trying to establish an open door policy
- Send a brief message between meetings to stay in touch
- Prepare well, but be flexible (e.g., review notes, prepare objectives and questions)
- Have an overall plan with room for flexibility; tailor to individuals' needs
- Discuss goals and expectations up-front in the mentoring relationship and revisit periodically
- Define how often, how long, and why you will meet
- Get meetings on your calendar early and keep them, if you must cancel, reschedule as soon as possible
- Make your role as a Mentor a high priority
- Be positive and honest with your Protégé
- Share your experiences - personal scenarios offer valuable, often unforgettable insight
- Be receptive to approaches from the Protégé, giving advice and assistance when required
- Ask questions that make your Protégé think - questions that ask for evaluation and reflection
- Respect confidentiality at the outset, identify “ground rules” for confidentiality with your Protégé
- Network with other Mentors for ideas and support
- Support and praise your Protégé

Don'ts

- Don't be afraid to say “I don't know, but I'll follow up and get back to you”
- Don't forget to follow up on outstanding issues

How Can I Improve Protégé Effectiveness?

Do's

- Understand the significance of the mentoring relationship. It is a two-way exchange and a powerful “grooming” experience. You, too, must be willing to give information and support
- Confide in your Mentor. Be honest, open and sincere with your concerns
- When you ask your Mentor for help, be sure to tell your Mentor what you want him/her to do (e.g., listen, pose questions to help you clarify your own thinking, offer advice, teach a new skill, help solve a problem)
- Develop action plans based on your Mentors feedback
- Serve as a sounding board for your Mentor's ideas. Listen for how you might help bring his/her ideas into fruition
- Show pride in your Mentor/ Protégé relationship. Talk about your Mentor's accomplishments and how he/she has helped you
- Serve as an ally to your Mentor by showing interest in his/her engagements, ideas, thoughts and abilities
- Give your Mentor feedback on how you perceive the relationship to be working
- Be respectful of your Mentor's time. Make and keep appointments. Be prepared for discussions
- Learn from your Mentor's failures and successes.
- Take an active role in the mentoring process. Feel comfortable approaching your Mentor for counsel before an issue is full blown

Don'ts

- Don't try to imitate your Mentor. Know yourself
- Don't rely on your Mentor to make decisions on your behalf. Ask for advice, but make your own decisions
- Don't reveal sensitive/confidential information that your Mentor may share with you. Use discretion
- Don't overlook your Mentor's value. Give credit to your Mentor

What do Mentors and Protégés Talk About?

A key ingredient of any successful relationship is good rapport. There is no formula for building good rapport. You should, however, particularly at the beginning, come to meetings with your Mentor prepared with discussion topics and/or questions. Consider the following topics and questions:

Getting Acquainted

What are some of the tasks and responsibilities for which you are responsible and/or involved in your current role?

How did you get where you are currently? What have been your struggles and achievements along the way? What are some of your professional needs and goals?

How long have you been in your current role?

Work/Life Balance

How do you maintain balance in your life? What tips and/or resources can you share?

How do you integrate community work, exercise, hobbies/interests, family and friends with work demands?

Building Professional Relationships

What can I do to improve my relationship with my supervisor/manager? My peers?

How do you suggest I network within UIC across UI campuses to develop contacts? How do I cultivate professional relationships?

What skills are critical to effectively communicate with people across levels at UIC? How can I gain credibility in their eyes?

Can you help me create opportunities/platforms to showcase my skills to others at UIC?

Career Development

What are the most valuable lessons you've learned during your career? How might I apply them to my career?

What do you see as my strengths? Weaknesses? Developmental areas? How might I capitalize on my strengths and improve my weaknesses?

What tips do you have to enhance my professional style?

What are your time management tips and tips to be better organized?

What are some of the less obvious skills I can develop in my current role?

Goal Achievement

How do I go about setting goals?

What do you think are realistic and achievable goals for me in the short-term? Long-term?

Considering my goals, what can I do to expand my skill base?

How do I link performance feedback to my long-term career goals?

What action steps do you suggest I take to obtain my goals?

Mentoring Resources

Books:

Bell, Chip R., Managers as Mentors: Building Partnerships for Learning. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1998.

Brockbank, Anne and McGill, Ian. Facilitating Reflective Learning Through Mentoring and Coaching. Kogan Page, 2006.

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Stone, Florence. Coaching, Counseling & Mentoring: How to Choose and Use the Right Technique to Boost Employee Performance. 2nd ed. AMACOM, 2007.

Stone, Florence. The Mentoring Advantage: Creating the Next Generation of Leaders. Kaplan Publishing, 2004.

Videos:

Insight to Better Mentoring

http://www.media-partners.com/leadership/insights_to_better_mentoring.htm

Leading By Example

<http://www.crmlearning.com/leading-by-example>

The Leader as Mentor

<http://www.videos4training.com/mentoring-training-videos.html>