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CCAPS Mentor Program Handbook

2023-2024

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
About the CCAPS Mentor Program	2
Introduction	2
Purpose of This Handbook	2
The Matching Process	2
Collegiate Values	2
Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	2
Program Timeline & Important Dates	3
Abbreviations & Terminology	3
Mentoring Program Details	4
Mentoring - What Is It?	4
Mentee Benefits	4
Mentor Benefits	4
Mentee Expectations	5
Mentor Expectations	5
Mentoring Do's & Don'ts	6
Managing the Mentor Relationship	7
Relationship Expectations	7
Time Commitment	7
Best Practices	7
Goal Setting	7
Suggested Activities & Topics	9
First Meeting: Getting Acquainted	9
Discussion Topics	9
Networking Opportunities (Yes, Even Virtually!)	9
Professional Skill-Building	10
Resources	10
Articles	10
College & University Specific	10
Frequently Asked Questions	11
Contact Information	12

About the CCAPS Mentor Program

Introduction

The [CCAPS Mentor Program](#) connects College of Continuing and Professional Studies (CCAPS) students to alumni and industry professionals for 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 leaders can be rewarding and impactful. The program formally runs from October through April of each academic year.

Purpose of This Handbook

This handbook provides an overview on how to approach your participation in the CCAPS Mentor Program. It is a resource for helping mentors and mentees get started in the program. We recommend you review it before your first meeting with your mentoring partner and revisit it as often as you wish. We hope it can help you navigate the mentoring relationship.

The Matching Process

To allow for a close working relationship, most mentoring relationships will consist of one mentor and one mentee. During the application process, mentees indicate a commitment to initiating, developing, and maintaining a mentoring relationship. When making matches based on the available pool of mentors and mentees, the matching staff 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 CCAPS Mentor Program have a passion for their industry and developing professionals, and this alone is enough of a similar interest to build a mentoring relationship.

The 2023-2024 CCAPS Mentor Program offers the flexibility of in-person or virtual meetings. No in-person meetings are expected or required, and all orientations and the kickoff will be offered virtually. During the application process, you will be able to indicate your preference for meeting in person, hybrid, or virtual only (as well as if you are based in/outside of the Twin Cities). We will do our best to match you with your preferences, but all are expected to conduct virtual meetings if in-person cannot take place.

Collegiate Values

CCAPS aims to inspire and serve an expanding population of learners in all stages of life. Our five [collegiate values](#) are Access, Learning, Inclusivity, Collaboration, and Excellence.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

The CCAPS Mentor Program is committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive environment that recognizes and celebrates differences. No matter what type of work or learning space - on campus, online, and in the community - we are committed to overcoming systemic barriers and implicit biases to ensure that everyone here has the opportunity to thrive. At CCAPS, we are guided by our [five collegiate values](#). Our mentor 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 in this handbook, in the [Resources](#) section of the Maroon and Gold Network, or contact the CCAPS Mentor Program Staff at ccapsmentor@umn.edu or 612-625-2910.

Program Timeline & Important Dates

Mentor Recruitment	August 1 – September 15
Mentee Application Open	September 5 – September 15
Mentee Canvas Orientation	Complete by September 24
Mentees Favorite Mentors	September 15 – September 29
Match Notification	By October 13
Mentor Orientation	October 16 , 17 , or 25
CCAPS Mentor Kickoff (in person)	November 8
Mentor Meet Ups	November 16, January 18, February 15, March 14
Submit Mentorship Agreement & Goals	November 17
Mid-Year Check In with Program Staff	January/February
UMAA Mentor Appreciation Dinner	April 11
Program Wraps Up/Evaluation	April 30

For additional details please refer to the [Maroon & Gold Network](#).

Abbreviations & Terminology

- **CCAPS**, College of Continuing and Professional Studies
- **UMAA**, University of Minnesota Alumni Association
- **Mentee**, CCAPS student participating in the program
- **Mentor**, CCAPS alumni & friends participating in the program
- **Maroon and Gold Network**, online virtual mentor platform

Mentoring Program Details

It's important to understand the fundamentals of the mentoring relationship.

Mentoring - What Is It?

Mentoring is a relationship focused on an individual's overall career goals and aspirations. Mentoring provides a knowledge-sharing opportunity. The relationship is mutually beneficial and requires a commitment from the mentor and mentee. Participating in a mentorship improves communication skills, increases networking opportunities, and strengthens professional skills. A good mentoring relationship provides honest and specific feedback and a route to growth.

Mentoring can't replace formal training, but it can enhance it. Mentoring does not assure a job, internship, or job recommendation. The mentoring relationship is not a counseling relationship - it's best to seek help on personal issues from a mental health professional. Although mentoring is worthwhile, it's not effortless - it requires time and attention.

Mentee Benefits

- Deepen your knowledge of a specific industry, employer, organizational culture, and/or job function.
- Partner with a real world professional, who offers insights, explores paths, and helps you achieve your goals.
- Improve your job search and networking skills.
- Expand your existing network.
- Gain a sense of belonging and purpose.

Mentor Benefits

- Share knowledge about your education, career path, successes and failures, and what your experiences have taught you.
- Gain experience in coaching and fostering the talent of current CCAPS students.
- Cultivate a stronger connection with CCAPS & the U.
- Deepen your knowledge of the CCAPS student body and campus community.
- Network with other participants.
- Reignite your enthusiasm for your work.

Mentee Expectations

- Initiate regular contact with your mentor via phone, email, and/or meetings.
- Be proactive and willing to meet your mentor at least once a month and see the relationship through to its official end (October - April).
- Discuss your goals, needs, and what you hope to gain from the relationship with your mentor.
- Participate in self-reflection, self-development, and receive feedback.
- Act professionally at all times, and return phone calls/emails promptly.
- Understand that the mentor program is NOT a job placement program.
- Notify the mentor program staff if circumstances require you to stop participating in the mentorship program or if there is a concern with the mentoring relationship.

Mentor Expectations

- 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.
- Demonstrate [CCAPS values](#) of Access, Learning, Inclusivity, Collaboration, and Excellence.
- Be familiar with the [University of Minnesota Student Development Outcomes](#).
- Contact CCAPS Mentor Program staff if there is any concern with the mentoring relationship.

Mentoring Do's & Don'ts

For the best results, follow these Mentorship Do's and Don'ts. And remember, you should always contact the mentor program staff if the relationship is not going well.

Do:

- Communicate* - Begin your relationship with a constructive conversation. Be open to ideas and discussion topics. Listen. Ask before making suggestions and giving feedback. Be receptive to constructive feedback and advice. Be explicit about your own needs, limits, and time constraints. Provide feedback on job search tactics, networking, and success strategies.
- Prepare* - Use the [CCAPS Mentorship Agreement & Goals](#) to set specific goals. Plan agendas for monthly meetings/contacts. Plan for the end of the mentoring relationship. Honor your commitments. Remember personal safety.
- Encourage* - Set high reachable expectations. Be motivated to take the time for self-directed reflection, analysis and problem-solving. Encourage your mentee to take initiative with the mentoring relationship. Show appreciation for your mentor's time.

Don't:

- Assume* - Make assumptions that your advice will be followed or that your mentee doesn't need encouragement or reinforcement. Assume responsibility for the mentee's academic or career success. Assume your mentor has unlimited time for you. Expect your mentee to aspire to the job or career path that you've taken.
- Overreach* - Offer "personal" counseling or life coaching unrelated to professional or personal development. Ask your mentor for a job, internship, or job reference. Share mentor contact information without their permission.
- Underachieve* - Neglect agreed commitments without explanation. Take your role lightly. Be defensive when receiving feedback. Simply provide solutions, instead of teaching your mentee to resolve issues. Act like you know more than you do. Avoid discussing "touchy" or taboo subjects (check out: z.umn.edu/convos). End the relationship prematurely.

Managing the Mentor Relationship

Relationship Expectations

During your first meeting, it is suggested that you clearly define the relationship to meet the needs of both your mentee and yourself. Use the [CCAPS Mentorship Agreement & Goals](#) 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. How often will you meet? How will you meet? How will you set up your meetings? When using email, what is the appropriate “turn-around time” for responding? Establishing basic ground rules will clear the way for focusing on discussion and exchanging ideas and advice.

Time Commitment

Mentor-mentee pairs are encouraged to have one quality monthly interaction for at least one hour from October through April. For most mentor pairs, a successful relationship is developed through these regular meetings and conversations. However, the pair should determine the commitment and is subject to the pair’s scheduling needs.

Best Practices

- Pick your preferred mode of communication (email, text, phone).
- Set specific times to connect (remember time zone difference if applicable).
- Collaborate on a project using internet collaboration tools such as Google Drive.
- Attend professional development opportunities together (such as webinars by CCAPS, University of Minnesota Alumni Association, or other reputable resources).
- Connect mentee with colleagues in your professional network to help them expand their network, practice informational interviews, and learn about potential career paths.

Goal Setting

It’s important for you to establish goals for the relationship and decide how you will achieve those goals. Use the SMART model and make your goals:

- **Specific** - The goal should be clear and directly related to your desired end objective. The goal should contain as much information as is relevant (the who, what, why, and how).
- **Measurable** - You should be able to objectively tell whether the goal has been achieved. A measurable goal might be to meet five times over the course of the mentorship.
- **Achievable** - There is a realistic chance of achieving the goal.
- **Relevant** - Goals need to be reasonable and related to a person’s skills, experience, role, and ambition.
- **Timely** - Set a designated time limit for your goal and try to stick to it.

When creating a SMART goal consider the following questions:

- Why is this goal important to your future development?
- Is this the goal you should be working towards right now?
- Is the time frame we have set realistic for accomplishing your goal?
- What processes can we put in place that would help us stay on track?

Ensure a Successful Mentorship

Participating in a mentoring relationship can lead to phenomenal opportunities, but it does present some challenges. Here are some tips for making the most of your mentorship.

- During your first meeting, discuss expectations up front and complete the [CCAPS Mentoring Agreement & Goals](#).
- Make the experience personal.
 - If you cannot meet in person, use video chat to make your conversations feel less virtual and more “real” and show that you genuinely invest the time to get to know one another.
- Switch it up.
 - Diversify your activities or conversation topics. If you have a great conversation over video chat one month, maybe the next month you can focus on reviewing resumes or a class project. Mentees can send materials over email and the mentor can offer feedback by marking up the documents themselves or discussing them over Zoom.
 - Job and internship screening interviews often take place via video conference or phone: mentors can offer great practice interview opportunities.
 - Attend an in-person event or webinar offered by CCAPS, University of Minnesota Alumni Association, or other reputable resources and discuss it together.
- Avoid multitasking.
 - When on the phone, FaceTime, Zoom, or Skype, give the conversation your full attention. Avoid interruptions and listen actively. Let your mentor or mentee know in advance if you are taking notes or may be interrupted by a meeting or phone call.
- Be spontaneous.
 - Between your scheduled check-ins, allow yourself the time to send a quick email or make a phone call to share news, ask a question, or send a thank-you or hello. Spontaneous contact helps build rapport. However, mentees should not be sending quick emails to get your help on something they could easily solve themselves.
- Set a topic of discussion or short agenda in advance.
 - Deciding on a topic or agenda ahead of time will ensure you are making the most of your time together. Plan to each read a short article to discuss and share your thoughts at the beginning of a meeting as a way to break the ice and get the conversation flowing.

Suggested Activities & Topics

As you progress through the year, you'll want to include various activities and topics in your meetings.

First Meeting: Getting Acquainted

- Use the [CCAPS Mentorship Agreement & Goals](#) to develop goals and set expectations for the mentoring relationship together. This includes how often you will meet, what you both hope to get out of the relationship and how to contact each other.
- Share your story and background.
- Discover common interests.
- Learn about your mentee's career goals and interests.
- Establish a schedule for future meetings and discuss preferences for communication in-between such as phone, email, Skype/Zoom.
- Schedule your next meeting!

Discussion Topics

- Talk about the mentee'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 training and skill development that would be helpful.
- Talk about the transition from school to work or from one industry to another.
- Discuss professional standards and workplace etiquette.
- Discuss salary and/or severance negotiation.
- Share the advantages of informational interviews and how to appropriately reach out to professionals to ask for an informational interview.

Networking Opportunities (Yes, Even Virtually!)

- Attend an online/virtual conference, professional association meeting, or an industry presentation together.
- Help arrange informational interviews via Skype/Zoom with your colleagues or network.
- Attend a virtual lecture or event, such as a U of M lecture.
- Connect with fellow CCAPS Mentor Program participants through the Maroon & Gold platform and plan a virtual meeting to practice networking.
- Connect mentee with professional colleagues to expand their network and explore careers.
- Tour the mentor's organization.

Professional Skill-Building

- Conduct an informational interview and/or a practice interview.
- Provide feedback on a resume or cover letter, or review your LinkedIn profiles together.
- Practice professional etiquette for an interview, business lunch, or networking opportunity.
- Participate in a webinar and have a discussion - free webinars and recordings are available through the [University of Minnesota Alumni Association \(UMAA\)](#) and [CCAPS](#).
- Create a list of potential professional organizations to join. Discuss the pros and cons.
- Search the internet together for job resources and other information related to your field.
- Review a class project or assignment and discuss applying the content or skills to the workplace.
- Review presentation and public speaking techniques.
- Discuss industry-relevant books, web resources, articles, or other resources. Resources may include career development, especially ones that focus on skills you want to develop (such as cross-cultural communication, conflict resolution, creativity, organization, etc.).

Resources

Articles

- [How to be a great Mentee](#)
- [How to be a great Mentor](#)
- [Matched? Here's what to do before you meet](#)
- [Structure, Goals, and Agendas](#)

College & University Specific

- [Boynton Health](#)
- [Career & Internship Services](#)
- [CCAPS & University Student Resources](#)
- [CCAPS Mentor Program on the Maroon and Gold Network](#)
- [CCAPS Mentor Program Website](#)
- [Student Counseling Services](#)
- [Gold Mind](#), a collection of University faculty and expert talks
- [Mentor Connect](#), connect with other mentors across campus to share ideas, troubleshoot issues, and learn from one another.
- [University of Minnesota Alumni Association \(UMAA\)](#)
- [University of Minnesota Events](#)
- [University of Minnesota Office for Equity and Diversity](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Maroon & Gold Network?

The Maroon & Gold Network is the online virtual mentor platform hosted by the University of Minnesota Alumni Association. This platform hosts the CCAPS Mentor Program and our application process. This FAQ is designed to help you navigate our registration process on the Maroon and Gold Network: z.umn.edu/mentorFAQ.

I haven't heard from my mentee/mentor. 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 at least twice to connect with your mentee/mentor and they haven't responded, please reach out to us at ccapsmentor@umn.edu.

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

The CCAPS staff does their best to make appropriate matches based on interests, experiences, and preferences indicated on the applications. All individuals in the Mentor Program have a passion for their industry and developing professionals, and this passion is a strong basis for building a mentoring relationship. We encourage matches to go in with an open mind and discover common interests.

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

If you're unable or uncomfortable having a conversation with your mentee/mentor about the situation, please reach out at ccapsmentor@umn.edu or 612-625-2910 to discuss the situation.

Where can I find more resources on resume and cover letter writing, networking, informational interviews, etc.?

You can find great resources on the Career & Internship Services website - careerhelp.umn.edu. Feel free to contact the office for additional information. CCAPS Mentor Program staff would be glad to connect you with these resources as well.

How can mentors help expand the mentee's professional networks?

Mentors can introduce their mentee to colleagues and provide the colleagues' contact information so the mentee can follow up and set up an informational interview with them. Mentors can also invite mentees to attend (and perhaps volunteer) at virtual conferences, professional association meetings, or trainings. Please be mindful of potential activities that may be cost-prohibitive to mentees.

Does the mentee expect to get a job or internship from this experience?

There is NO expectation that internships or employment will result from this experience. However, mentors may share job/internship postings with their mentee matches, and support them with constructive feedback as they apply for opportunities.

Contact Information

612-625-2910

ccapsmentor@umn.edu

Please utilize this general email to ensure the quickest response.

CCAPS Mentor Program Staff

- [Aislinn Hernandez](#), Manager of Alumni Engagement and Annual Giving
- [Courtney Barrette](#), Director of Engagement & External Relations
- [Alissa Bigelow](#), Senior Academic Advisor - Health Services Management
- [Lisa Garrett](#), Senior Academic Advisor - Multidisciplinary Studies