



BLOCH

MENTORING PROGRAM

MENTOR HANDBOOK

UMKC

BLOCH

Career Center

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Bloch Mentoring Program is designed to bring together students and professionals that share common professional interests. This mentoring relationship will enable business students to be better supported as they explore varied career opportunities and assist them as they navigate those early years of professional life. Overall, an effective mentorship can provide career assistance to mentees by enhancing a sense of professional competence and career identity.

TIMELINE

Mentors can join the program at any time, and matching rounds are at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. After submitting information about their career interests through our online mentoring community, professionals will be ready to be matched with a student. A matching survey will be sent to all mentors prior to each matching round. The program coordinator will send formal email introductions to each pair, and provide conversation starters, guidelines and topics throughout the mentoring process. Each pair will be matched up for four months.

After the mentoring relationship, the program coordinator will conduct follow-up emails and send online evaluation surveys to program participants. The results of the evaluation survey will be used to assess and improve the mentoring program. We welcome any feedback and comments regarding the program.

ELIGIBILITY

This program is open to any UMKC alumni, as well as any other professionals that are looking for an opportunity to connect with UMKC Bloch and provide assistance to our students. We accept mentors from all levels of career, no matter the levels or years of experience. Our program also welcomes mentors who are located not only in the local Kansas City area, but from across the nation and even abroad! E-mentoring over email, phone, the Roo Network, video chat, text message, or social media is very common, and welcomed!

BENEFITS OF BEING A MENTOR

The potential benefits for a professional involved in a mentoring relationship can often be immeasurable. The opportunity to provide professional insights via a formal and organized structure is valuable, but mentors may also be surprised to learn of the potential for personal development as well. Strong mentoring relationships can offer many benefits and below is a list of just a few of the ways mentors can impact a student. ***Research has found that mentoring relationships can be significant factors in positive career development and satisfaction, and are key to exploring career opportunities.***

- Share personal and professional best practices
- Build your professional network
- Contribute to your profession by helping to develop future leaders
- Develop leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills
- Grow and learn from the experience by sharing your insight with a committed mentee
- Stay connected to alma mater and “give back” to UMKC
- Acquire mutual feelings of respect and professional validation
- Learn from future generations
- Identify a potential future employee pipeline

Mentors can also use this mentorship experience as an opportunity to re-enforce professional connections with their network, and evaluate their own professional development.



MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

Responsibilities:

As a mentor, you are a valuable resource to your mentee and can inspire and facilitate career and personal achievements. The developmental transitions students face in each of these areas are enriched by your experience, wisdom, and guidance. Responsibilities of a mentor can include:

- Providing career direction and insight to students
- Acting as a professional resource to students
- Facilitating networking by introducing your mentee to professional contacts
- Sharing knowledge and experiences
- Serving as a coach and advocate for the mentee
- Being a positive role model

General Expectations:

Most of these students have never had a mentor before and therefore may not fully understand how to appropriately interact with you. By listening actively and asking the right questions, you may help alleviate much of their anxiety as well as establish rapport with your mentee. Feel free to coach the student when you see areas that need improvement. Many mentees are young and may not have had many professional experiences. Furthermore, mentors can provide valuable advice on the importance of professionalism, networking, and being active in career development; while higher education administrators work diligently to promote these themes to students, it means more and will be more powerful coming from a mentor!

This mentoring opportunity will ultimately only be as beneficial as you and your mentee want it to be. Be honest with your mentee and help them be an active participant in the relationship. You should be asking them questions, soliciting their feedback, challenging them while supporting them, and having an impact on your mentee as much as he or she may be impacting you. This is not just a chance to better your mentee, but also a chance to develop a new friendship, learn from them, and have some fun! By staying flexible and open to new things, you can be ready for whatever your mentorship may bring.

MENTOR DO'S AND DON'TS

WHAT SHOULD A MENTOR DO?

A mentor is someone who can draw on their own experiences to guide others and act as a trusted confidante over a flexible period of time. You're more than a coach. A true mentorship is a mutually beneficial learning experience where the mentor shares their personal knowledge and experiences to promote self-discovery.

A mentor should:

- Provide an outside perspective to the mentee, and their situations and ideas
- Listen to what is worrying them (these conversations are confidential)
- Help by sharing your own experiences, failures and successes
- Give friendly, unbiased support and guidance
- Provide honest and constructive feedback
- Be a sounding board for ideas
- Facilitate decision-making by suggesting alternatives based on personal experience
- Inspire mentees to realize their potential
- Provide ongoing support and encouragement

WHAT SHOULDN'T A MENTOR DO?

As a mentor, you will not be expected to:

- Offer "personal" counseling or life coaching that is not related to professional or personal development (a resource directory is available at the end of this handout)
- Solve your mentee's problems or provide solutions directly. Instead, advise or identify resources to assist the student to make their own decisions.
- Assume responsibility for the student's academic or career success. Rather, provide feedback on job search tactics, tips on networking successfully and comments on various strategies to succeed.

*Adapted with permission from mentoring materials at VMLY&R

COMMUNICATION

It is the responsibility of the STUDENT to initiate the conversation and reach out to the mentor after the first introduction email from the Program Coordinator. We encourage mentors and mentees to develop a communication strategy that best fits the relationship.

This being said, we expect that students and mentors **will be in touch at least every 3-4 weeks** via email, phone, video chat or meeting in-person. We encourage you to find what communication method is most appropriate for your situation and go with it!

Once you have met your mentee, your role as mentor will begin. It is your responsibility to give honest feedback with regard to your mentee's progress. Don't be afraid to give them "homework" if there is something that would be useful for them to do to based on a topic you discussed. By establishing regularly spaced meetings, you will be able to review your mentee's success in achieving their objectives and evaluate the effectiveness of the mentor/mentee relationship.

Be sure to talk about:

- Current issues that the mentee may be facing in their academics or professional lives
- Achievements thus far and how to build upon them
- Realistic expectations regarding their career interests
- Priorities: how should they be focusing their time?

CONFIDENTIALITY:

It's imperative that you respect each other's confidentiality. Remember that anything you talk about when you meet up is between the two of you only. However, legally, you should report any criminal conduct or possible harassment or bullying. Speak to the Bloch Mentoring Program Coordinator if you have any concerns.

**Adapted with permission from mentoring materials at VMLY&R*

GETTING STARTED

The first conversation with your mentee can set the tone for the rest of your relationship. What should you talk about during your first meeting? You might feel nervous about your first meeting--don't worry, a lot of people feel this way! Here are a few suggestions to frame your first conversation:

- Clarify expectations about the extent to which you will offer guidance concerning personal as well as
- professional issues as you work together to define learning objectives.
- Discuss and define common goals and focus.
- Discuss what you can offer: information, skills, experience.
- Decide how/when/how often you will interact in the future. Get each other's contact information!
- Discuss any questions or concerns.

Getting to know each other and establishing expectations for how you both plan to build your partnership are two critical activities that begin at your first meeting. Remember — if you don't hit it off straight away, don't panic. It takes time to build any relationship, and it will get easier the more you meet and build trust. Each mentee will be provided with a Professional Development Plan (PDP). We encourage you to meet with your mentee to talk about their goals and use their PDP to set action steps towards those goals.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What is your ideal job in one, two, or three years?
- How long have you been with your company?
- What do you enjoy most about your current position?
- How long have you worked in this industry?
- Where did you grow up? Where do you currently live?
- Who are some of your role models?
- How do you spend your time away from work? What are your interests and hobbies?
- Can I tell you about my personal and professional development goals? Discuss your interest in obtaining a mentor.
- When, where, how long, and how frequently will we meet/talk/correspond?
- Will we create a written agenda and document action items?
- How often will we communicate between meetings?
- Tell me about your personal communication style—how do you prefer to communicate?
- Will we communicate via phone, e-mail, or voice mail?
- What is the purpose of our mentoring relationship? Consider creating a mutual understanding of what you want to accomplish together.

MENTOR BEST PRACTICES

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM BEING A GOOD MENTOR?

You might wonder before you start if you'll be any good at mentoring. You don't need to be an expert or know everything to be a good mentor. You just need to be patient, open-minded, good at listening, positive and, of course, enthusiastic. Unfortunately, there's not a test that can tell you if you're getting it right, apart from your mentee telling you that you are. You are probably getting things right if:

- Your mentee is meeting up with you (that might sound silly, but if they didn't want to, they wouldn't turn up)
- You have good rapport
- You feel like your mentee has opened up about their goals and objectives
- Your mentee has learned new things from your sessions
- You're really listening to them (not just pretending to)
- Your mentee appears to be developing both personal and business skills

IS IT WORKING?

Don't worry if meeting certain goals seems to be going slowly. This doesn't mean you're not a good mentor. Things take time, and often it takes a while before you see any change. Concentrate on the little things and remember they can make a big difference. If things don't seem to be going well, ask your mentee how they think it is going. If they provide feedback that is less than stellar, listen and then look for ways to change what you are doing. Review your initial plan to see if you can agree on more tangible or realistic goals. If that doesn't work, please contact the Bloch Mentoring Program Coordinator and we will explore another mentor.

Although every effort will be made to ensure a close match between you and your mentee, sometimes it may not work out. This is not necessarily a reflection of either party, and either party may end the relationship. Mentees should try the relationship for at least 90 days, because what sometimes appears to be a mismatch can turn into a wonderful mentoring relationship. If a new match should be made, please contact the mentoring program manager.

*Adapted with permission from mentoring materials at VMLY&R

ACTIVITIES

- **Dispel the career myth.** It's okay not to have a concrete career path! Don't focus on job titles but on experience, responsibilities, and lifestyle changes your mentee wants. Ask questions like "What problems excite you?" and "What strengths can you build on?"
- **Focus on transferable skills.** Skills such as communication, self-management, writing and public speaking can be applied to a variety of roles and will diversity your mentee's career capital. Before meeting with your mentee, reflect on questions like, "What skills would help a recent graduate gain more influence in your current role or industry?" and "What skill gaps could become barriers?"
- **Create milestones and consider celebrating new skills, knowledge and achievements.** Ask "What do you want to achieve next?" and "How will you know you've achieved it?"
- Encourage small experiments. **Facilitate your mentees getting training** in topics they want to explore. Ask "What areas of the business intrigue you?" and "Who might you want to collaborate with?"
- **Discuss industry relevant books, web resources, articles, or other resources.** Resources on career development, especially ones that focus on skills you or your mentee may want to develop (such as cross-cultural communication, conflict resolution, creativity, organization, etc.) or professional goals they may have can be great too!
- **Discuss industry topics** such as technology, globalization, competition and marketing, workplace ethics, professional attire, and diversity.
- If possible, provide your mentee with **job shadowing opportunities** or an on-site company visit. Debrief with your mentee afterward.
- **Discuss training and educational opportunities.** For instance, would an advanced degree be helpful in your industry?
- Discuss any **generational differences** that may come into play in the workplace.
- Ask your mentee to **create a vision statement** that captures where he or she would like to be in five or ten years. Review and discuss together. Consider assigning them a "stretch" goal that gets them outside their comfort zone and challenges them to try something new.
- **Share your resume and be willing to review your mentee's resume.** What are "power" phrases or key words can they use in their resume? Do you notice any ways your mentee can supplement their education? Can you identify potential gap areas in their experience? Consider showing your mentee examples of resumes that are effective in your field of work.
- **Compare and contrast your company/organization's mission, goals, products, and strategic plans** with those of peer companies/organizations.
- **Discuss current industry-related cases/news stories** and problem solve together. Consider asking your mentee to diagnose and/or suggest solutions to problems.
- Discuss any concerns your mentee may have. Have there been recent professional situations where your mentee has struggled and **needed some advice**? Talk it out with them.

ACTIVITIES, CONTINUED

- **Share your personal stories.** Students are deeply interested in you and your career, not just your company and your industry. Let them know about your struggles and successes.
- Identify **possible areas of weaknesses** and how your mentee may develop in that area.
- **Conduct a mock interview** with your mentee to practice interviewing skills and explore interviewing types.
- **Share your career path with your mentee and discuss valuable skills, interests, strengths, and experiences** and how those may fit into a successful career. Provide long-term career guidance and feedback on their career goals.
- Discuss the **recruitment timelines and processes** for your industry/organization.
- If possible, **invite your mentee to a key meeting** in your office and debrief with them afterward.
- **Suggest professional contacts** with which your mentee can conduct informational interviews.
- **Participate in informal outings**, such as sporting events, volunteering, UMKC-affiliated events, or meeting up for coffee, lunch, or dinner.
- Evaluate your mentee's LinkedIn profile. If you are willing, **invite your mentee to connect on LinkedIn.**
- Team up to **attend an industry-related function or networking event** with your mentee. Debrief afterward.
- Discuss what qualities you look for **when you hire candidates.**
- Role play how to **address challenging situations** in the workplace.
- Discuss **their job/internship search** and what type of companies they are interested in.
- Talk to them about their **struggles in identifying a career path**, if applicable.
- Help them to **identify other professionals** that they could benefit from talking with about their career interests.
- If you are located in the local area, consider asking your mentee if you could **attend a class or extra curricular presentation that is important to them** (or even one that they may be facilitating!), and debrief afterward. This can help you get to know their communication and interpersonal skills.
- **Ask them about their classes** and what they are currently learning in the classroom.
- Talk to them about **where they want to live** after their time at UMKC.
- **Prepare a business case or bring in real clients.** Anything you can do to give students a window on a real-life business situation will increase the impact of the visit.
- **Invite other executives.** Bringing in a partner, colleague, boss or client can give students more exposure and enrich the experience.
- Tell them **how their UMKC education can help them.** How are UMKC graduates employed in your company and industry? What career paths are available? Share what you know.

OTHER QUESTIONS

- Describe what success means to you—what personal steps do you take on a daily basis to ensure you feel successful or accomplished?
- Can you tell me more about your career path? What led you to your current position?
- What can I do now as a student to prepare for a career in ____?
- What qualities or personality characteristics are present in individuals who succeed in your industry?
- What does success/leadership mean to you? How would you describe your leadership style?
- What are some of the challenges you have encountered in your career?
- What trends have you been seeing in your industry?
- Are there ways to become involved in professional associations?
- What are other types of professional development I can consider?
- Do you have any tips or advice about the internship/job search?
- How did you identify and choose this career path?
- Do you have any advice on courses I can pursue to help me become more marketable?
- What are the top companies in your industry?
- How do you balance work and life?
- Can you tell me more about your office's norms, culture, and practices?
- Do you use LinkedIn? How is this tool used in your industry? How do other social media tools play a part in your industry?
- Are there “unwritten” rules you have observed in your workplace regarding professionalism?
- How would your competitors describe your work?
- Why did you choose UMKC?
- Tell me about your experience at UMKC.
- What is the most important thing you did this year?
- What do you value in a co-worker? Do you value similar or different traits in a manager?
- What do you want to learn to do better?

UMKC RESOURCES

- **Financial Aid**, 101 Administrative Center
x1154 | finaid@umkc.edu
- **International Student Affairs Office (ISAO)**, G-04 Student Success Center
x1113 | isao@umkc.edu
- **Registrar**, 115 Administrative Center
x1125 | registrar@umkc.edu
- **Academic Support & Mentoring**, 2nd floor Student Success Center
x1174 | umkcasu@umkc.edu
- **Bloch Career Center**, 1st floor Bloch Executive Hall
x5529 | blochcareernet@umkc.edu
- **Counseling Services**, 5110 Oak St, Suite 201
x1635 | chtc@umkc.edu
- **Disability Services**, 5110 Oak St, Suite 225
x5612 | disability@umkc.edu
- **Health and Wellness Center**, 5110 Oak Street, Suite 237
x6133 | studenthealth@umkc.edu
- **Student Involvement Office (OSI)**, 320 Student Union
x1407 | getinvolved@umkc.edu