



Mentorship Program

MENTOR AND MENTEE HANDBOOK

2021-2022

Dear Mentors and Mentees,

The RD Mentorship Program strives to create opportunities for undergraduate and graduate nutrition students and registered dietitians (RDs) to expand their network and enhance the profession. The program also aims to help increase diversity and preceptors in the field. The goal of the mentoring program is to provide students hands-on experience working one-on-one with an RD and enhance mentoring abilities and professional development for the registered dietitians. We are pleased to have had a great response from both registered dietitians and undergraduate students excited to commit to the program and cannot wait to get started! This handbook has been created to help guide you through your mentoring relationship. Included in this document you will find an overview of the program and other information that will come in handy during your participation in the program. Do not hesitate to contact the mentorship program coordinators and/or principal investigators should you have any questions regarding this program; our information is below.

Once more, welcome and thank you for joining the program!

This program is launched nationwide and is currently only a virtual format.

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Overview of the Program

What is this program about?

The RD Mentorship Program was created to help build bonds between registered dietitian (RD) professionals and nutrition students. Our main goal is to facilitate a professional experiential learning opportunity for nutrition students, while helping RDs on a project. RD mentors will be matched with undergraduate junior, senior or graduate nutrition students who are preparing to become registered dietitians. The main role of the RD mentor is to provide their mentee with advice on project-specific duties and/or career path guidance and professionalism, provide motivation and serve as a role model. The main role of the student mentee is to act with professionalism and create a relationship with their mentor to learn about the field of dietetics and assist them with identified projects.

What are the benefits of this program?

For the mentor, this program is a great way to enhance your mentoring skills and gain valuable assistance on a project. Every commitment comes with responsibilities, so mentors are expected to act professionally when engaging with their mentee. For the mentee, this program provides the opportunity to gain experience working one-on-one with an RD. Ultimately, the mentor-mentee pair should work together to accomplish a project.

What resources are provided to help assist mentors and mentees?

- A Virtual Welcome Reception (two separate time options available)
 - Designed to enhance communication and understanding of the logistics of the mentor-mentee program and promote professional networking.
 - Wednesday September 22 at 6:30 pm CT/7:30 pm EST **OR** Thursday September 23 at 6:30 pm CT/7:30 pm EST
- Professional Workshops (two separate time options available for each)
 - Designed to promote professional development for mentors and mentees and enhance communication among participants.
 - Fall Professional Development (2 options)
 - Wednesday October 27 at 6:30 pm CT/7:30 pm EST **OR**
 - Thursday October 28 at 6:30 pm CT/7:30 pm EST
 - Spring Professional Development (2 options)
 - Wednesday January 26 at 6:30 pm CT/7:30 pm EST **Q**

- Thursday January 27 at 6:30 pm CT or 7:30 pm EST
 - Closing Reception (2 options)
 - Wednesday April 6 at 6:30 pm CT/7:30 pm EST **OR**
 - Thursday April 7 at 6:30 pm CT/7:30 pm EST
- Mentor-Mentee Agreement
 - Designed to help the mentee/mentor pair establish communication expectations, identify goals for this mentoring relationship, and outline skill areas to be enhanced or developed through this partnership.
- Mentoring Log
 - Designed to help the mentee log topics discussed at meetings.
 - Intended to enhance communication and continuity by highlighting meeting content and projects.
- Mid-Semester Evaluation
 - Designed to provide feedback and allow for interim program modifications as needed.
- Program Website, <https://www.rdmentor.com>
 - Designed to enhance communication and provide digital resources and useful information throughout the mentor-mentee program.

Communication and Participation:

Communication is a requirement of any successful relationship. Please reply to emails or other forms of communication within 24-48 hours and use professional etiquette. Be proactive! If you have suggestions, let us know.

Mentoring Meetings:

Mentor-mentee virtual meetings are required at least once a month minimum and will be individually arranged by the mentor and mentee. The mentor pair can meet twice a month or more frequently if they choose, depending on what is acceptable with both participants.

Issues:

If any issues arise between mentor and mentee, please contact the program coordinators immediately so we can assist in reconciliation of the situation. Issues may include, but are not limited to, lack of communication/responses from one party, disrespect, inappropriate language, failure to meet expectations of the program, etc.

FOR MENTORS

How/Where to get started with your mentee:

To begin, we suggest reaching out to your mentee within 24-48 hours after being matched.

Start the conversation to determine the following:

1. When do you first plan to meet? How often do you want to meet?
2. Do you plan to meet on the phone, web meetings (zoom, Skype, FaceTime) or via email?
3. Set out your expectations from the get-go! (i.e., communication, email etiquette, professionalism, HIPAA etc.)
4. Describe your area of dietetics and what project-specifics you need help with (they may not remember from the application, there were a lot of RDs from which they could choose).
5. What are their overarching or long-term goals in dietetics? (They may not know)
6. What skills/background experiences might they have to help you? Learn about your mentee and how to maximize their success in your project together.
7. Set goals and expectations together by assisting the mentee in completion of the mentor-mentee contract.

Other potential areas of discussion may be:

Dietetic Internship (DI) applications and the application process:*

1. Discuss the process of applying to DI programs and/or graduate degree programs and/or specialty certifications; provide guidance and professional tips for success.
2. How to research programs – What are the characteristics of a good program (e.g., finances, reputability, location, etc.)?
3. Assist with application materials needed for your field (e.g., read and offer guidance on their personal statement, CV, letters of recommendation, etc.)
4. How to contact potential advisors and get letters of recommendation (perhaps you might consider writing a letter of recommendation for them after successful completion of the program.)

*Please contact Karen Beathard (kbeathard@tamu.edu) if you have questions or need assistance with DI match information.

Other suggestions:

1. Share your background, values, goals, and needs.
2. Talk about your very first job and other experiences that might enrich your mentee's insight on RD internships, research, and the professional field.

3. Talk about life as a dietetics student vs. dietetics professional.
4. Look at your mentee's resume and cover letter and offer constructive criticism. The success of your mentoring relationship depends on you and your mentee.

Be an active listener, a cheerleader, a compassionate supporter, and a role model.

FOR MENTEES

What is your Role as a Mentee?

As a mentee participating in the RD Mentorship Program, you are expected to display professionalism and respect. As a mentee, you are also a representative of your university's nutrition department. You applied to be a part of this program and are expected to follow through with your commitment by engaging in communication, working with the RD you were matched with and accomplishing project goals.

How to handle your mentee position:

1. Be respectful, timely, flexible and use professional language.
2. Address your mentor by their preferred credentials. (Ph.D./DCN = Dr; Mrs.; Mr.; Sir; Ma'am)
3. Communicate with your RD mentor using the preferred mode of communication.
4. Complete the mentor-mentee contract to set goals and expectations with your RD.
5. Discuss and understand the projects and assignments given to you by your RD. If something is unclear, ask your RD mentor for clarification.
6. Be clear about your time and effort commitments to the program and your ability to complete the tasks assigned.
7. If you have trouble understanding or agreeing with the given tasks, speak with your RD or contact the program coordinators through email (rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com).

How to gain the most from your experience:

1. Complete assigned tasks by the identified deadline and ask your RD mentor for feedback.
2. Get to know your RD! Prepare and ask relevant questions and listen. Use questions below for ideas.
 - a. What is the dietetic internship like? What does a typical workday look like for the RD?
 - b. What advice would the RD offer DPD students regarding the DI application process?
 - c. What are some challenges the RD faces in the professional field and how can future RDs prepare for them?
 - d. What skills are necessary for becoming a successful professional?
 - e. Depending on the area of focus that the RD has, what are some resources for

- specializing RDs?
- f. What are some good ways to manage finances through the dietetic internship and as a working professional?
 - g. Where can the student seek advice while completing the dietetics program and dietetic internship?
3. Most importantly, think of this program as a growing experience for both involved.

Be eager to learn, actively listen, show willingness to work as a team player, be a strong communicator, display a positive attitude, and show gratitude to your mentor for mentoring you.

Research Overview

What are the objectives of this research study?

The objective of the study is to examine the outcomes from participating in a mentorship program. We would like to determine the benefits and perceptions on being a member of a mentoring partnership. We will be collecting qualitative and quantitative data to measure this. This study was approved by the University of North Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB 1143661-8).

Please visit our website: <https://www.rdmentor.com>

What requirements are there to participate in this study?

- Sign the informed consent and complete the Pre-Perceptions of Mentoring Relationships Survey (September 2021)
- Students will submit monthly mentoring log *see final page* (September 2021-April 2022)
- Welcome Reception (2 options- register for ONE)
 - Tuesday September 15 at 8pm EST
 - <https://unf.zoom.us/j/92028126305>
 - Thursday September 17 at 7pm EST
 - <https://unf.zoom.us/j/92028126305>
- Fall Professional Development (2 options- register for ONE)
 - Tuesday October 27 at 8pm EST
 - <https://unf.zoom.us/j/92028126305>
 - Thursday November 5 at 7pm EST
 - <https://unf.zoom.us/j/92028126305>
 - Complete the Mid-Semester Evaluation (November 2020)

- Spring Professional Development (2 options- register for ONE)
 - Tuesday January 26 at 8pm EST
 - <https://unf.zoom.us/j/92u3uAblT41RftpU4u7yuP>
 - Monday February 4 at 7pm EST
 - https://unf.zoom.us/j/1AqduCqri0jGNO7EDUVLcs1sM_B_G8Z_WoQ
- Closing Reception (2 options- register for ONE)
 - Tuesday April 6 at 8pm EST
 - <https://unf.zoom.us/j/1ErcO-hqjotEtTi6bmmdYTmjIwUrH6lDbEi>
 - Thursday April 15 at 7pm EST
 - <https://unf.zoom.us/j/wqdeihqD8sHdTy0Gk3K7qLw9AOPpDcDjWy>
- Complete the End of Program Evaluation (April 2021)

What will I gain from being a part of this program?

The direct benefits to you by participating in this program are gaining experience in the field of dietetics and/or being part of a mentorship program. The project that the mentor and mentee work on will be a hands-on experience to offer a look into life as an RD.

Will any personal information be used in this research program?

No, the research study team is only using data collected from the surveys and program evaluation. There will be no direct ties to personal names and/or workplaces that are involved.

Is this a new program?

No, this program has been undergoing pilot testing and evaluation for the past five years. This is the second year it will be launched on a broader scale and will be nationwide. There have been two published articles on the pilot programs that you may read if you choose. There is also one manuscript under review as of July 2020.

- 1) **Hicks-Roof KK.** Growing the Dietetics Profession via a Mentorship Program between Dietitians and Dietetics Students. *Nutr Today* 2018; 32(2): 89-91
- 2) **Hicks-Roof KK,** Beathard K. Development of a Sustainable Mentorship Program: Registered Dietitian Nutritionists Mentoring Undergraduate Dietetics Students. *J Allied Health* 2018; 47(2): e49-51

Mentor/Mentee Agreement

Purpose

This Mentoring Agreement was created to help the mentee/mentor pair establish communication expectations; identify goals for this mentoring relationship; and outline skill areas to be enhanced or developed through this partnership.

Goals for participation in the Mentor/Mentee Program

- Mentee

My goal(s) for this program is/are to: _____ . At the end of this program, my desired outcome(s) is/are: _____
_____.

- Mentor

My goal(s) for this program is/are to: _____ . At the end of this program, my desired outcome(s) is/are: _____
_____.

Ground rules

- Meeting Frequency: We will meet _____ (minimum of once monthly, e.g., every two weeks)
- Meeting Length: Our meetings will last _____ (amount of time, e.g., one hour minimum))
- Meeting Platform: Our virtual meetings will occur via _____ (e.g., videoconference, phone and/or email; a variety of formats is acceptable)
- If either the mentor or the mentee must postpone or cancel a scheduled meeting, we agree to _____ (method of communication - example: email the other person at least _____ hours prior to the scheduled meeting time)
- If I have questions about a project, I will contact the other person via _____ (method of communication) within _____ (specified time)

Team Agreement

As a mentee, I agree to do the following:

- To dedicate to learning and practicing new skills
- To seek to learn, improve and grow by asking questions and being open to honest feedback from my mentor.
- Clearly identify my goals in participating in this mentor/mentee program and come prepared to meetings.
- Prepare in advance of our mentor/mentee sessions by creating and bringing questions and ideas to the session.
- Accomplish agreed upon tasks by the identified timeline.
- Learn to use constructive criticism and feedback to further my professional development.
- Respect my mentor by showing up to meetings on-time and understanding when things come up.
- Maintain confidentiality of our relationship.
- To participate in professional development sessions provided by the research team.
- Honor ground rules established in this agreement.

As a mentor, I agree to do the following:

- Serve as a mentor and provide guidance, oversight, and encouragement.
- Provide constructive feedback regarding their progress, and experience.
- Meet virtually and communicate regularly with my mentee to review their progress and help them work toward identified goals.
- Respect my mentee by showing up to meetings on-time and understanding when things come up.
- Maintain confidentiality of our relationship.
- To participate in professional development sessions provided by the research team.
- Honor ground rules established in this agreement.

This agreement outlines the goals and expectations agreed upon by the mentor and mentee listed below. Although the thoughtful completion of this form was used, it is understood that items will change and adjust naturally to fit the needs of both parties as the mentoring relationship grows. Current plans are to revisit this document every _____(months) to adjust goals and dates given current accomplishments. If at any time during the duration of the mentoring contract one member of the mentoring pair does not feel like the other is able or willing to fulfill the items agreed to above, please contact the Mentor/Mentee Research Team at rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com.


Name of Mentee: _____

Mentee's Signature: _____ Date: _____(may be electronic)

Name of Mentor: _____

Mentor's Signature: _____ Date: _____(may be electronic)

See www.rdmentor.com



Mentoring Log

* Required

Email address *

Your email

Mentor Name *

Your answer

Mentee Name *

Your answer

Date of Meeting *

MM DD YYYY
/ / 2021

Contact Type *

Teleconference
 Email
 Phone

Description or Status of Activity/Project *

Your answer

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe4pqpFJnaHbaWxFPoeIULoAf0INF3zU00XI VtpgXE361qdFA/viewform?usp=sf_link