

PLUGGED IN

Holcombe Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Plugged In Mentorship Program MENTOR ORIENTATION MANUAL

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Introduction

Thank you for volunteering as a mentor with the Clemson University Holcombe Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Department Plugged In Mentorship Program. This manual contains information on the Plugged In Mentorship Program and your role as a mentor.

Please read over this information and direct any additional questions or comments to the program director, Amanda Harris, at (864)656-4507 or aleslie@clemson.edu.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a relationship whereby a more experienced individual (a mentor) shares his/her skills, knowledge and expertise with a less experienced individual (a mentee) who is willing to benefit and learn from this exchange. It is

- a transfer of information and experience from one individual to another
- a voluntary and productive relationship
- focused on mentee learning and development
- based on the mentee's personal and professional goals

Mentoring is not...

- a “quick fix” to a mentee's problems
- a personal counseling session for the mentee
- a method of motivating a mentee who is unwilling to take responsibility for his/her own development
- a job interview
- a way for a mentee to gain employment, contacts or financing for a project

The Holcombe Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Plugged In Mentorship Program

The Plugged In Mentorship Program was created for first-year (in-coming sophomore) students participating in the undergraduate electrical engineering or computer engineering programs at Clemson University. These students wish to benefit from an exchange of skills, knowledge and expertise to enhance their careers. Plugged In mentors are alumni and department advocates who are successful and experienced in their field, and who have indicated an interest in sharing their knowledge and expertise with current students. Plugged In mentees are Clemson University ECE students who are willing to learn and who believe that they can benefit from the knowledge and expertise of a more experienced mentor.

The ECE Plugged In Mentorship Program's mission is to facilitate mentoring relationships between Clemson University alumni and members of our supportive community, to develop the skills, knowledge and expertise needed to excel professionally and personally.

The focus of the mentoring relationship is on the achievement of specific learning objectives identified by the mentee before the relationship starts. There is no limit to the topics that may be discussed, as long as the learning objectives are related to the mentee's career, educational or personal development.

Examples of learning objectives are

- to find out what a “day in the life of a....” is really like
- to enhance interviewing and networking skills
- to learn about the university recruitment and interviewing process
- to determine what career opportunities exist
- to gain up-to-date industry information
- to develop a clear career path and action plan
- to overcome challenges in a job search
- to determine what actions need to be taken to achieve long-term career goals
- to learn about working and studying abroad
- to explore different career options in a particular industry
- to learn about varying work cultures among firms
- to determine what additional skills/expertise are necessary for a chosen profession
- to explore new careers or educational opportunities

All Plugged In Program mentors and mentees must agree to and adhere by the *Plugged In Code of Conduct* (See Appendix A). The Plugged In Program is managed by the program director who works closely with mentors and mentees to ensure a successful mentoring experience. The program director is responsible for facilitating mentoring matches and for providing relationship support as needed. The program director also will conduct follow-up with program participants to evaluate their mentoring experience.

Matching Mentor to Mentees

Once you have filled out an application as a mentor for the Plugged In Program, your personal profile will be added to the Mentor Directory of the program. It is very important that your profile is complete and up-to-date so that the program director can successfully match the mentees to the mentors according to the mentees education and professional interest. Mentees must refer to the program director for contact information. The program director will contact you prior to providing your information.

Length of Mentorship

The time commitment or term of mentoring can be defined as a relationship whereby a mentor and a mentee commit to meeting on a regular basis over a pre-defined amount of time. Mentoring partners are interested in developing a personal relationship built on mutual respect and trust. This type of mentoring can be characterized as a two-way exchange of information, knowledge and expertise. Partners are matched based on the mentee’s personal and professional objectives.

It is recommended that mentoring partners agree to meet via email, phone or in person, three to four times throughout the academic year. However, communication outside of the regular meetings is recommended (at the discretion of both mentoring partners).

A mentor’s role is not only to provide information, but also to challenge the mentee to develop leadership skills, as well as his/her ability to make informed decisions that will lead to the attainment of his/her personal and professional objectives.

A mentee who is interested in mentoring is often:

- focused on one particular industry, profession and/or occupation
- interested in developing his/her short- and long-term career plan
- interested in developing a long-term relationship with one mentor

As a mentor, mentoring may be a fit if you:

- are willing to commit to meeting with your mentee regularly over a pre-defined amount of time
- are interested in developing a personal mentoring relationship with one individual
- are interested, in addition to sharing your knowledge and experience, in working closely with a young person to help him/her develop as a person and as a professional

The Mentor's Role

As a mentor, your role is to share your knowledge and experience with your mentee. You should reflect on your successes, failures, critical moments and other events in your life that have shaped you and your career.

The Role of a Mentor is not...

The biggest misconception in mentoring is that a mentor's role is to tell the mentee what to do or even to take actions on behalf of the mentee. This is simply not the case. You should never make decisions or take actions on behalf of your mentee because:

- you may not have access to all the information needed to make a sound recommendation. Your mentee may, willfully or inadvertently, not be telling you everything you need to know to make a sound decision or take the right action.
- a decision or action that is right for you might not be right for your mentee. Remember that there are many paths to success; your mentee should not be limited to yours.
- your mentee could hold you accountable if the decision or action leads to failure.
- your mentee will not develop the ability to make decisions or take actions for him/herself.

Rather than making decisions for your mentee or taking actions on his/her behalf, challenge your mentee, question him/her and provide mentee with access to the information and resources that he/she needs to act and make decisions on his/her own.

The Role of a Mentor is to...

Listen: In order to be an effective mentor, you must have good listening skills. You must be able to listen to your mentee in order to understand the situation, his/her needs, and the type of information and assistance being sought.

Build Trust: As a mentor, it is your responsibility to build your mentee's trust so that he/she feels comfortable sharing and communicating his/her true goals, fears and ideas. You should always follow through on your promises and commitments.

Offer advice and challenge your mentee to make decisions: This is not the same as telling your mentee what to do. As a mentor, you want to protect him/her from making errors, but at the same time you want him/her to grow into an independent thinker and decision maker. Effective mentors ask questions and make suggestions that lead their mentee to make informed decisions for his/her career.

Share your experiences, both positive and negative: Your mentee will learn as much from your successes as from your failures.

Initiate contact with your mentee. Don't always wait for your mentee to initiate contact. Call or e-mail to follow-up and check-in to see how he/she is progressing. It will mean a lot to your mentee if you take a sincere interest in the progress and development of him/her.

Appendix A

Adhere to the Plugged In Mentorship Program Code of Conduct below.

Participation in the ECE Plugged In Program requires agreement to the following program and relationship guidelines. Mentorships are unique relationships requiring the highest standards of professional conduct, consistent with the integrity and ethical standards upheld by Clemson University. Please read the following and indicate your acceptance of these guidelines. Should you require any clarification, please contact the program director, Amanda Harris, at (864)656-4507 or aleslie@clemson.edu.

1. Participants commit to participate in the program relationships keeping free of discrimination, harassment, romantic or sexual involvement. Any concerns of this nature must be communicated to the Program Director IMMEDIATELY.
2. In accordance with the current privacy legislation, the Holcombe Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering will not disclose, share, duplicate or distribute personal information beyond the expressed purposes of the mentorship program and the Holcombe Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering records management. Your personal information will not be shared with, or sold to, outside third parties. More specifically, your agreement indicates consent for program staff to make available your personal profile information with registered program participants only.
3. As a program participant, you are restricted from disclosing, sharing, duplicating or distributing any individual's personal information to other program participants, the Holcombe Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering community members, or outside third parties, without the direct and expressed consent of the individual.
4. The program is not intended to provide students (mentees) with employment from mentors or their organizations. Direct solicitation for employment is grounds for removal from the program.
5. Mentors must approach the relationships with an open mind; provide open and honest feedback with no intent to insult or harm; and commit to challenging their mentees to exceed their own expectations, encouraging personal and professional growth.
6. Mentees must commit to be as open as possible, providing honest presentations of issues and be forthcoming in all discussions.
7. Confidentiality of the information shared in mentoring discussions is critical. If this issue is not specifically, or clearly, discussed between contacts/partners, then all information is to be considered confidential.
8. All participants agree to complete a program evaluation. Participants are encouraged to maintain contact with the mentee and to provide feedback on the program and their mentoring relationships.

9. Commitment to the relationships is an important part of the program. Participants agree to work together to resolve conflicts that may arise. If they are unable to come to a satisfactory agreement, they will request assistance from the program director.

10. Introduction to a mentor's extended network is a privilege. All relationship boundaries are also applicable to these relationships.

11. Program participants will act in good faith and with goodwill. Participants will not hold liable the other for information, feedback or recommendations. Each recognizes their full, and individual, choice for final decisions made and actions taken.