

# PLUGGED IN

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

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## Introduction

Welcome to the Plugged In Mentorship Program! This manual provides an introduction to mentoring and the Plugged In Mentorship Program. It is to be used as an information resource and a stop-by-step guide as you engage in the process. Each mentoring relationship is unique, which is why the Program Director works closely with each mentee and mentoring pair to ensure a successful experience. As you progress through the Plugged In Mentorship Program, additional resources and tools will be provided to ensure that you are able to capitalize on the mentoring experience. Please read over this information and direct any additional questions or comments to the program director, Amanda Harris, at (864)656-4507 or [aleslie@clemsun.edu](mailto:aleslie@clemsun.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.*

## **STEP 1: Formulate Your Learning Objectives**

A helpful first step in preparing for a mentoring relationship is to develop learning objectives. These objectives are very personal and outline the knowledge, skills and competencies that the mentee intends to gain through mentoring. They are the focal point of the mentoring relationship, and once established will guide the mentee through the entire process.

Examples of potential learning objectives include

- to find out what a “day in the life of a....” is really like
- to enhance my interviewing and networking skills
- to explore new careers or educational opportunities
- to learn about the university recruitment and interviewing process
- to determine what career opportunities exist for me
- to gain up-to-date industry information
- to develop a clear career path and action plan
- to overcome challenges in my job-search
- to determine what actions need to be taken to achieve my 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 between firms
- to determine what additional skills/expertise is necessary for my chosen profession

The list of possible learning objectives is endless, and is unique to each mentee’s career goals, strengths, weaknesses, and reasons for seeking a mentor. Mentees should identify a minimum of five (5) learning objectives to discuss with their mentors and to guide their mentoring process. Once a mentee has established his learning objectives, he is ready to proceed to STEP 2.

## **STEP 2: Matching You with Your Mentor**

Choosing the right mentor is obviously a very important part of the mentoring process. It is important not to focus solely on the individual’s reputation, name recognition, potential network or financial worth. In order to ensure a successful match, concentrate on locating a mentor with the type of skills, knowledge, experience, education, interests and other attributes that will help you achieve your learning objectives established in STEP 1. After filling out your application the program director will search for a close match for you and match you with a mentor.

## **STEP 3: Engage in the Mentoring Process**

Once the mentor selection process is complete, the mentee is instructed to contact the Program Director. In all cases, the Program Director will initiate first contact with the mentor(s) in order to determine the interest in working with the mentee. Once a mentor has confirmed his or her interest, the mentee will be responsible for contacting the mentor and for coordinating the meeting logistics.

There are several ways that you can prepare in order to ensure a successful experience:

### **1) Understand your role as a mentee**

The success of a mentoring relationship is largely dependent on the mentee and his ability to engage in the process. As such, it is important that the mentee understand his role in the mentoring relationship.

- Take an active role. This process is about you, so it is your responsibility to work at the relationship. Be proactive, ask questions, and participate fully in each meeting. Listen attentively to your mentor and be open-minded.
- Be prepared with topics for discussion, questions and an agenda.
- Initiate contact with your mentor. If you are engaged in long-term mentoring, initiate contact with your mentor between meetings and provide regular updates on your progress. Determine an appropriate way to stay in touch once the relationship has ended so that you do not lose this valuable contact.
- Be respectful. Be respectful of your mentor's time and schedule. Do not change meeting dates/times and always be on time.
- Be professional. Always conduct yourself in a professional and mature manner.
- Know yourself. Be aware of your strengths, weaknesses, and what you hope to accomplish through mentoring. Share this information openly with your mentor.
- Show your appreciation to your mentor. Send him/her a thank you note. Share with your mentor how his/her advice has been of assistance.
- Be honest and trustworthy.
- Adhere to the *Plugged In Mentorship Program Code of Conduct*. (See Appendix A)

### **2) Establish Clear Expectations of mentoring**

As you enter into your mentoring relationship, it is important that you have established clear and reasonable expectations. This means clarifying what you expect of your mentor and what you expect to gain from the mentoring experience. It is important that you share these expectations with your mentor because problems can arise when mentors and mentees do not share the same expectations of the relationship and/or of each other. For example, if a mentee expects to have unlimited access to his mentor and the mentor expects to only communicate with his mentee once a month; there is a clash of expectations. This issue must be addressed early in the mentoring relationship. Participant expectations that **MUST** be addressed include

- the mentee's learning objectives
- each partners criteria for success in view of the relationship
- the duration of the relationship, frequency of meetings, time commitments
- the format of the mentoring meeting(s)

As a mentee, it is important to develop expectations of your mentor and of the mentoring experience that are realistic, fair and reasonable. Examples of inappropriate mentee expectations include:

- Gaining access to your mentor's network of contacts
- Obtaining employment opportunities or referrals
- Obtaining financial support or referrals
- Having continued access to your mentor beyond the original commitment

### **3) Prepare for meetings**

In order to ensure a successful mentoring match, the mentee must fully prepare for all meetings with a mentor. Prior to a first meeting, it is crucial to conduct research on your mentor, his/her firm, industry, etc. In addition to being well-prepared, you will avoid wasting valuable time asking questions

that can easily be answered through simple research. For all meetings, it is important to create a meeting agenda and prepare questions and/or discussion topics in advance. Where possible, notify your mentor of the agenda and discussion topics prior to the meeting so that he/she has time to reflect on how to answer your questions. This will ensure that you and your mentor are maximizing the time you spend together by focusing on your learning objectives.

#### **STEP 4: Evaluate the Mentoring Process**

It is recommended that mentoring partners agree to meet via email, phone or in person, once monthly for a period of at least six months and a maximum of one year. However, communication outside of the regular monthly meetings is recommended (at the discretion of both mentoring partners). Toward the end of the pilot program the student mentee as well as the Mentor will be asked to evaluate the Mentorship Process.

## 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. Mentorship 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](mailto: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 periodic program evaluations. Participants are encouraged to maintain contact with the mentor 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.