



# GUSTAVUS MENTORING PROGRAM

MENTOR HANDBOOK



GUSTAVUS  
MENTORING PROGRAM

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

# VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

*“We understand vocation to be a sense of responsibility encompassing multiple areas of one’s life (work, family, citizenship, etc.) so that the person lives life in such a way as to benefit the community. For the Lutheran tradition out of which Gustavus comes, the most profound foundation for a sense of vocation is gratitude to God for the free gift of God’s love and for the gifts received through others (teachers, parents, mentors, friends, etc.). That same tradition recognizes that vocation may also be grounded in other religious faiths and on other understandings of self and the world, and that diverse perspectives and traditions enrich each individual’s sense of calling.*”

*Closely associated with the sense of responsibility and integral to our understanding of vocation are the wisdom to understand what benefits the community and the courage to act for justice and defend human dignity even when economic, social, and political pressures make it easier not to do so.”*

–Darrell Jodock, Professor Emeritus of Religion

At Gustavus, we take seriously the opportunity to support and nurture students who are exploring their future career and calling. Based on the brain development experienced by young adults during their college years, this vocational discernment process is a natural fit for this time in life. Arthur Chickering, one of the leading theorists in college student identity development, says, “We discover our vocation by discovering what we love to do, what energizes us and fulfills us...and what actualizes all our potential for excellence.”

Vocational discernment addresses the holistic development of students by challenging them to look up from their narrow studies to ask and struggle with the larger questions of life: “Who am I?” “Who am I called to be?” “What is my purpose?” “What are my passions?” and “How can I use them to meet the needs of the world?” This process must focus on listening and reflecting upon a person’s true self including personality characteristics, gifts, skills, aptitudes, desires, passions, and interests.

A supportive mentoring relationship is a great setting for intentional reflection and dialogue around vocation to take place. For mentors, we believe you have a great opportunity to support a student’s vocational discernment process. And for the students, we trust that this experience will be a significant environment to consider their future.

# GUSTAVUS MENTORING PROGRAM

*“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”*

–Benjamin Franklin

## **Mentoring Program Goal:**

To have students engage with alumni and other professionals to gain insight so they become more informed and prepared to make vocational and career decisions.

## **Mentoring Program Values:**

**Discovery:** For students and mentors to explore simple and deep questions about life, work, and vocation, and remain open to uncover insights that are inside an individual.

**Integration:** To intentionally integrate learning from the classroom and past experience into setting a course for future exploration. In addition, an integration of many departments and constituents is valued to make the program a success.

**Authenticity:** Everyone involved in the program is expected to be their true and best self.

## **Commitment to You:**

We thank you for your participation in the Gustavus Mentoring Program and hope you have a meaningful experience with your mentee. My goal is to provide you with enough structure, ideas, and questions to engage your mentee and to make this a mutually beneficial relationship for both of you. I ask you to contact me immediately to address any concerns or answer any questions you may have.

## **Program Contact:**

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Mentoring Program and Still Deciding Cluster

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[gustavus.edu/mentoring](https://gustavus.edu/mentoring)

# WHAT IS A MENTOR?

**men•tor** noun \men•tor, -t r\ a mentor is someone who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced and often younger person (Merriam-Webster)

## **Mentoring Program Experience Goals:**

- Assist in preparing students for the transition to professional life upon graduation
- Realization that many career paths are non-linear and encourage students to keep an open mind and explore varied possibilities
- Accept coaching to enhance and develop interpersonal, professional, and leadership skills
- Assist in building a professional network

## **Nature of the Mentor Relationship:**

The nature of a mentoring relationship is not something that can be clearly defined because ultimately the mentoring relationship is based on the needs of the mentee, and as his/her needs change, the relationship will evolve. Remember, it takes time to build a reciprocal, trusting relationship, and every mentor-mentee relationship will be unique based on the personalities, goals, and experiences of the mentor-mentee pair. The relationship will be a process where the mentor and mentee work together to discover and develop the mentee's latent abilities and encourage the mentee to acquire knowledge and skills. If you and your mentee commit the time and energy to build a solid relationship, your mentoring experience will be an enjoyable and rewarding one!

## **Mentor Responsibilities:**

As a mentor, you are a valuable resource to your mentee that can inspire and assist in career and personal achievements. Each student faces developmental transitions throughout these areas and are enriched by your experience, wisdom, and guidance.

- Respond to your mentee when they reach out to you
- Meet in person with your mentee at least twice during the year (if available)
- Attend program events when possible
- Assist mentee in reaching their objectives
- Be encouraging and supportive
- Be open and generous in sharing your ideas, experience, resources, and network with your mentee
- Respect boundaries
- Complete an evaluation at the conclusion of the program

## **What is Not Expected of the Mentor:**

- Be an academic adviser or career counselor
- Provide jobs or internships
- Pay any expenses—meals, transportation, etc.
- Have all the answers

Relationship developed between you and your mentee allows for channeling of information, advice, challenges, opportunities, and support, with the ultimate goal of achieving goals and having fun. There

are as many different mentoring styles as there are personality types and no one style can be everything to one person. The challenge and the excitement of mentoring is developing your own personal style for sharing your experiences, strengths, and skills.

Many of the students in the Mentoring Program have never had a mentor before and therefore may not ask thought-provoking questions; you may help to alleviate much of their anxiety as well as establish rapport with your mentee. If you see areas of communication that need improvement, please coach your mentee through these moments so that they may improve. Many mentees are new to the Mentoring Program and may not have had many professional experiences. Mentors can provide valuable advice on the importance of professionalism, networking, and taking ownership to be active in their career development. The Center for Career Development conveys this same message, however, it is powerful coming from a mentor as well.

Please be open and flexible. This mentoring relationship is ultimately only as beneficial as you and your mentee want it to be. Be honest and upfront with your mentee and encourage them to be an active participant in their career journey. When engaging in conversation it should be a two-way street and not simply a lecture on the do's and don'ts. Ask questions, listen for their feedback, challenge while providing support and make an impact on you mentee as much as they may be impacting you.

Communication can occur by means such as by email, phone, Skype, in-person, etc. Establish a communication method early on. Communicate through the Gusties Connect platform for maximum results. You can sync your calendars and set meeting times as well as connect via video chat within the platform. This is an academic year-long program. Your mentee must communicate twice per month with you. Mentorship pairs may continue year after year; email the Director to be matched again prior to the start of the next year.

### **Mentee Responsibilities:**

- Initiate monthly contact with mentor—mentees are responsible for driving the relationship and indicating their needs
- Respond to emails and messages within two business days
- Show up on time, keep commitments, and be prepared
- Respect the confidentiality of the relationship
- Be open and listen to constructive feedback
- Commit to the mentoring relationship throughout the academic year

### **Characteristics of a Great Mentor:**

A great mentor understands that the goal of mentoring is to provide guidance and support. You should not be expected to solve problems for your mentee, but rather you should help them find the solutions.

- **Actively Listen**

Active listening is a technique which requires the listener to restate or paraphrase what they have heard in their own words to confirm that they have understood what the speaker is saying. Active listening also requires the listener to pay close attention to non-verbal cues. When used effectively, active listening can increase the likelihood of opening up, build trust, and establish understanding and comfort between both parties.

- **Role Model**

Your mentee will undoubtedly look to you as a role model and example of how to comport themselves in a professional manner. Always be aware of how you may be presenting yourself to your mentee and ask yourself if you would want your mentee to emulate your actions or choices.

- **Provide Feedback**

Students do not yet have much experience receiving feedback or constructive criticism so this may be an area of sensitivity on the part of your mentee. However, it is important to help them learn how to both give and receive feedback.

- **Share Similar Experiences**

The best mentors are ones who inspire their mentees, and one of the best ways to inspire another is to share personal stories of accomplishment, overcoming adversity, perseverance, etc. Be willing to share your personal experiences, including successes and failures, with your mentee.

- **Set Clear and Realistic Goals**

You have the unique opportunity to support your mentee as they set specific goals related to the future and their career aspirations. Use your active listening skills to help your mentee set attainable goals for the year and then offer them assistance and support as they work toward their goals. It is important to start discussing goals and expectations as soon as the relationship begins. Goals are important because they provide direction and clarity to help improve the success of the relationship.

- **Facilitate Self-reflection and Self-development**

Ask thought-provoking questions to help your mentee understand and articulate his or her motivations, accomplishments, weaknesses, etc.

## NETWORKING

One objective of the Gustavus Mentoring Program is to have every mentee complete at least three informational interviews. It is important to work with the mentee, find out their skills and interests, and assist them in setting up interviews with other professionals to help them explore possible careers and professions. Students don't know what they don't know and one of the best ways to have them learn about a profession is to have a conversation with a person in that field. Once the mentee has decided the direction they want to pursue upon graduation, they can start to build their network to assist them in their job search. Networking will help them build confidence when meeting new people and improve their interpersonal and professional skills.

- Share experiences of how your network has helped you in your career, i.e. landing an interview or job offer, receiving a promotion, finding new clients, etc.
- Provide tips on how you approach meeting new people. How do you start the conversation?
- Reinforce the importance of effective communication skills: smiling when you speak (including when talking on the phone), maintaining eye contact, having a firm handshake, being an active listener, and finding common areas of interest.
- Talk about the importance of following up effectively and how to initiate the next steps.

## MANAGE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Take a moment to reflect on your expectations for this relationship. What do you expect of your mentee? What are you hoping to get out of this relationship? Having expectations for a relationship is very normal and can be helpful in setting the stage. However, be aware of your expectations and understand the ways in which they are unrealistic or unlikely.

Common Expectations	What if?	Consider this
You will have an immediate connection with your mentee.	You meet for the first three months and don't feel like you are connecting.	Relationships take time to build, often it may take several months before trust is established. Hang in there.
Your mentee will always call you back.	Your mentee never calls you back.	Your mentee may be struggling with time management. You have an opportunity to continue to pursue your mentee and be a consistent presence in the midst of busy college life.
Your mentee will initiate contact.	You always have to be the first one to reach out.	You can model positive behavior by initiating contact and getting the ball rolling. Your mentee may learn from your commitment!
Your mentee will need a lot of help on his/her resume and job preparation skills.	Your mentee feels set with their resume and is confident about getting a job after college.	There is innate value in your relationship. Your mentee can learn new things from you and you can offer your mentee a safe space to process the experience of being a student. Think outside the box for ways you may support them.
Your mentee will be savvy and have the skills needed to get a job after college.	Your mentee lacks basic interpersonal skills needed for networking and interviewing.	Focus on your mentees strengths and look for skills to build on. Don't be afraid to make observations about ways they can grow and improve and be sure to affirm things you see as well.
Your mentee will be interested in your career.	Your mentee is set on a completely different career path and seems to wish their mentor was in that field.	You both have a chance to learn! Find out what your mentee is interested in and look for commonalities to talk about. Consider the skills and experience you have in your profession that translate.

# THE STAGES OF MENTORING

## **The Beginning: Getting Acquainted and Setting Expectations**

The first stage of mentoring is about establishing a rapport and getting to know each other. At the first meeting, you should create and review the mentoring agreement so that the expectations are clear for both parties. Below are some questions to help you get started:

### **Establishing a Rapport**

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Exchange bios/resumes/curriculum vitae.
3. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?
4. Why did you choose Gustavus?
5. Share your background and reasons for attending Gustavus.
6. What, or who, inspires you?
7. Of what accomplishment are you most proud?
8. What are your personal values?

### **Setting Expectations/Ground Rules**

1. Why did you choose to participate in the *Gustavus Mentoring Program*?
2. Have you had a mentor before? What did you learn from the experience?
3. What do you wish to gain from this experience?
4. Discuss confidentiality and what it means to both of you.
5. Clarify expectations for meetings (i.e. when, where, and for how long you will meet?  
Who will be responsible for making the arrangements?)
6. Clarify expectations for correspondence in between meetings.

### **Academic/Professional and Co-Curricular Exploration**

1. What is your major(s)? Minor(s)? What about this subject interests you?
2. Tell me about the classes you have taken thus far.
3. Which professors have made an impact on you?
4. What organizations have you joined/thought about joining so far?
5. Share your thoughts on the value of the liberal arts.
6. What would your dream job/career be? What is appealing about it?
7. Have you thought about any alternate career paths?
8. Do you have any experience in this area?
9. Have you taken any career or interest assessments? (if not, encourage a visit to the Career Development office) What were the results? Did they surprise you in any way?



## The Middle: Achieving Objectives, Goal-Setting, and Networking

Every mentee has specific objectives that they need to achieve during the mentorship. It is important that your conversations and activities are focused around these items.

- Completed resume, LinkedIn profile, Handshake account, and expanded Gusties Connect profile
- Have three informational interviews
- Attend a career related event
- Construct “elevator speeches” to introduce yourself, articulate your skills, etc.
- Set up a career exploration, internship, or summer job in career interest, if possible

In addition, you may be working with your mentee to create an action plan to achieve additional goals. You can help your mentee set goals by using the **SMART** model:

**Specific**—A goal of graduating is too general. Specify how this will be accomplished, e.g. study more in order to receive better grades.

**Measurable**—Establish criteria for how to achieve a goal. Measurable does not refer to a timeline; it means determining a way to measure your success in completing the long-range goal.

**Action-oriented**—Be proactive in taking action that will result in reaching the desired goal.

**Realistic**—Strive for attainable goals; consider the resources and constraints relative to the situation

**Timely**—Allow reasonable time to complete each goal, but not so much time that you lose focus or motivation.

A key to the success of the program is to have mentees learn how to network in a professional setting. Your mentee will appreciate hearing your personal approach, as well as suggestions on building and maintaining a network.

## The End: Celebrating Successes and Evaluation

The final stage of mentoring is a time of reflection for both you and your mentee.

- What lesson or new information was learned?
- What were the greatest challenges?
- What goals were accomplished?
- How will you use the information/knowledge gained moving forward?
- What are the next steps?

At this time it is also important to redefine your relationship and set new ground rules or boundaries for any future interaction. The formal program ends at the conclusion of the academic year, but that does not preclude you from continuing the relationship. If you wish to continue the mentoring relationship in the next year’s cycle please email the Director after confirming with your mentee.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Work with mentee to achieve their objectives
- 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 some probing questions like "What problems excite you?" and "What strengths you can build on?"
- Focus on transferable skills. Skills such as communication, self-management, writing, and public speaking can be applied to a variety of different positions and will diversify your mentee's career capital. Reflect on questions like "What skills would help a recent graduate gain more influence in my industry?" and "What skill gaps could become barriers?" before your first meeting with your mentee.
- Encourage your mentee to join Toastmasters or another soft-skill enhancing program
- Encourage them to join professional organizations as a student member according to their major or career interest (mentors and faculty can provide suggestions)
- Invite your mentee to shadow you or another associate at your place of employment
- Send your mentee career articles as well as encourage them to subscribe and read relevant magazines and articles
- Discuss training and educational opportunities. For instance, would an advanced degree be helpful in your industry?
- Invite your mentee to join you in a social activity where other professionals or clients are involved
- Ask your mentee how classes are going, what classes they plan on taking in the future, and what activities they are involved in
- Give feedback on your mentee's professional attitude, presence, and conduct
- Ask them to identify and research appropriate careers and companies
- Ask your mentee to connect with you on LinkedIn. Critique their profile and teach them how to effectively use it
- Suggest your mentee take a self-assessment test such as the Strong Interest Inventory or CliftonStrengths (both offered by Career Development) and share their results with you
- Discuss the difference between business professional and business casual dress
- Inquire about your mentee's progress in getting an internship or job related to their career
- Work with mentees to set up informational interviews to understand more about potential careers and build their professional network
- Discuss current industry trends and developments at your company to give your mentee perspective on how the job market changes and evolves
- Have your mentee attend a morning staff meeting, client meeting, or a professional association meeting with you (if appropriate)
- Discuss any generational differences that may come into play in the workplace
- Ask your mentee to make a vision statement that conveys where they would like to be in five or ten years. Review and discuss. You may even want to ask them to consider a "stretch" goal that gets them outside of their comfort zone while challenging them to try something new
- Encourage your mentee to attend career related events offered through Career Development
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- Talk to them about their struggles in identifying a career path, if applicable.
- Ask them about their classes and what they are currently learning in the classroom.
- Talk to them about where they want to live after Gustavus.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Amherst College, Mentor Handbook, 2015

Colorado University-Leeds Business School, Mentor Handbook, 2016

Stanford University, Mentor Handbook, 2015

Transylvania University, Mentor Handbook, 2015

Xavier University, Mentor Handbook, 2015

University of Kansas, Mentor Handbook, 2017

## PROGRAM POLICIES

### **Eligibility Policy**

Mentors must be Gustavus graduates or friends of the College and mentees must be at least sophomores currently enrolled at Gustavus Adolphus College.

### **Screening and Training Policy**

All mentors and mentees must complete the screening process and be accepted into the program. We strongly recommend that all mentors and mentees attend the beginning of the year training session to ensure that the relationship gets off to a good start.

### **Match Support and Supervision Policy**

The Gustavus Mentoring Program lead, Laura Diaz, is available to you throughout the program if you encounter challenges in your relationship or are looking for additional resources or support. There will be a one-month check and a mid-year check to make sure the relationship is progressing.

### **Confidentiality Policy**

Program staff will not share information and records about mentors and mentees with others unless given permission. Mentors and mentees are expected to keep information about their mentor/mentee confidential.

### **Overnight Visit and Out-of-Town Travel Policy**

Mentor/mentee visits should take place within their own community and not take place out-of-state.

If an opportunity presents itself where a mentor would like to conduct business travel with a mentee, special arrangements and approvals need to be arranged with Laura Diaz.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

Mentors must disclose information indicating that a mentor or mentee may be dangerous or intends to harm themselves or others to Laura Diaz immediately so she can disclose it to the appropriate state and/or local authorities.

### **Unacceptable Behavior Policy**

Mentors or mentees that engage in illegal substance use or criminal activity will be immediately removed from the program.

### **Closure Policy**

The formal mentoring program will end at the end of the academic year, however we encourage the relationship to continue if both parties agree. It is crucial that both mentor and mentee complete a year-end evaluation to continue to improve the program.

# SAMPLE FIRST MEETING AGENDA

## I. Introductions

- Share bios/resumes
- Share your connection to Gustavus
- Develop a rapport by discovering points in common and shared interests

## II. Mentoring Discussion

- Discuss what mentoring means to you
- Share previous experiences with mentoring (if any)

## III. Expectations

- Clarify what you hope to gain from this experience
- Clarify when and how often you will meet
- Clarify who will be responsible for initiating and arranging meetings

## IV. Boundaries

- Discuss what, if any, topics are off-limits
- Discuss any time constraints
- Clarify your availability for communication between meetings and in what form, if any, that should take
- Discuss confidentiality

**V. Set up next meeting /Exchange information** (may also be completed through Gusties Connect  
Communication should be conducted through Gusties Connect but you may still want to convey the following information just in case an emergency comes up.)

**Mentee's Name:**

**Mentee's Cell Phone:**

**Mentee's Email:**

**Mentee's LinkedIn:**