

LEWIS & CLARK LAW SCHOOL

MENTORING TOOLKIT

Be the initiator. As soon as you get information regarding your law student mentee, contact them through an introductory email. Let them know a little bit about you, where you work, where you went to school (not just law school) and how long you've been practicing. Let them know immediately whether you can attend the kick-off reception and then make sure you attend. If you cannot attend, let your mentee know immediately and schedule plans to meet with them for lunch. –Kristin Sterling Hopkins '00

Get Started on the Right Foot:

- When you receive the name and contact information for your new mentee, save it somewhere (e.g., in your contacts list) and share the student's information with your assistant/anyone who might answer your phone or check your email.
- Add some reminders to your calendaring system – to check in with your mentee on a regular (e.g., monthly) basis.
- Send a quick introductory email to your new mentee even before the kick-off reception, letting them know you are looking forward to meeting them at the reception (or, if you are unable to attend, suggesting another time to meet)

Recommendations for Program:

- Students are informed that, initially, you will contact them, but that they may also contact you. Many law students are somewhat intimidated about contacting lawyers and often fear they are "bothering" their Mentor.
- Attorneys frequently report that they "told [their] student to call when they wanted to get together." We have learned this does not necessarily work. Attorneys must show some initiative in contacting their students.
- It is absolutely crucial early on for the Mentors to show willingness to meet/talk with their students. Please try not to cancel/change the first few meetings. Once the first 2-3 contacts are made, it will be easier for students to feel comfortable emailing or calling, and they will be more understanding of last minute shifts.
- Think of interesting things that are coming up in your work schedule. Make the student aware of them even if you are not able to attend, and then follow up by phone to see how it went.
- Make sure your office staff recognize your student's name. If you are rarely available by phone, provide possible meeting times to your secretary and ask s/he to arrange a mutually convenient time.

- Please try to respond to their emails and phone calls. After one or two unreturned emails or phone messages or scheduling problems, students interpret this as lack of interest on your part and stop trying to reach you. (This is actually the biggest problem students report.)
- Remember that most students do not have a full picture of what legal practice entails. They may not know what to ask you or what types of knowledge you possess. Think of how little you knew when you were in law school; try to figure out what would be helpful to expose them to. Take the lead in suggesting topics or activities of interest. The dose of reality is very helpful.
- Students appreciate the support and encouragement that a successful relationship provides. It helps calm fears about law school and career choices.

Meetings:

Introduce your mentee to your lifestyle as a lawyer. Let your mentee know that there is life after law school—extend an invite to your backyard BBQ, introduce your mentee to your colleagues and friends, go out for happy hour drinks at your favorite pub. --Jenny Morf Madkour '98

Engage your employer in the project. Tell them in advance that you plan on participating in the project. Let them know the time commitment you expect to make. Ask if it would be acceptable to have your mentee visit the office, participate in a project, and/or attend a trial, hearing, or meeting. --Sean O'Day '00

Frequency of Meetings: If possible, try to meet your student at the kick-off reception in September. If you are unable to attend, please contact the student and arrange another time for your initial meeting. Thereafter, try to meet your student at least twice during each semester. Occasional telephone or e-mail contact is also a great option.

Location of Meetings: Meetings might take place at your office, over breakfast or lunch, or at some other pre-determined setting to observe/participate in an activity (see below).

Be sure to stay in contact with your mentee on a regular basis. Email is great for this. Don't just meet your mentee at law school functions--invite them to your office, take them on a tour of the courthouse, take them to lunch, take them out for drinks with your friends (especially if your friends are lawyers too). --Kristin Sterling Hopkins '00

Mentor Program Goals and Topics of Discussion

To lend some structure to the mentoring experience, the following are suggested goals for the year:

- ❖ *Exploring the practice of law and employment options*
- ❖ *Effective networking*
- ❖ *Resume review, cover letters and interviewing skills*
- ❖ *Professionalism – what it means and putting it into practice*

September: Getting To Know You

Topics

- What brought the student to law school at this point in life/career?
- At start of the year, what are the biggest concerns and what is most exciting?
- Discuss your own background and practice: what do you enjoy most and what is most challenging in your own career?

Possible Activities

- ❖ A visit to your office
- ❖ Explore a favorite spot in Portland

October: Exploring the Practice Of Law

Topics

- What are the student's career objectives and why?
- Discuss the student's qualifications and background as they fit with career goals
- How did you connect your background and qualifications to your current career?
- Discuss flexibility in experiences, the benefits of transferrable skills where applicable

Possible Activities

- ❖ Shadow experience with mentee (court, meeting)
- ❖ Visit to courthouse to observe hearing or trial

Given the busyness of winter holidays and the fact that students will be in finals beginning the second week of December, you and your mentee can discuss whether you will check in or get together during the November/December timeframe.

January: Spring Semester Goals & Effective Networking

Topics

- What are the student's plans for spring semester and potentially for summer
- Discuss the importance of networking in obtaining employment
- Discuss resources for building a network and different types of networking: receptions, bar association involvement, outside activities, informational interviews
- What are the student's professional targets for building network?
- What are your own networking tips, how do you build community and is it still important?

Possible Activities

- ❖ Schedule lunch with another attorney practicing in field of interest
- ❖ Take mentee to bar function or presentation

February: Application Materials and Interviewing Skills

Topics

- What is the student actively doing to gain practical experience this summer?
- Has the student built a legal resume yet? Has the student determined what to highlight?
- What do you value in a resume/ what would be important given the student's current career objectives?
- Discuss how to prepare for interviews, and what makes for a good interview

Possible Activities

- ❖ Do a review of resume and cover letter with student and discuss strengths and weaknesses afterwards
- ❖ Set up practice interview for student with you or an attorney in field of interest

March: Professionalism

Topics

- What does professionalism mean to you and how do you put it into practice?
- What are the professionalism pitfalls you've observed in your career?
- Discuss meaning of ethics vs. professionalism

Possible Activities

- ❖ Meet with former mentees or colleagues and their mentees
- ❖ Attend bar association meeting or CLE

The bottom line is that the program takes a time commitment and both parties must work at maintaining contact. If you have any difficulty contacting your student, call or email Tracy Sullivan at Lewis & Clark Law School, 503.768.6886 or tas@lclark.edu.