

Rotary Club of Milwaukee  
Guide for  
Student Scholar Mentors

Prepared by the  
Rotary Club of Milwaukee  
Scholarship Committee



## **Mentor Guide**

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Welcome to the (Rotary Club of Milwaukee (RCM) Mentoring Program. This document offers general guidance to ease your transition as you mentor some of the best and brightest young minds our city has to offer.

After several years of operating this program, the RCM knows that this work has been very impactful in guiding numerous young professionals towards personal and professional success and exemplifies the ideals associated in Rotary's Four Way Test.

You are not alone in this journey, as the Scholarship Committee stands ready to assist your efforts through dedicated training and supplemental support. This support will augment your skills as you work to provide value to your student.

Investing in a mentor-mentee relationship can be immensely rewarding. So, let's get started!

## **Mentor Roles and Expectations**

At its core, a mentor serves as a trusted guide, supporting the growth and development of a mentee. In the case of RCM mentors, they guide student mentees through the uncharted territory of living and learning as scholars advance through higher education.

RCM Mentors:

- ◆ Set realistic expectations for the relationship; understand what the mentee can and should accomplish
- ◆ Are available outside of scheduled meeting times if a need arises
- ◆ Maintain consistent contact with the mentee
- ◆ Listen with empathy
- ◆ Be open minded regarding the mentee's needs and opinions
- ◆ Offer encouragement
- ◆ Work at building the relationship
- ◆ Follow through on commitments
- ◆ Provide emotional support where needed
- ◆ Communicate often
- ◆ Alert mentee to opportunities that will benefit them
- ◆ Share information on own experiences, reasons for success and failure
- ◆ Give and accept constructive feedback when needed

For a successful relationship to develop and thrive, RCM mentors should:

- ◆ **Have consistent contact** with your mentee. We recommend a monthly minimum, but as you begin your relationship, the two of you should establish a frequency schedule that is mutually agreed. You should also establish the expectations around canceling and forms of communication – phone, email, text, social media messaging, etc.
- ◆ **Listen** to concerns or problems; serve as a sounding board to aid mentee in working through a problem and solving it themselves

- ◆ **Provide information**, insight, knowledge, ideas, and feedback at the appropriate time to challenge thinking, perceptions, and behavior
- ◆ **Offer constructive feedback** by providing non-judgmental descriptions of behavior, events and anticipated consequences, then allow mentee to form own conclusions
- ◆ **Explore options**; brainstorm alternatives to actions, decisions that help mentee see situations with a new perspective
- ◆ **Attend** Rotary and mentor group meetings.
- ◆ **Review** mentee report cards and discuss academic performance and goals
- ◆ **Submit** Rotary reports as requested. (The RCM offers periodic surveys to the mentors and mentees. Additionally, we will ask for mentor reports. We need your candid and timely feedback, as we strive to monitor and evaluate the program's effectiveness for all stakeholders).

## **Tips for Getting Started with your Mentee**

### ***Logistics***

As you initiate your first conversations with your mentee, it is best to agree upon:

- ◆ When, where and how long are meetings?
- ◆ Who sets up the meetings?
- ◆ When necessary, how do meetings get canceled and rescheduled?
- ◆ What is the best method for staying in contact with each other?

### ***Questions to consider:***

Here are a few conversation starters for your initial meetings:

- ◆ What do you (mentee) want to get from this relationship?
- ◆ Here are areas/topics I am good at; do any of these interest you?
- ◆ What developmental needs, knowledge, skills, etc. are of greatest value to you?
- ◆ What is your preferred method of learning (listening; reading; hands-on; observing)?
- ◆ How can I increase the comfort level between us?
- ◆ What can each of us do to make sure we start off on the right track?
- ◆ Is there anything I need to know about you that would be helpful (likes, dislikes, preferences)?

### ***Clarifying expectations:***

Most professionals place a high value on taking the initiative to clarify their own expectations and to understand the expectations of others. This quality contributes to the establishment of strong and positive mentoring relationships. Expectations that should be communicated during the initial stages of a mentoring relationship include:

- ◆ There should be an expectation that certain hurdles will have to be overcome – initially getting your mentee to open up, challenges across age/generational, gender, background, and experiences, etc. This is normal, and as your relationship develops it will improve.
- ◆ The frequency of contact, the availability and the accessibility of the mentor and mentee.
- ◆ The amount and kind of support needed by the mentee or that can be provided by the mentor.
- ◆ The various roles the mentor finds comfortable: listener, supporter, advisor, guide, counselor, role model, friend, nurturer or resource in the background.
- ◆ The range of roles the mentee will find natural: listener, observer, initiator of requests for help or guidance, need for nurturing or autonomy, self-expectations as peer or equal.

- ◆ If you feel you are at an impasse with your mentee, please reach out to the committee and your senior mentor resource, as we will make sure you have the support you need to deal with your situation.

## Moving forward

In everyday life, we each utilize various techniques and tools when starting new relationships. The same holds true for this relationship. Follow what has worked well for you. Mentoring discussions can be wide-ranging, but most importantly should encompass topics you both find of interest and mutually beneficial. As you develop your relationship, you will have deeper discussions, which will become more personable and intimate over time.

Topical examples could include:

- ◆ Work Life Balance - Hours for study, work, and play
- ◆ Financial issues and budgeting for current needs and future success
- ◆ What does success look like? Having a rudimentary idea of plans after graduation
- ◆ Knowing and understanding / using your campus resources and connections
- ◆ Code shifting and etiquette for a number of audiences and situations (everyday language and how it is different for school, informal events, business, etc.)
- ◆ How and when people socialize
- ◆ Dress code
- ◆ How people compete and cooperate
- ◆ How information is communicated and shared; expectations for contact with mentor
- ◆ How questions are asked and disagreement expressed
- ◆ How performance is recognized and contribution credited
- ◆ Sense of urgency or casualness in assignments, meetings, projects
- ◆ Relationships between professionals and support staff; insiders and outsiders

## **From the Mentee's Perspective**

### ***Benefits of the relationship***

Having you as a mentor provides many benefits to your mentee, including:

- ◆ Opportunity to learn from the mentor's particular experiences, insights, knowledge in the business world, specialty area of academic study
- ◆ Chance to test ideas, strategies in a friendly environment
- ◆ Expanded network of contacts keeping abreast of important changes or plans
- ◆ Understanding of and reinforcement for specific behaviors that support success in school and business world
- ◆ Assistance in defining personal growth and development needs
- ◆ Increased access to technical, administrative and professional leaders in business and area of study

### ***Responsibilities in the relationship***

Being a RCM student scholar holds some basic expectations. These will be shared with scholars during their orientation to the program:

- ◆ Appreciate the mentor's help without being encumbered by a sense of relative status, position within business world; do not allow "awe" to create a feeling of inferiority
- ◆ Welcome the expression of interest and concern
- ◆ Be open to feedback; accept information and evaluate its merits
- ◆ Set realistic expectations for the relationship
  - ◆ I need to know more about...
  - ◆ I want to strengthen the following skills...
  - ◆ I need to increase my knowledge of...
  - ◆ I have set the following personal development plans I want to achieve in the next six months
  - ◆ I need to understand this about school or work...
- ◆ Communicate problems clearly and early, before they expand
- ◆ Initiate appropriately frequent contact with mentor
- ◆ Seek help when needed
- ◆ Be honest about strong feelings, opinions
- ◆ Contribute ideas about options for solving a given problem
- ◆ Discuss failures and successes equally so learning can occur
- ◆ Work at building a solid relationship