

Oklahoma City Community College

Students Connecting with Mentors for Success

Policy Manual

Mission Statement

The mission of Students Connecting with Mentors for Success is to connect students to mentors who will provide supportive relationships that facilitate academic program completion and post-graduation preparation.

Vision Statement

Students Connecting with Mentors for Success envisions a campus community in which every student experiences supportive one-on-one relationships and community support, thereby facilitating the student's academic achievement, professional accomplishment, and personal fulfillment.

Program Director—Job Description

The Director oversees the development and implementation of the mentoring program, which matches adult volunteer mentors with students in a one-on-one relationship. The Director ensures program quality and performance related to recruiting, screening, matching, monitoring, and closing the relationship with the mentor and student, and communicates with the mentor and student throughout the relationship.

Reporting to the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services, the Director is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the mentoring program and will carry out the responsibilities of the position as defined below:

Duties:

- Create and oversee implementation of an ongoing mentoring program, to include professionals from the community to serve as mentors for OCCC students who are seeking a degree or certificate of mastery.
- Perform and oversee participant screening, training, matching, support and

supervision, and closure activities.

- Manage the planning and implementation of mentor and/or mentee group events.
- Maintain and update the program's policy and procedure manual as needed.
- Oversee program evaluation.
- Attend regional/national conferences to increase knowledge of mentoring programs and best practices.
- Complete other duties and activities as needed.

Recruitment

It is the policy of the SCMS program that there be ongoing recruitment for new mentors. As such, a formal Recruitment Plan will be developed and will include recruitment goals, strategies, timeline, and adjustments. The Director assumes lead responsibility for the recruitment of new mentors.

Eligibility Requirements

Each participant, mentor and student, must meet the defined eligibility criteria. Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the program Director and acceptance may then be allowed with the written approval of the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services when all eligibility requirements are not clearly met. These instances are expected to be rare.

Mentor Eligibility Requirements:

- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Be willing to adhere to all SCMS policies and procedures.
- Agree to a one-year commitment to the program.
- Be willing to meet with the student face-to-face at least once per month.
- Be willing to communicate with the mentee weekly.
- Complete the screening procedure.
- Agree to attend mentor trainings as required.
- Be willing to communicate regularly with the program Director and submit monthly meeting and activity information.
- Have a clean criminal history.

- Have never been accused, arrested, charged, or convicted of child abuse or molestation.
- Not be a convicted felon. If the applicant has been convicted of a felony then they may be considered only after a period of seven years with demonstrated good behavior and an appropriate and corrective attitude regarding past behaviors.
- Not be a user of illicit drugs.
- Not use alcohol or controlled substances in an excessive or inappropriate manner.
- Not be currently in treatment for substance abuse. If a substance abuse problem has occurred in the past, the applicant must have completed a non-addictive period of at least five years.
- Not currently be under treatment for a mental disorder or have been hospitalized for a mental disorder in the past three years.
- Not have falsified information during the course of the SCMS screening process.

Mentee Eligibility Requirements:

- Be an OCCC student seeking an Associate's degree or certificate of mastery. Student may be full- or part-time.
- Demonstrate a desire to participate in the program and be willing to abide by all SCMS program policies and procedures.
- Agree to a one-year commitment to the program.
- Be willing to meet face-to-face with mentor at least once per month.
- Be willing to communicate with the mentor weekly.
- Agree to attend mentee trainings as required.
- Be willing to communicate regularly with the program Director and report monthly meeting and activity information.

Screening

At minimum, the following screening procedures are required for mentor and mentee applicants. Program staff must ensure that each applicant completes these established minimum screening procedures:

Mentor Screening Procedures:

- Be willing to attend mentor training.
- Complete mentor application.

- Be willing to allow OCCC to conduct a federal and state criminal records check.
- Complete personal interview.

Mentee Screening Procedures:

- Attend mentee training.
- Complete application.
- Complete personal interview.

The decision to accept an applicant into the program will be based upon a final assessment done by program staff at the completion of the mentor or mentee screening procedure. The SCMS Director has final approval for an applicant's acceptance into the program. No reason will be provided to mentor applicants rejected from participation in the program. All mentors are expected to meet the eligibility criteria. However, extenuating circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the program Director and acceptance may then be allowed with written approval of the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services when all eligibility requirements are not clearly met. Documentation of the screening process must be maintained for each applicant and placed in confidential files.

Training

There will be training opportunities for mentors and mentees. The agendas will cover basic program guidelines, safety issues, and communication/relationship building skills.

It is the responsibility of the program Director to plan, develop, and deliver all training sessions with assistance from other staff, faculty members, and off-campus experts. Evaluation forms will be collected from each training session for the purposes of evaluating and improving the content of the trainings and trainer performance.

Matching Mentors and Mentees

It is the policy of SCMS that the program Director should use the factors outlined in the matching procedure to determine the suitability of a mentor/mentee match.

The program coordinator will determine the suitability based on the following criteria:

- Preferences of the mentor and/or mentee
- Same ethnicity
- Common interests

- Similar experiences
- Geographic proximity
- Compatible personalities

Match Support and Supervision

SCMS staff must gather information regarding mentor/mentee contact including the dates and times spent participating in mentoring activities and a description of those activities. The mentor and mentee will be surveyed in order to evaluate the success of the match. In the case of match difficulties, discord, or concerns, SCMS staff will conduct an intervention in order to address problem areas, as outlined in SCMS Procedures.

Confidentiality

It is the policy of the SCMS program to protect the confidentiality of all participants. With the exception of the limitations listed below, program staff will only share information about mentors and mentees with other OCCC professional staff. All prospective mentors and mentees will be informed of the scope and limitations of confidentiality by SCMS program staff. Additionally, mentors are required to keep information about their mentee and his/her family confidential.

Limits of Confidentiality

Information from mentor and mentee records may be shared with individuals or organizations as specified below under the following conditions:

- SCMS staff are mandatory reporters and as such must disclose information indicating that a mentor or mentee may be dangerous to or intends to harm him/herself or others.
- Information may be gathered about program participants and shared with other participants, individuals, or organizations only upon receipt of signed “release” forms from mentors or mentees.
- Information may only be provided to law enforcement officials or the courts pursuant to a valid and enforceable subpoena.
- Information may be provided to legal counsel in the event of litigation or potential litigation involving OCCC. Such information is considered privileged information, and its confidentiality is protected by law.
- At the time a mentor or mentee is considered as a match candidate, SCMS staff will share limited information between the prospective match parties. Names and

addresses are shared with mentors and mentees only after the involved parties have agreed to be formally matched. Each party shall have the right to refuse the proposed match based on the preliminary information provided to them. The information to be shared may include:

- Mentors: sex, race, profession, interests, hobbies, marriage or family status, reasons for applying to the program, and a summary of why the individual was chosen for the particular match.
- Mentees: age, sex, race, area(s) of interest, hobbies, a summary of the needs assessment, and mentee expectations.

Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and Firearms

It is the policy of the SCMS program to prohibit the use of drugs, alcohol, and firearms. Mentees and mentors are prohibited from using drugs or alcohol or possessing firearms while engaged in mentoring activities. Any suspected violations should be reported to the program Director

Alcoholic Beverages. No SCMS participant will possess or consume beer, wine, or other alcoholic beverages while actively engaged or prior to actively engaging in mentoring, nor shall any participant endorse the use of alcohol. Mentors and mentees may go to a location where alcohol is served provided that the mentor and mentee do not consume any alcohol.

Drugs. No participant of the SCMS program will manufacture, possess, distribute, or use any illegal substance while engaged in mentoring or otherwise.

Tobacco. OCCC promotes a smoke- and tobacco-free environment. To that end, smoking and the use of all tobacco products is prohibited on the OCCC campus and those involved with the SCMS program must refrain from the use of such products while engaged in mentoring. The use of tobacco products includes but is not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff, or other matters or substances that contain tobacco.

Weapons, Firearms, and Other Dangerous Materials. The possession or use of firearms, firecrackers, explosives, toxic or dangerous chemicals, or other lethal weapons, equipment, or material while participating in mentoring activities is strictly prohibited.

Any violation of this policy will result in the immediate suspension and/or termination of the mentoring relationship. In addition, violations of this policy may result in notification being given to legal authorities that may result in arrest or legal action and may be punishable by fine and/or imprisonment.

Conduct

Inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated on the part of mentors or mentees while participating in the program. This policy is in addition to behavioral requirements stipulated in other policies or procedures within this manual. A number of behaviors are regarded as incompatible with SCMS goals, values, and program standards and therefore are considered unacceptable and prohibited while participants are engaged in mentoring activities:

- Unwelcome physical contact, such as inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, punching, and physical assault.
- Unwelcome physical, verbal, visual, or behavioral mannerisms or conduct that denigrates, shows hostility, or aversion toward any individual.
- Demeaning or exploitive behavior of either a sexual or nonsexual nature, including threats of such behavior.
- Display of demeaning, suggestive, or pornographic material.
- Known sexual abuse or neglect of a child.
- Denigration, public or private, of any mentee's family member(s).
- Denigration, public or private, of political or religious institutions or their leaders.
- Intentional violation of any local, state, or federal law.
- Drinking while driving under the influence of alcohol.
- Possession of illegal substances.

Any unacceptable behavior, as specified but not limited to the above, will result in a warning and/or disciplinary action including suspension or termination from participation in the SCMS program.

Closure

All mentors and mentees must participate in closure procedures when their match ends. Closure is defined as the ending of a formal match relationship regardless of the circumstances of the match ending or whether they intend to have future contact informally beyond the match duration.

Closure can occur for any number of reasons including: the contracted match duration has ended; one or both participants do not want to continue the match; there are changes in life circumstances of either the mentor or mentee; or an individual no longer meets the requirements for program participation. Hence, the match may end at the discretion of the mentor, mentee, and/or SCMS program staff. It is left to the discretion of the program

Director whether an individual will be reassigned to another match in the future based upon past participation performance and/or current goals and needs of the program.

Future contact will be at the mutual and informal agreement of the mentor and the mentee. If future contact is agreed upon, OCCC and the SCMS program will not be responsible for monitoring or supporting the match after the match has ended. The Director will verbally and in writing inform the mentor and mentee that the formal match has ended and that OCCC will not be liable for any incidents that occur after the match has closed.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation will be a key component in measuring the success of the SCMS mentoring program and for making continuous improvements in the effectiveness and delivery of mentoring services. Evaluations will be conducted throughout the program utilizing web-based surveys, written questionnaires, or personal interviews. Inquiries will regard relevant information such as perception of interactions, meaningful activities, and overall level of satisfaction. The feedback of mentors and mentees will be collected and used to improve the program as recommended.

MENTEE

Setting the Foundation

As mentee, it is important for you to establish a purposeful foundation for your mentor/mentee relationship from the very beginning. What you receive from this collaboration is largely up to you. The best thing you can do for yourself and your mentor is to identify the goals you want to achieve as a result of the mentorship. Once you have established the foundation, your mentor can help you with the blueprint you need in order to build on that foundation. You owe it to yourself and your mentor to have a good idea of what you wish to construct. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What do you expect from having a relationship with a mentor?
- What do you want to learn from your mentor?
- Would you like assistance in determining what your major or field of study should be?

- Do you need suggestions on how to better manage your time?
- Would you like to be introduced to professionals in your area of interest?
- Would you like advice on general life issues?

Those are just a few of the many subjects you may want to address. You should compile your list based on what your personal needs are. Please understand that it may not be suitable for you to discuss certain personal issues with your mentor. You may need to speak with OCCC advisors who can direct you to campus resources and subject matter experts for an array of sensitive personal matters. It is important for you to express your specific needs in order to be referred to the best available assistance.

Remember, the more specific you are about your goals, the more effectively your mentor can facilitate your achievement. Your mentor wants to share knowledge, experience, advice, and resources to equip you with what you need to advance your scholastic pursuits, your professional career, and your life comprehensively.

MENTEE

Your First Meeting

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Making a positive first impression on your mentor is the best way to create a climate for success. The more you convey genuine interest and sincere appreciation, the more receptive your mentor will be to devoting the time required to help you. Keep in mind that your mentor may hold the key to countless doors of opportunity for you. You should do your best to establish professional rapport from the first minute you meet.

Before your first meeting, learn all you possibly can about your mentor. You may only receive a limited amount of biographical information beforehand but, minimally, try to conduct an internet search about their profession and place of employment. Attempt to gain insight on their area(s) of expertise and professional background. Your initial encounter with your mentor will be much better if you exhibit personal interest in them and ask questions related to what you have discovered about them.

In your initial meeting, you should particularly ask questions about your mentor's academic and professional journey. Ask about obstacles they have overcome. Seek to gain tips on how to navigate life's challenges and listen attentively to your mentor's life lessons. You are privileged to be in a private master class—take full advantage of the wisdom you will receive. It may transform your life.

PREPARATION

Your mentor will ask questions of you, specifically regarding your areas of study and career interests. You should also be prepared to answer what you want to receive from the mentorship relationship. Ponder the following questions and be ready to provide an answer:

- What are your expectations from the mentoring relationship?
- What obstacles do you anticipate could prevent the two of you from meeting those expectations?
- How can your time together be most useful and meaningful to you?
- How can your mentor help keep you on track to accomplish your academic and professional goals?
- What do you need from your mentor that would make the process most effective for you?
- Would you like to have an agenda for each meeting/conversation?

Additionally, you should be willing to explore ways you can be of service to your mentor. Assure your mentor that you want this collaboration to be a win/win. This sentiment will engender gratitude on the part of the mentor and will enable you to incorporate meaningful contributions whenever you are capable.

THE ROLE OF MENTEE

Working with a mentor as early in your academic career as possible can significantly contribute to your scholastic, personal, and professional success. Mentoring relationships are reciprocal; therefore, it is critical for you to remember that creating an effective mentoring relationship is as much your responsibility as it is your mentor's.

Before your initial meeting with your mentor, give a great deal of thought to exactly what you are willing to do to make the collaboration worthwhile. Remember this: having a mentor is a privilege not an entitlement. Approach this

relationship with humility and gratitude and be prepared to work! You have the wonderful opportunity to have someone who is interested in facilitating your success. Be willing to demonstrate how committed you are to your own academic and professional progress.

Once you meet your mentor, discuss the mentoring process and mutually agree on what methods work best for both of you. Be mindful that any collaborative opportunity your mentor offers is only as effective as your willingness to work hard and take full advantage of that arrangement.

BEST PRACTICES

As a mentee, it is important for you to create an environment that enables you to receive the most benefit from your mentor. The following are a few points to keep in mind as you work with your mentor and mutually develop the mentoring relationship:

- Communicate openly with your mentor. Feel free to ask questions or gain clarity on any matter. Your mentor cannot help you if you do not verbally share your questions and concerns.
- Be a good listener. Your mentor has wisdom and experience that will be helpful to you. Your ability to listen attentively will heighten the benefit you receive from the partnership.
- Be committed to the mentor/mentee relationship. Take initiative and show your mentor that you are invested in the process.
- Welcome constructive feedback from your mentor. Be receptive when your mentor seeks to advise and correct you.
- Honestly and regularly assess your needs, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Identify your short-term and long-term professional goals—the clearer you are about what you want to achieve in your career, the easier it will be for your mentor to serve you effectively.
- Regularly show appreciation and respect to your mentor by expressing gratitude for their assistance. Say the words *thank you*. Send thank-you notes or emails in addition to your verbal expressions.
- Keep all scheduled appointments, arrive on time, follow through on commitments, and respect the mentor explicitly. Your mentor is meeting with you for your benefit. Their time is valuable. Be considerate of the sacrifice they are making on your behalf.