

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.

THE ROLE OF MENTOR

As a mentor, you have the privilege of potentially changing the trajectory of someone's life forever. Being an effective mentor involves the integration of three overarching functions: listener, teacher, and advisor. You have the opportunity to provide insight, direction, and support in a nonjudgmental environment.

Begin your mentoring relationship by encouraging your mentee to start with clear goals and realistic expectations. It is critical to have clarity of purpose from the onset of the mentor/mentee partnership. As your mentee sets goals, you will need to provide guidance as to how to navigate possible obstacles to those goals. Doing so will equip the mentee with developmental coping strategies and critical thinking skills.

Establishing trust and confidentiality will be crucial to a successful relationship. Your ability to establish rapport early on will determine how receptive and open your mentee will be. Remember, some students have never had an adult in their life who simply cares about them. Genuine concern goes a long way in a mentoring partnership. Show respect, be positive, and exude excitement regarding this new collaboration. Your mentee will sense your authenticity and respond favorably.

It is important for you to be a good listener, reliable, caring, committed, discreet, and trustworthy. Build confidence within the mentee and support their positive endeavors. Also, be sure to correct unseemly behavior or improper attitudes. Your mentee is required to be respectful to you and to others. Keep in mind that some students have no one in their life to steer them away from unsuitable conduct. Take a firm stand against any negative dispositions that could potentially cause the mentee to derail their positive advancement.

Above all else, be yourself! No one else can offer what you can. Your mentee will appreciate your unique experiences and perspective. And remember, you have the ultimate privilege to transform a life.

BEST PRACTICES

As mentor, it will be imperative for you to create an environment that makes your mentee feel welcome and comfortable. Many mentees are intimidated by the mentoring relationship. You must take the initiative to make them feel wanted and

respected. The following are a few points to keep in mind as you work with your mentee and mutually develop the mentoring collaboration:

- Establish clear communication with your mentee. Let them know that the two of you will be open and honest about all matters. Make them feel comfortable discussing their true feelings.
- Convey to your mentee that no question is too dumb or mundane. Many students are embarrassed to ask questions about basic everyday matters and proceed through life without an answer. Whether it's knowing which fork to use when dining or how to properly shake someone's hand, your mentee should feel comfortable asking you. Set a climate that facilitates such discussions.
- Be a good listener. Many students have no one who will listen to them without interrupting or judging. The simple act of listening to your mentee will solidify your relationship bond.
- Maintain confidentiality. Many students express reluctance to share feelings due to fearing betrayal. Assure your mentee that you will not share confidential information; however, warn them beforehand that any disclosures that you are legally required to divulge must be handled according to applicable laws.
- Be committed to the mentor/mentee relationship. Your time is valuable so clearly communicate with your mentee what the frequency and duration of your meetings will be. Get the most benefit out of your time together.
- When appropriate, offer constructive criticism to your mentee. Your words should be phrased in a way that doesn't destroy their spirit but you should certainly take every opportunity to correct unsuitable behavior or attitudes. You may be the only person they have who will steer them in the right direction.
- Be sure to commend your mentee's achievements. As you discuss good grades and other academic wins, be sure to give them a pat on the back. Also commend them on general accomplishments in other areas of their life. Unfortunately, many students never hear the words, "Good Job!" Be that person who reinforces positive behavior.
- Respect goes a long way with a mentee. As they respect you, you also extend polite courtesies to them as well. Doing so will enable them to see that you value them as a fellow human being and will demolish barriers of distrust.

- If your mentee needs advice on matters that are outside of your expertise, contact OCCC and we will provide counselors or subject-matter experts to assist the student.
- One of the best ways you can serve your mentee is to provide advice on how to launch and propel their professional career. Where possible, connect them with colleagues who have job openings and/or mentorships available.
- Take your mentee with you to networking events and introduce them to local business professionals.
- Remind your mentee of the importance of outstanding academic performance. Check with them regularly to see how well they are doing in class. Advise them to seek on-campus help if they are performing poorly. Academic success is critical to future success!

MENTOR

Setting the Foundation

As mentor, you will need to help your mentee establish the best foundation for a successful collaborative environment. Encourage your mentee to identify the goals he or she wants to achieve as a result of this mentoring relationship. Remind them that your purpose is to facilitate their academic and professional success. You are not going to do their work for them. You are going to provide advice and resources to the best of your ability; however, they must have the drive and perseverance to accomplish their goals.

By the time of your first meeting, your mentee should have answers to 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 your mentee may want to address. You should make it clear to your mentee that some personal issues may not be suitable for discussion. In those cases, encourage your mentee to speak with OCCC advisors who can direct them to campus resources and subject matter experts for an array of sensitive personal matters. Avoid giving legal counsel or medical advice; direct them to licensed personnel instead. Also, warn your mentee that confidentiality does not apply to matters where the law requires you to report matters to the proper authorities. If you are unsure about how to proceed with a matter, contact OCCC and we will advise you accordingly.

This mentoring partnership is designed for you to share knowledge, experience, advice, and resources to equip your mentee with what they need to advance their scholastic pursuits, professional career, and their life comprehensively.

MENTOR

Your First Meeting

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

It is highly likely that your mentee is nervous and intimidated to meet you. It would be helpful for you to set the tone for your mentoring relationship by being cordial and welcoming from the very first moment you meet. The more you convey genuine interest in your mentee, the sooner you will be able to establish trust and create a winsome bond. You may also be nervous about meeting your mentee; however, you want to make every effort to put them at ease and create a comfort zone. If you can establish rapport in this first meeting, you will be well on your way to conquering hesitation and apprehension on the part of your mentee.

Your mentee has been instructed to ask questions about your professional journey. Be open about the trials and triumphs you have had throughout your career. Many students believe that experiencing a difficulty is a reason to give up. Inform them that everyone has obstacles in life but the key is to not allow those problems to derail your progress. Share with your mentee the various mistakes you made during your academic and professional careers. Convey to them the value of not allowing defeats to define who you are. Stress to them how those perceived failures did not cause you to relinquish your aspirations.

Also use this first meeting as an opportunity to get to know your mentee. Ask them about their areas of interest. Many students have no idea what they want to do professionally. Assure them that they have time to explore options. Encourage them to be proactive in determining which career path to take but not to waste time worrying. Many adults have made several occupational changes; assure your mentee that life is alterable and career paths can take new and often unexpected turns.

PREPARATION

You should be prepared to share with the mentee exactly how available you can be for the mentorship. Consider the following questions:

- What do you need from your mentee that would make the mentoring process

most effective?

- How can you help your mentee stay on track and accomplish their academic and professional goals?
- How much time can you devote to your meetings? Will they be conducted by phone? In person? Online? How long will each encounter be?
- Would you like to have an agenda for each meeting/conversation? Should the mentee prepare that agenda?
- How can you introduce your mentee to other business professionals and employment opportunities?

Be willing to explore ways you can be of service to your mentee. For many students, a mentor is the solution they have needed for years. In many ways, you hold the key to their future success. Explain to your mentee that you will assist them as long as they remain committed to their own success. You have the wonderful opportunity to positively impact your mentee's life forever. And it all starts with the first meeting.