

## *Maintain a Relationship – A Mentor’s Guide*

Guidelines and suggestions for keeping your mentoring relationship progressive:

### **GUIDELINES**

Sometimes there can be a lull in a professional relationship after the initial ‘get to know each other’ questions. Check out the conversation starters and questions for possible topics for your emails.

Often, it can be as simple as starting your email each week with a summary of how your week went. If you encountered any struggles, or succeeded in fulfilling any of your goals, or even sharing your accomplishments can ignite conversations and even prompt questions from your mentee.

# *Maintain a Relationship – A Mentor’s Guide*

Guidelines and suggestions for keeping your mentoring relationship progressive:

## **SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

These questions are grouped according to different career values.

### **1. ACHIEVEMENT**

- What gives you a sense of accomplishment at school?
- What kinds of things do you find challenging about school?

### **2. ASSOCIATES**

- How much of your schooling involves interaction with professionals? The community?
- Is there a team approach to your schoolwork?

### **3. CREATIVE**

- Do you get to express individuality in your schoolwork, or do you have to follow strict guidelines?
- Do you have leeway in your schoolwork to be creative and imaginative?

### **4. ENVIRONMENT**

- What kind of conditions do you typically enjoy working in- noisy, quiet, crowded? Did the size of the City of Houghton play a part in attending Michigan Tech?
- Do you want to work in the city?

### **5. ETHICAL**

- Under what circumstances can you refuse to do something not in tune with your ethical beliefs?
- What do you know/learn about ethics that relate to your studies and future career?

### **6. FINANCIAL BENEFITS**

- Does the amount of money you may make play a large part in your professional decisions?
- What kind of benefits do you want after graduation from Tech?
- Do you want to be able to do continued education, and if so do you want your company to pay for it?
- Do you prefer salaried or hourly pay?

### **7. INDEPENDENCE**

- How much time do you spend working alone?
- Do you have complete control over how you do things?

### **8. INTELLECTUAL**

- What do you find most challenging about your major?

## *Maintain a Relationship – A Mentor’s Guide*

Guidelines and suggestions for keeping your mentoring relationship progressive:

- What kinds of opportunities for post-graduate education are there? Are you considering graduate school? Why?
- What parts of what you are learning do you most want to work with?

### **9. LIFESTYLE**

- Do you spend a lot of time in the computer labs?
- Do you enjoy traveling?
- Approximately how many hours do you spend studying in an average week?
- Would you prefer to dress-up for your profession or be able to wear jeans?

### **10. MANAGEMENT**

- Do you often become the group leader for projects?
- Do you feel you have the tools to be an effective leader?

### **11. SECURITY**

- Do you know about the job market trends for this field?
- Do you prefer to have a stable, long-term position or internships and short-term employment?
- What sorts of changes do you expect to occur in your field of interest?

### **12. SOCIAL RECOGNITION**

- Do you feel respected as a result of your schoolwork?
- How is your achievement recognized?
- What social obligations go along with your major?
- Is there a lot of public exposure in your organizations or major?

### **13. SOCIAL SERVICE**

- Does your work bring about social change?
- Do you help others in society?
- Does the community benefit from your work?

### **14. VARIETY**

- What is the most exciting thing about your major?
- Do you prefer to multi-task, or to take it one project at a time?

### **GETTING YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR**

- What do you feel will help prepare you for the career you want to pursue?
- What do you look for or find most impressive in potential employers?

## *Maintain a Relationship – A Mentor’s Guide*

Guidelines and suggestions for keeping your mentoring relationship progressive:

- Are there any professional journals/ career-related literature/ organizations that you are involved with?
- Have you been on an internship? What did you learn? Did you enjoy it?
- How are you job searching? Have you been successful?
- What coursework have you found most interesting?
- Have you been interviewed for a job that is related to your schoolwork? How did it go? What could have gone better?
- If you could go back in time, would you do anything differently in choosing your school or major?

### **PROS AND CONS**

- Would you choose the same major/school if you could do it all over again; why or why not?
- What have been some good experiences for you at Michigan Tech?
- If you could change any aspects of your major/school, what would you change?
- Why did you choose your major/Michigan Tech? Was it all that you had expected it to be? Was it better or worse?
- What is your favorite thing about your field of interest?
- What are some of the major stresses in your schoolwork? Do you consider this to be a low/ medium/ high stress field?

### **OTHER QUESTIONS**

- What other occupations are you interested in?
- If you had to choose another related occupation, what would it be?
- Are there any experiences that you have had (work-related or otherwise) that have helped you in your schooling?
- How did you end up on your educational path?
- What level of education are you looking to obtain?
- Are you working on any new projects? Tell me about your involvement.

Sample questions courtesy of the University of Manitoba, Student Counseling and Career Center: Career Mentor Program, Sample Questions,  
[http://umanitoba.ca/student/counselling/mentor/sample\\_questions.html](http://umanitoba.ca/student/counselling/mentor/sample_questions.html)