
FAMILY OF MENTORS PROGRAM



Mentee Handbook

Updated: September 2020

Career Development Center

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Welcome to Family of Mentors!

Welcome to the SUNY College of Optometry Family of Mentors Program (FMP)! Your decision to participate in the FMP is one I hope you find rewarding and worthwhile. FMP is a signature program of the Career Development Center (CDC) and one that was developed to meet the College's strategic goal to provide students, residents and alumni with the services to succeed in their career.

Mentoring relationships have been shown to be transformative especially for students navigating medical educational programs. As an optometry student, you face a rigorous course load and challenging clinical rotations along with extra-curricular activities that leaves little time for the ever-important relationship building with a mentor. Moreover, since many of you hail from all parts of the country and from other countries, this poses a challenge to creating relationships with mentors close to home. Thus, FMP was developed to overcome these challenges and help connect you to a caring professional.

Your mentor will advise, teach, guide and share his experiences with you as you navigate your educational path. As a student, you will need to make a number of decisions important to your career development from deciding whether to pursue a residency to choosing externship sites and will need guidance and support. But, just as importantly, you will be developing skills often referred to as "soft skills" such as communication, leadership, conflict management, time management, etc., which your mentor will be an integral part in shaping and refining.

The mentor-mentee relationship is, however, a two-way street. As is the case in many mentor-mentee relationships, I would not be surprised that you may wind up teaching your mentor more than he/she teaches you, helping your mentor develop and grow and ultimately inspiring him/her to be better.

I look forward to being a part of this journey with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Quy H. Nguyen', with a stylized, flowing script.

Quy H. Nguyen, O.D.
Director of Career Development and Minority Enrichment

FMP Description

FMP is an online and in-person program developed to enhance students' and residents' personal, academic, and career development and to expand professional networks for students, residents and mentors. FMP seeks to capitalize on the vast network of SUNY alumni, professional organizations and partners from which to recruit the most talented mentors to develop our outstanding student body.

FMP Mission

The mission of FMP is to connect students of optometry and residents with mentors in order to foster a trusting and long-lasting relationship that helps to develop students and residents personally, academically and professionally and allows the mentors opportunities to share wisdom and expertise, develop interpersonal communication, motivation, coaching, counseling, and leadership skills, and build professional networks.

FMP Goals

1. Establish strong relationships between students and residents and mentors that last beyond matriculation at SUNY Optometry
2. Enhance students' and residents' career development
3. Increase students' and residents' overall experience and satisfaction at SUNY-Optometry
4. Provide a meaningful avenue for alumni, professional organizations and partners to stay connected with SUNY Optometry

Mentors

We will be leveraging SUNY Optometry's very own alumni network, the SUNY Eye Network (www.sunyeyenetwork.org), to find mentors. This platform was created uniquely to allow alumni to stay connected to the College, as well as offer alumni an opportunity to work with students and residents.

Matching

The mentor-mentee relationship will be established mutually between the mentor and the mentee. Mentees will be allowed access on the SUNY Eye Network, search for a mentor that fits their needs, and send a request that way.

Once a mentor has accepted your request, this will trigger the start of your mentor-mentee relationship!

Duration of the Mentor-Mentee Relationship

The goal of FMP is to create long-lasting relationships that extend the duration of professional careers; however, your mentor-mentee match will be one year, ending at graduation, with the opportunity to end or continue the relationship at the end of the academic year, during the same month as graduation, May.

Ending the Mentor-Mentee Relationship

As in any relationship, you may experience growing pains and bumps in the road, and the Career Development Center will be available to facilitate, mediate, and help address issues that may arise during your mentor-mentee relationship. Should the relationship, however, reach a point where either the mentor or mentee feel that the relationship is no longer beneficial, a mentor or mentee may choose to dissolve the mentor-mentee relationship with facilitation by the Career Development Center.

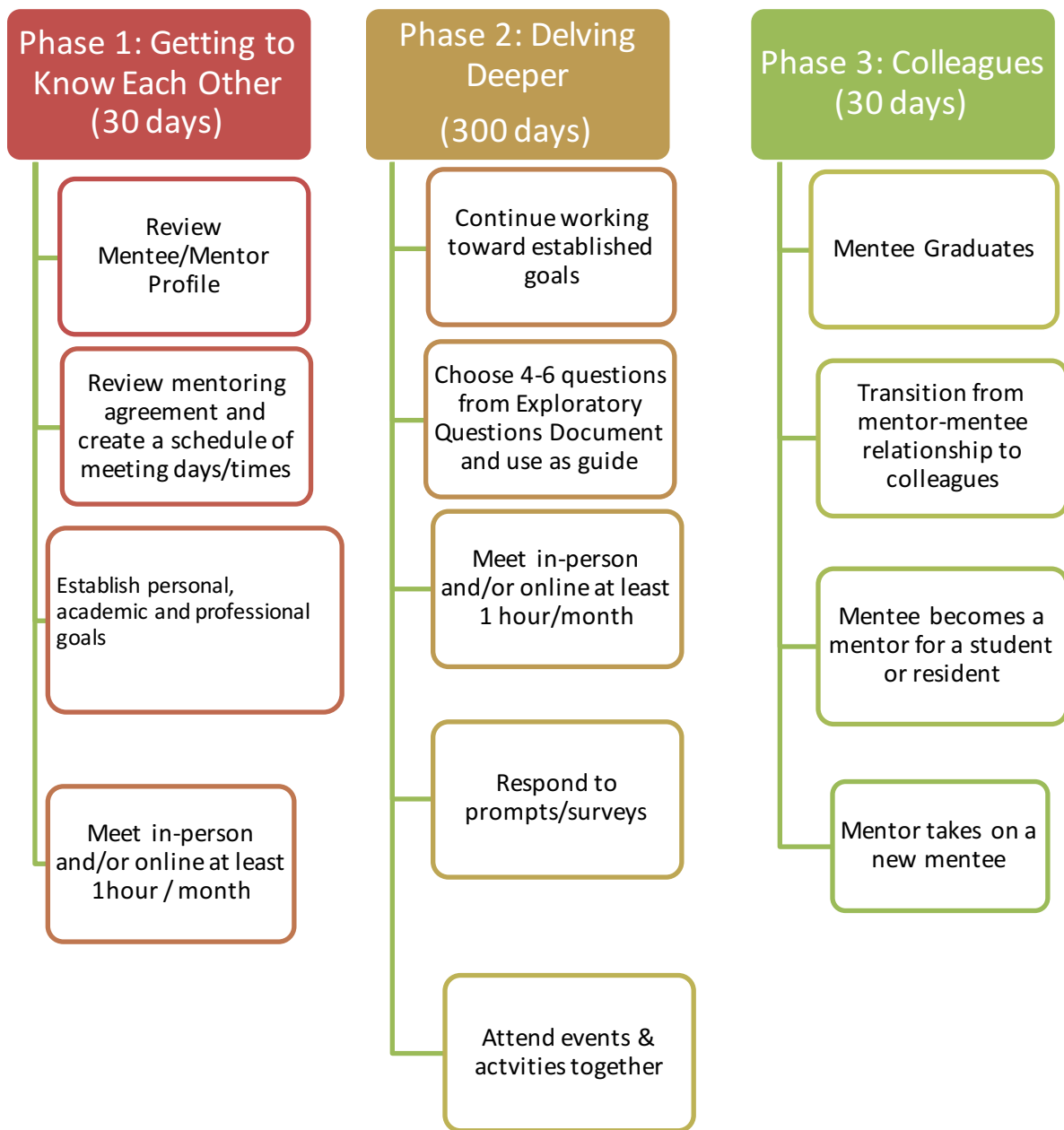
Mentoring Workflow

The workflow consists of 3 phases:

Phase 1: Getting to Know Each Other

Phase 2: Delving Deeper

Phase 3: Colleagues



Mentoring Agreement

The mentoring agreement will serve as a promise between you and your mentor to fulfill the expectations and roles of participating in FMP. You and your mentor should review and

discuss the mentoring agreement at the beginning of your match as indicated in the workflow chart. The mentoring agreement can be found on our FMP website.

Goal Setting

Setting goals with your mentor is a great way to create a roadmap for the mentoring relationship. During Phase 1 you and your mentor should discuss the goals that you want to achieve during your year mentoring period. Once your goals are established, you should track your progress and goal achievement periodically with your mentor. The goals you and your mentor set should focus on three key areas in your development: 1) Personal Goals; 2) Academic Goals; and 3) Career Goals.

1) **Personal goals** are goals related to your personal skills or traits. For example, you may want to have a goal to better manage your stress during exams and assessments or improve her conflict management skills. Improving your personal skills and traits will prove useful in other areas of her life.

2) **Academic goals** are essential as your professional success hinges on your ability to do well in school and gain the clinical skills necessary to pass the Boards and earn a license to practice optometry. As each academic year brings new challenges, your academic focus may be overcoming a difficult course or clinical skill development or landing a coveted externship rotation.

3) **Career goals** are important as you prepare to enter the workforce. During your time in school, you will have a chance to explore different specialty areas in optometry, go to various externship sites and experience different modes of practice. Your career likes and dislikes will begin to be refined with guidance from your mentor through these experiences. Additionally, you may require help writing a curriculum vitae and cover letter, refining interviewing skills, learning how to network or enhancing your network, etc.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

When crafting goals with your mentor focus on creating S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound) goals. S.M.A.R.T. goals are effective ways to write clear goals that are time-bound and will hold you and your mentor accountable. The graphic below illustrates S.M.A.R.T. goals.

S

- Specific
- The goal should be as specific and answer the "who or what" is the goal

M

- Measurable
- The goal should be measurable and answer "how" is the goal achieved or "when" is the goal achieved.

A

- Attainable
- The goal should be attainable, reasonable and within reach.

R

- Relevant
- The goal should be relevant to the overall program mission

T

- Time-bound
- The goal should clearly state a time frame in which the goal should be completed

Examples of S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Not S.M.A.R.T.	S.M.A.R.T. Goal
Write a CV	Work with my mentor to draft, revise and finalize my CV by the end of the fall semester.
Shadow an optometrist	By July, identify an optometrist to shadow in the Queens area that practices in a health center.
Network with more optometrists	Attend 2 optometry events this academic year and engage with at least 3 optometrists at each event and exchange business cards. Follow-up with each optometrist after the event.

Find a job	Find a full-time position in Washington D.C. with an OD / MD practice one month after graduation.
Pass Ocular Disease 2	Study 20 hours per week leading up to the final exam and score at least an 80%.
Be a leader	Run for and win position as NYOSA Trustee next semester.

Exploratory Questions

Exploratory questions are designed to guide you and your mentor through points of discussion and ensure that you are considering the appropriate career questions based on your year in school. Exploratory questions are divided by year; however, questions can be explored in a different sequence depending on your developmental needs. For example, a first year student may be interested in learning about a residency program and a resident may want to examine his values.

Discussion Prompts and Resources

To increase engagement, periodically, discussion prompts and any relevant personal and career development resources will be made available to you and your mentor on the SUNY Eye Network and our website. They are meant to stimulate dialogue between you and your mentee.

Mentor-Mentee Tips

Relationship Building

Establishing a strong and trusting relationship with your mentor will take time and effort. The foundation of the relationship should be built on mutual trust and respect. Achieving this foundation will be a product of consistent and clear communication and follow-through. Below are some Do's a Don'ts to build a strong relationship:

- Do open up to your mentor and share your experiences

- Do ask questions
- Do be yourself
- Do follow-through on agreements to meet or speak
- Do let the CDC know if your mentor is unresponsive
- Do NOT feel too shy to ask for help
- Do NOT feel like you are bothering or inconveniencing your mentor

Communication

Clear and understanding communication will help maintain your mentor-mentee relationship. Below are some Do's and Don'ts:

- Do respond in a timely manner
- Do follow-through on promises
- Do be honest
- Do NOT write abbreviated and/or unresponsive or unprofessional emails
- Do NOT lie

Mentor of the Year

A Mentor of the Year will be chosen at the end of the academic year. The mentor of the year will be nominated by the mentee and have exemplified outstanding qualities, inclusive of but not limited to, exemplary commitment to the FMP mission, mentee development, leadership, and advice.