

PIP MENTORING GUIDELINES

A central feature of the Northwestern University Public Interest Program is the formation of a mentoring relationship between more experienced Northwestern alumni and newly graduated alumni, just beginning their transition in a public interest job. A PIP mentor is some combination of a friend, advisor, listener, guide, and advocate. The mentor is a person with whom the Fellow can share concerns, discuss issues, and develop contacts. The guidelines below have been designed to assist you in developing a positive and successful mentoring relationship.

Before You Start:

You may find it useful to begin by thinking of your days as a recent graduate and the mentoring that you received. Think about the following:

- What kind of mentoring did you have? Was it formal? Informal? Fun? Stressful?
- What did you like and not like about the mentoring you received?
- How well did your mentors help you progress through your personal and professional life?
- How well did your mentors prepare you for your career?
- What did you not receive in the way of mentoring which would have been helpful to you?

By answering these questions, we hope you can develop a vision of the kind of mentor you want to be and can think about the most helpful ways you can mentor Fellows inside and outside of your discipline.

Tips for the PIP Mentor ...

- While some Fellows take full advantage of the mentoring program, others choose not to. The best a mentor can do is to reach out and offer support to the Fellow.
- Once you have been assigned your Fellow, contact them. We have found that many Fellows feel shy about making the first call.
- Keep in touch with your Fellow regularly, particularly in the beginning of the year. It is at the discretion of the mentor to set the pace and method of assistance based on the needs and wishes of the Fellow.
- Facilitate networking. Expand, whenever possible, the Fellowship experience by providing your Fellow with exposure to related aspects of the community and introductions to relevant individuals. If you cannot provide something a Fellow needs or requests, suggest other people of complementary interests who might be of assistance.
- Visit your Fellow's host organization to gain a better sense of what he or she is doing and the issues that he or she is trying to address.
- Talk to your Fellow about his or her work situation. If the Fellow is not finding the work interesting or challenging enough, brainstorm ways to address the problem. Notify the PIP Coordinator, Paul Arntson, of any major problems by contacting nupip@northwestern.edu.

- Please don't try to resolve a problem at the Fellow's organization without first talking to the Fellow AND the PIP Coordinator.

Some Ideas For Mentor-Fellow Activities:

- Attend PIP social gatherings, meetings, and seminars together. Make a point of discussing the event afterwards.
- Socialize with other mentor-Fellow pairs in the area.
- Have lunch or dinner at a local eatery – share your favorite spots with each other.
- Attend or watch sporting events.
- Engage in outdoor activities.
- Shop – spend a day window-shopping or buying all your favorite things.
- Introduce each other to your favorite types of movies, concerts, festivals, art exhibits, and other cultural events. Enjoy them together!

Suggested Discussion Topics:

Possible "talking points" for your first meeting:

- What are the Fellow's goals for his or her Fellowship and beyond?
- What are the Fellow's strengths?
 - Ask about their prior academic, professional, or personal experiences.
 - Ask them about their skills (creative, analytical, statistical, etc.)
- What is the Fellow's work style?
 - What kind of guidance does he or she seek? Does he or she prefer to work alone or with a group? How often would he or she like to meet with you?
 - Discuss your own work style with your Fellow.
- Ask the Fellow about people in his or her past who have been important mentors. Inquire about how these people were effective in helping him or her.

The on-going mentor-intern contact may include discussion of such topics as:

- What is the mission of your Fellow's host organization?
- How is the organization's mission communicated to its staff? How could this be better done?
- What strategies and tactics is the organization using to achieve its goals?
- How well is the organization doing (socially, financially, or both)? What could it do better?
- What are the organization's principal constituencies?
- How well does the organization serve the needs and interests of its constituencies?
- What are the Fellow's ideas for making the organization more effective in achieving its goals and serving its constituencies?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the organization's leaders?
- What ideas can the mentor contribute from his /her own experiences that are relevant to the above questions and their possible answers?
- What are the pros and cons of a public interest career compared to a career in the private sector (or the possibilities of a combining of the two)? Can the two careers be combined without sacrificing the goals of the public sector?

Thank you for taking the time to greatly enhance a PIP Fellow's experience. Mentoring is an excellent learning opportunity for both parties involved.

Have fun!