

## Guide to Help You Find Appropriate Mentors & Sponsors

- **Identifying potential mentors/sponsors**
  - Check with section chief/department chair/current mentor for mentors/sponsors outside your section/department/institution
  - Check BU Profiles (<http://profiles.bu.edu/search/>), enter keywords to identify additional potential names
    - Make sure your BU Profiles page is up to date (<https://weblogin.bu.edu/web/login3?jsv=1.5p&br=un&fl=2>)
- **Targeting mentors & sponsors**
  - Area of expertise
  - Ability to provide insights into your career/project/dilemma
  - Interest in your career
  - Constraints
    - Availability of time
    - Meeting location/in person/skype
  - Compatibility
- **Have mentor/sponsor identify other**
  - Resources – both within and outside institution
  - Potential colleagues, collaborators, or mentors
- **If you both think it would be mutually beneficial to meet again**
  - Establish preferences for meeting times and communication

### Suggested questions for your informational interview

**Succinctly** describe purpose of meeting

- Who you are (give your elevator pitch - LINK)
- What the purpose of the meeting is or what you are seeking mentoring on (e.g., research project, career advice, specific dilemma)
- I am seeking you out because of...
  - Engage your mentor around the specific area you are seeking mentorship in
    - How did he/she become interested in a particular field?
    - How did he/she end up in a particular professional role?

Describe your goal or dilemma and your potential approaches.

Does mentor/sponsor have observations about potential unseen challenges?

Does mentor have suggestions for additional resources – both within and outside institution?

Does mentor have suggestions for additional potential colleagues, collaborators, or mentors?

Does mentor think they are a good match for you (expertise/interest/bandwidth)?

Does mentor have constraints or preferences for meeting (location/in person/skype)?

Does mentor have preferences for communication between meetings?

Does mentor have expectations for follow-through, progress, agendas, etc.?

If potential match, set up next meeting. Ideally set up all meetings for academic year as early as possible.

## **Tips for Productive Relationships with Your Mentors & Sponsors**

### **Programming for Success with your mentor/sponsor**

- A. Get to know your mentor/sponsor's interests so you can tailor questions to his or her strengths.
- B. Suggest to your mentor that you will send agendas to him/her prior to your meetings as an organizing principle. Send your current CV/biosketch prior to the first meeting.
- C. Arrive at each meeting with an explicit goal you would like to achieve. Leave space at the beginning of each meeting for your mentor to articulate what is on his/her mind.
- D. Summarize next steps at the end of the meeting.
- E. If appropriate, schedule f/u appointment with mentor/sponsor (consider making this the last item of your agenda).
- F. Email afterwards succinctly summarizing big takeaways, and expressing thanks.
- G. Record and follow up on suggestions from mentoring sessions.

### **If a longitudinal relationship:**

- H. If suggestions do not work out, present your mentor/sponsor with several potential alternative strategies.
- I. Use your mentor's/sponsor's preferred form of communication.
- J. Be respectful of your mentor's/sponsor's time – arrive on time and prepared for meetings, share progress and challenges on goals relevant to your work together.
- K. Establish a timeline for project and/or career milestones, and share the timeline with your mentor/sponsor.
- L. Keep your CV updated and share new accomplishments (e.g., grants received, new leadership positions) with your mentor/sponsor.
- M. Say, "Thank you." If your mentor deserves praise, write a letter expressing your gratitude to his or her department chair.