

AGS Alumni Association Mentoring Program

Students at AGS face many challenges. The Alumni Association and AGS administration are working collaboratively to re-establish a formal Mentoring Program to enable them to successfully progress through their Master's program and make an effective transition into their careers.

Students at AGS have needs that are not currently being met. We request that alumni consider volunteering to help these students deal with issues such as:

- Juggling their graduate school course workload, a job, family and an internship.
- Difficulty with course work.
- Discouragement.
- Handing in assignments late.
- Coping with problem situations at AGS.
- Getting bogged down on writing their thesis or integrative paper.

Sometimes students recognize that they would benefit from a mentor and ask for one themselves. At other times, it is a faculty member or staff person at AGS who sees that a student is struggling with the challenges of graduate school and suggests that they get a mentor.

Mentors can:

- Provide support, encouragement and guidance to students to enable them to stay on track and complete their masters program in a timely fashion.
- Share their wisdom, skills and insights.
- Offer feedback on internship experiences.
- Engage in career development conversations.
- Provide professional networking opportunities.
- Assist with resume writing and job interviewing skills.



Mentoring does not include:

- Any type of counseling (this would constitute a dual role).
- Befriending.
- Taking care of the students.
- Doing for students what they can do for themselves.
- Representing the student in dealings with faculty, staff or administration.
- Serving as a go between for the student.

Qualifications to be an Alumni Mentor

Currently, there is no formal screening or selection criteria established. However, the Alumni Association Mentoring Program has developed general guidelines for alumni mentors and student mentees. All alumni mentors are encouraged to attend an initial training session for orientation.

Responsibilities of an Alumni Mentor

- Respect student mentee's time and work by keeping all appointments. Contact mentee in a timely manner if unable to attend scheduled meetings.
- Monitor mentee's progress and provide coaching and feedback to reinforce positive changes.
- Maintain mentee's confidentiality.
- Provide feedback to AGSAA Mentoring Program representatives.

Responsibilities of a Mentee

- Become acquainted with mentor and share concerns, issues and struggles, as appropriate.
- Respect alumni mentor's time and work by keeping all appointments. Contact mentor in a timely manner if unable to attend scheduled meetings.
- Realize that having a mentor is a privilege and take the opportunity to learn and to advance oneself.
- Provide feedback to AGSAA Mentoring Program representatives.

Signing Up and Getting Matched

Alumni members who are interested in mentoring a student and students who want to have a mentor should contact Priscilla MacDougall, the Mentoring Program Coordinator, at agsmentor@mail.alfredadler.edu. She will e-mail a brief form that will facilitate the matching process. You can contact Priscilla if you have any questions or concerns regarding the mentoring relationship, matching process or volunteer opportunities.

The Mentoring Process

Once a match has been made, Priscilla will e-mail contact information to both the mentee and the mentor. The student mentee is strongly encouraged to initiate the first contact with his/her mentor and arrange the meeting time, date and place. The meeting place needs to be

comfortable and convenient for both parties. Some examples of meeting places are the mentor's office or place of employment, a public library or a local coffee shop. The AGSAA discourages alumni mentors and student mentees from meeting in their homes.

Both mentee and mentor will most likely have busy lives and maintaining the mentor/mentee relationship may be challenging at times. Mentor and mentee need to be respectful of each other's schedule and remain flexible when arranging meetings. The Alumni Association recommends that the student mentee and alumni mentor engage in communication via phone or e-mail at least once a month and meet in person at least once a month.

The First Meeting

This is a time for the mentor and mentee to get to know each other and to identify and discuss the mentee's needs, expectations and goals. The mentor and mentee will find out each other's schedules and agree on future meeting times. Over time, the alumni mentor will assess whether counseling would be useful for the student and, if so, make a referral.

Poor Matches

Both the alumni mentor and student mentee will put their best effort into building rapport, trust and a supportive professional relationship. However, there will be instances when the relationship simply does not work out between the two. For example, the student mentee will be matched with an alumni mentor based on his/her degree/program and career interests/direction. Should the student mentee and/or alumni mentor find a match to be unproductive, this should be openly discussed. If necessary, the Mentoring Program coordinator may be asked to reassess the student's needs and make a new match.

Questions, Concerns and Issues

Typical concerns include:

- **Boundary issues**

Although a mentoring relationship can be therapeutic and supportive in nature, mentoring is neither psychotherapy nor counseling (a dual relationship is not recommended). Being in a close relationship can make people talk about personal or family problems or share private issues. If an alumni mentor determines that his/her student mentee would benefit from mental health services then the alumni mentor should provide a referral. It is not appropriate for the alumni mentor to share unresolved personal problems or issues with the mentee.

- **Confidentiality and Privacy Issues**

Alumni mentors are expected to respect the mentees' confidentiality and right to privacy. However, when questions, concerns or issues arise that require consultation, mentors may contact the Mentoring Program Coordinator, Priscilla MacDougall, and/or the Faculty Liaison, Sue Brokaw. The Mentoring Program Coordinator can be reached at agsmentor@mail.alfredadler.edu, and can address any questions, concerns or issues regarding the mentoring relationship. The Faculty Liaison, is available to provide additional support, conflict resolution and consultation, and can be reached at sbrokaw@mail.alfredadler.edu.

Ending the relationship

When the student mentee's needs have been met or have changed over time, the mentoring relationship will come to an end. The student mentee might graduate and become too busy with his/her new career. The alumni mentor might move to a new city or state and need to end the relationship. When the alumni mentor and the student mentee end their relationship, they are encouraged to provide positive closure, discussing the progress they made and what they have gained from the relationship.

Possible Outcomes for Student Mentees include:

- Timely completion of their Master's degree.
- Opportunity to start building their professional network.
- Professional orientation.
- Connect academics and career development.
- Explore new ideas and areas of interest.
- Opportunities to discuss school, internship issues or future career concerns in a supportive and encouraging professional relationship.
- Gain exposure to future career options, advice job search tips.

Expected Outcomes for Alumni Mentors include:

- Opportunity to apply and practice social interest.
- Support a current AGS student by sharing their knowledge, experience and resources.
- Opportunity to develop a meaningful mentor-mentee relationship and to make a

- positive difference in a student's life.
- Refine coaching and mentoring skills.
 - Expand their professional network.
 - Connect and maintain a positive long-term relationship with Adler Graduate School and the Alumni Association.

Future Resources

The AGS administration and Alumni Association are presently considering the possibility of developing a group of alumni who would like to mentor other AGS alumni. As with alumni to student mentoring, this alumni to alumni mentoring service would be free.

The AGS administration and Alumni Association are also trying to locate writing coaches who would be willing to work with students who struggle with writing skills. These writing coaches will help students with papers for courses and/or final projects. This service would also be offered on a pro bono or very low cost basis.

Finally, the AGS administration and Alumni Association are presently considering the possibility of identifying trained Adlerian psychotherapists who are willing to work with students who express a need for counseling. This counseling would be available to students with limited finances/insurance coverage and would be offered on pro bono basis or a very low fee.

Contact Information

The AGS Alumni Association is located at:
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