



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Marching Knights Mentorship Handbook

We connect Marching Knights with alumni mentors who serve as advisors, share professional experiences, provide insight into industries and enhance their mentee's future.

MK ALUMNI CHAPTER • 2020



WELCOME

Welcome to the Marching Knights Mentorship Program.

We have some outstanding alumni who are leading their industries in a variety of fields. The mentor program provides our students with an opportunity to connect with them. We encourage mentor/mentee connections in order to foster a great experience for all participants.

The role of the mentorship committee is to match the mentor/mentee pair, introduce them and set them on their way. Since each mentor/mentee pair charts their own path and determines what makes their mentorship relationship a success, we encourage each pair to connect and determine what communication options and frequency work best. The Marching Knights Mentorship Program chair will provide support and assistance to individual mentors/mentees as necessary.

Should you need assistance or have questions, please email marchingknights@ucfalumni.com.

Thank you – Go Knights!

MARCHING KNIGHTS ALUMNI CHAPTER

The UCF Marching Knights Alumni Chapter enhances the lives of graduates who marched as part of the Marching Knights program by helping to keep them connected to their alma mater and fellow alumni. The chapter creates opportunities to bring MK alumni and friends together to make a difference in the lives of MK students. The chapter board members dedicate their time and effort through volunteering and philanthropy to develop events and programming that foster personal and professional connections, collaboration and creative dialogue, engagement, outreach and visibility.

PROGRAM HISTORY

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Marching Knights Alumni Mentorship Program. The Marching Knights Alumni Chapter launched the program in 2018. The program provides alumni with the opportunity to give back to their alma mater, expand their network and enhance their resume, while supporting the educational and professional development and experience of current Marching Knights students. The program is specifically designed and coordinated by the Marching Knights Alumni Chapter board of volunteers. It is our belief that student enthusiasm and alumni support are crucial to the continued success and advancement of this mentorship program.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of this program is to connect current students with alumni mentors who share similar academic backgrounds, professional interests and career fields. Alumni mentors act as advisors, share professional experiences, provide new perspectives/insight into the industry, share knowledge about career advancement and assist in the building and enhancement of their mentee's individual skill set.

The Marching Knights Mentorship Program Committee pairs alumni mentors with upper-level undergraduate students who are preparing to enter the work force.

This is NOT a job placement program, but student mentees who take full advantage of this opportunity gain valuable skills and knowledge that will assist them in their internship/job search and future career.

“Early on, your teachers are your mentors, but mentorship goes beyond the teaching part. Alumni mentors can provide invaluable advice on moving down the road—not just a career path, but the road of life. A good mentor is a trail guide for our students and can provide a timely perspective on navigating toward success.”

- **Jeff Moore, Dean, College of Arts & Humanities**

WONDERING IF THIS PROGRAM IS THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOU?

A mentor can help in clarifying direction, developing focused goals and making a student's transition from college into the industry more seamless and effortless. Your program participation assists a student in linking classroom experiences directly with real world situations, gaining insight into the value and practical use of their education, and benefiting from direct, hands on career development advice.

Ideal professional alumni mentors are:

- Professionals with industry experience
- Advocates of the University of Central Florida and higher education
- Coaches who are willing to share their professional network with students
- Creators of unique learning opportunities outside of the classroom that offer exposure to the professional world
- Sounding boards and advisors who help students explore possibilities and learn more about their chosen industries, review career paths and fine-tune their career goals
- Open to sharing past successes, failures and insights into lessons learned
- Supporters and givers of constructive feedback

Ideal student mentees are:

- Excellent students dedicated to succeeding academically
- Dedicated to continuing their student-mentor relationship
- Ambitious and motivated to grow professionally
- Open to new experiences and learning opportunities
- Mature and respectful toward professionals in network
- Willing to utilize mentor to obtain industry insights

GENERAL PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

Mentor:

- Listen to the needs and expectations of your mentee
- Work with the mentee to help him/her develop and establish goals
- Offer suggestions and feedback
- Challenge the mentee to think differently and critically
- Keep the mentee aware of his/her progress
- Be committed to serve as a resource to the mentee
- Encourage your mentee to explore new areas and ideas
- Follow-up on commitments made to the mentee
- Contact the mentee if you are unable to attend scheduled meetings
- Contact program staff if there is a concern with the mentor relationship

Mentee:

- Discuss your needs and expectations with your mentor
- Think about what you want out of the program prior to each meeting
- Negotiate ideas and activities with your mentor
- Be committed to carrying out agreed-upon goals
- Be receptive to suggestions and feedback
- Keep mentor informed of progress
- Maintain professional demeanor
- Be respectful of the mentor's time, understanding that they are a working professional
- Contact mentor if unable to attend scheduled meetings in a timely manner
- Contact program staff if there is a concern with the mentor relationship

Mentor and Mentee:

- Respect confidences and trust each other
- Discover common ground and appreciate differences
- Be yourself and be flexible
- Be a good listener
- Be available
- Communicate regularly

THE MATCHING PROCESS

At the end of summer (August), all call emails will go out to both Marching Knights alumni and current Marching Knights students providing information for the upcoming academic year's mentorship program. These emails include a links to the program enrollment form that much be completed prior to program participation. The thorough and honest completion of these enrollment forms plays a crucial role in for the Marching Knights Alumni Mentorship Committee being able to create meaningful and successful mentor/mentee matches. During the month of September, mentor/mentee pairs will be matched, and each participant will receive confirmation of their pairing via email.

Once a mentorship match has been made, we expect all of our participants to adhere to the following program guidelines:

- Follow through on the commitments you make to the program and each other throughout the entirety of the mentorship agreement period, which may consist of one semester or the full academic year.
- Communicate at least once per month, or as arranged with your mentor/mentee, throughout the duration of the mentorship relationship in person or via telephone/ email/video chat. Please note: at least one in person and/or video conference call during the program is strongly recommended.
- Recognize that participation in this career and development program is solely voluntary. Furthermore, understand that either participant may decide to end the relationship during the agreement period. However, the expectation is set forth that if this were to happen, participants must provide notification to each other and the Marching Knights Mentorship Committee by email at marchingknights@ucfalumni.com.

I'VE BEEN MATCHED! NOW WHAT?

Congratulations in being matched! We expect that you make initial contact with your assigned mentor/mentee within 72 hours of receiving notification of your match from the mentorship program chair. Set a date and time for your first official "meeting", where you will start to get to know each other, set expectations, goals and a communication/meeting plan for the upcoming weeks and months. Please refer to resources set forth in this handbook to assist in the facilitation of laying the building blocks for a successful mentoring relationship.

In addition, the Marching Knights Alumni Chapter will provide opportunities to connect at various events throughout the year. While attendance at these events is not required, it provides an excellent opportunity for mentors/mentees to connect and network with other individuals participating in the program!

Key Dates, 2020-2021

- September 4 | Deadline to apply to be a Mentor/Mentee
- Sep. 7-11 | Applications review by the MK Alumni Chapter Board
- Sept. 14- 18 | MK Mentorship Committee will match alumni mentors with student mentees. The committee will prioritize the matching of UCF juniors and seniors first.
- Sept. 24 | Notification of match to MK Mentors/Mentees
- Oct. 23-24 | Meet up at MK Homecoming
- February | Optional: Mentee job shadowing for a day. This is to be privately arranged between both Mentor and Mentee based on schedule and availability.
- February 22-26 | Check in by Mentorship Committee
- March 8-12 | UCF Spring Break
- April 15 | Mentor/Mentee meet up at MK spring event, Symphony Under the Stars
- April 16-26 | Follow-up Review and Survey
- April 26 | Last Day of Classes

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why should I participate as a mentor / what are the benefits?

Our hope is that mentoring will be a positive and enriching experience where you will be able to:

- Refine your coaching and mentoring skills
- Develop meaningful connections with current students and provide a positive impact as they prepare to enter the industry
- Experience a reconnection with Marching Knights and be in the know of all current MK happenings

Why should I participate as a mentee?

Having a mentor can contribute enormously to your success in future professional aspirations. Much of that learning that contributes to our success happens not through books, but through real world experience. Without a mentor, that learning occurs mostly through trial and error. With a mentor, however, even experienced professionals can benefit from the experiences and expertise of someone who has withstood the trial and can help us avoid the error. Similarly, those new to the industry or interested in learning about the industry will discover that being a mentee shortens the learning curve for acquiring the skills and knowledge most critical to a successful career.

Other benefits that accrue as a result of being a mentee in a mentoring relationship include:

- **Learning new things about yourself:** The self-reflection that can result from a mentoring relationship can be a powerful growth experience and provide you with new insights about yourself
- **Making more of your strengths and exploiting your hidden talents:** A good mentor will push you to do more with your strengths, and help you discover and exploit hidden talents
- **Expanding your personal network:** Entering into a mentoring relationship adds your mentor to your personal network, and may lead to an introduction to the individuals in the mentor's network

- **A source of referrals:** Your mentor may refer you to other mentors once s/he has a better understanding of your needs, abilities, and goals

What are the qualifications I must have to be eligible to participate as a mentor/mentee?

Mentors must be Marching Knights alumni or friend with an undergraduate degree from an accredited university. Mentees must be currently enrolled Marching Knights students who are juniors and seniors by credit standing.

How long is the commitment?

Mentors and mentees over the course of several months during the academic year (September through April).

What if I want to continue to mentor my mentee beyond the term commitment?

Alumni are welcome to continue mentoring their mentees as long as they are willing and able.

Is event attendance mandatory?

Event attendance and participation is highly suggested, but not required. The great thing about this program is that your mentorship connection can be carried out as the mentor and mentee see fit. We have many mentors that live outside of the Central Florida area and due to the long distance, simply can't attend. However, we do encourage you to attend as many activities as possible to build a strong connection with your student. For mentees whose mentors live outside of the area, we encourage you to still attend events in order to connect and network with other alumni attendees.

I live outside of the Greater Orlando Area – can I still participate?

Absolutely! We have active alumni successfully participating in the mentorship program who are located nationwide. Phone, email and Skype/Zoom are acceptable means of connection.

How do I register to be a mentor/mentee?

Emails are sent out to all potential mentors and mentees at the end of summer, in August, with specific program participation information for the upcoming academic year. Included in those emails are the links to complete our program registration forms. You may also reach our mentorship committee directly via email at marchingknights@ucfalumni.com.

INITIAL MEETING CHECKLIST

To get the most out of your mentoring experience, we request that you talk to your mentor/mentee about the general expectations and goals that you have for your mentoring relationship.

Agree on Communication Expectations: How will the relationship work?

1. **Meeting together:** What works best? (remember, you want to have at least one meeting or conversation)
Will we meet:
 - In Person
 - Skype/Zoom
 - Phone
 - Email
 - Other
2. In general, **how often** would we like to meet/interact (e.g. once per week, every other week, once a month)? Renegotiate as needed.
3. If an **email/voice mail** is received, we will get back to our partner within:
 - 24 hours
 - 1-2 days
 - 3 days
 - Other
4. If we can't make an expected meeting/interaction, how will we get in touch?
5. When will we meet or talk **next**?

Agree on Goals: What do you hope to gain from the relationship?

1. What are the **mentee's goals** for this mentoring relationship? (Is there any clarification needed?)
2. What are the **mentor's goals** for this mentoring relationship?
3. What **actions** can you and your mentee take to achieve these goals?

GOAL SETTING

Purpose of Goal Setting

Setting goals helps people strive to achieve. Although goal setting may be challenging, it is worthwhile. The intention is to increase efficiency and effectiveness by specifying desired outcomes. Hellriegel, Slocu, and Woodman & Martens (1992) find goals to be important because they:

- Guide and direct behavior
- Provide clarity
- Reflect what the goal setters consider important
- Help improve performance
- Increase the motivation to succeed
- Instill pride and satisfaction in achievements
- Provide challenges and standards
- Bolster self-confidence and decrease negative attitude

SMART Goal-setting Model

The SMART guidelines can facilitate setting effective goals in traveling the road to success.

SMART means:

Specific

A goal of “graduating from college” is too general. Specify how this will be accomplished, e.g. “study more in order to receive better grades.”

Measurable

Establish criteria for how to achieve a goal. Measurable does not refer to a timeline; it means determining a way to measure your success in completing the long-range goal.

Action-oriented

Be proactive in taking action that will result in reaching the desired goal.

Realistic

Strive for attainable goals; consider the resources and constraints relative to the situation.

Timely

Allow reasonable time to complete each goal, but not so much time that you lose focus or motivation.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

One of the many benefits of the mentorship program is that mentees have the opportunity to ask questions that don't always get answered in the classroom. In order to make the most of this experience, mentees should ask their mentors detailed questions about their field of interest to gain a better understanding of what takes place on a day to day basis in that profession. The following are a few suggestions:

Job Description

- What is your job title?
- What is your typical day on the job?
- What is the title of the person to whom you report to?
- How free are you to work independently?
- What types of problems are you likely to face during the day?
- What are the most satisfying and the most frustrating parts of your work?

Advancement

- How did you get to your current position?
- What are the future trends and developments that you see affecting careers in your field?

Preparation

- How did you prepare for this occupation?
- What preparations do you recommend for a person entering this occupation?
- What education/degrees/training/licenses are required?
- What are the best places to go for additional education or training for a position like yours?
- If you could start all over again in launching your career, what steps would you take?
- What courses do you recommend taking for this occupation?

Lifestyle

- What hours do you normally work?
- Is overtime common?
- Is travel a factor in this job?
- What are the professional organizations in this field?
- How do these organizations serve their members?
- What are the pressures that you face?
- How does this occupation affect your private life?
- What is expected of you outside of working hours?
- Is there a formal mentor program set up in your workplace?

GUIDE FOR MENTORS

How to Support Your Mentee

- Think of yourself as a “learning facilitator” rather than the person with all the answers. Help your mentee find people and other resources that go beyond your experience and wisdom on a topic.
- Emphasize questions over advice giving. Use probes that help your mentee think more broadly and deeply. If he or she talks only about facts, ask about feelings. If he or she focuses on feelings, ask him or her to review the facts. If he or she seems stuck in an immediate crisis, help him or her see the big picture.
- When requested, share your own experiences, lessons learned, and advice. Emphasize how your experiences could be different from his or her experiences and are merely examples. Limit your urge to solve the problem for him or her.
- Resist the temptation to control the relationship and steer its outcomes; your mentee is responsible for his or her own growth.
- Help your mentee see alternative interpretations and approaches.
- Build your mentee’s confidence through supportive feedback.
- Encourage, inspire, and challenge your mentee to achieve his or her goals.
- Help your mentee reflect on successful strategies he or she has used in the past that could apply to new challenges.
- Be spontaneous now and then. Beyond your planned conversations, call or e-mail “out of the blue” just to leave an encouraging word or piece of new information.
- Reflect on your mentoring practice. Request feedback.
- Enjoy the privilege of mentoring. Know that your efforts will likely have a significant impact on your mentee’s development as well as your own.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Become Acquainted

- Discuss your backgrounds and get to know each other
- Discuss the mentee's career interests and goals

Career Conversations

- Discuss and list the mentee's talents, skills and interests
- Discuss how the mentor's personal and professional life fit together
- Read a book related to your field of interest and discuss it
- Discuss the mentor's educational background and educational preparation in their field
- Discuss organizational types and cultures
- Search the Internet together for job resources and other information related to your field
- Discuss how individual work values impact career choices
- Discuss the professional standards that exist in your field
- Discuss the transition from attending school as a student to working as a professional
- Go out to lunch or dinner and discuss proper business etiquette
- Discuss "office politics"

Career Observations

- Participate in a company tour, if appropriate.
- Attend a professional meeting or program together.
- If feasible, arrange for your mentee to visit your work site and shadow you for a day.

Resume/Interview

- Share resume and cover letters. Review and critique your mentee's resume and cover letter.
- Assist the mentee in completing a job application packet, portfolio, etc.
- Conduct a mock/practice job interview.

Personal Branding and Social Media/Technology in the Workplace

- Review your mentee's LinkedIn and/or Facebook profiles and provide suggestions on how to improve their online presence and professional brand.
- Discuss how your company or industry uses social media to reach and communicate with clients/customers.
- Discuss how your company or industry utilizes technology to communicate internally or with clients/customers. What type of technology is used to do this?

Back to School

- Attend a campus lecture, alumni event, or sports game together.
- Invite the mentor to attend one of your classes.
- Investigate career-related student clubs.
- Visit your college's career center together.

Creating Professional Networks

- Compile a list of contacts the mentee could meet with in your field.
- Attend a professional networking event together.

THE POWER OF NETWORKING

What is Networking?

Webster's dictionary defines networking as the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically: the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business. Your main networking goal is to create mutually supportive professional relationships. In that regard, networking in a mentoring relationship can benefit both partners. You never know where career help may come from or what form it may take, and the mentoring relationship provides both partners with an opportunity to expand their networks.

Benefits

- **Information**
A network is your conduit to the kind of information you need to advance your career...or to discover creative career possibilities.
- **Referrals**
Sometimes the best information is knowing who to call.
- **Feedback**
A network helps you check out your behavior, your ideas, and your strategies for success before you risk them in the "real world."

Topics of Discussion in Networking

- **Career Information**
Ask for information about the career field, but don't ask for a job or internship. However, sometimes the information will lead you in that direction.
- **Common Interests**
Consciously look for common ground, professional interests, and attitudes. This requires that you share a little of yourself.
- **Accomplishments**
Learn to talk comfortably about your own accomplishments.

What Not to Discuss

- **Criticisms**
Do not talk about other professionals or previous colleagues in a critical manner. The only exception is when you are specifically asked to give your opinion of someone AND you are absolutely sure that your opinion will be kept confidential.
- **Family/personal matters**
This is a professional network; know the boundaries.
- **Gossip**
Don't violate professional confidences or abuse inside information.

Dos and Don'ts of Networking

- Do try to give as much as you get.
- Don't be afraid to ask for what you need.
- Do report back (Did you follow their advice? What happened?)
- Do follow up all referrals.
- Do be businesslike. Be prompt, respect other's schedules.
- Don't pass up any opportunities to network – they can happen in the most unlikely places.
- Do keep in touch with your old networks (you may go back that way again).

- Don't expect your network to function as a placement office.
- Do call members of your network for "no reason at all." Keeping in touch is a reason.
- Don't be discouraged if someone brushes you off. It happens – and usually has nothing to do with you.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships by Lois J. Zachary. Jossey-Bass, 2nd edition, 2011.

The Mentee's Guide: Making Mentoring Work for You by Lois J. Zachary and Lory A. Fischler. Jossey-Bass, 1st edition, 2009.

Mentoring 101 by John C. Maxwell. Thomas Nelson, 1st edition, 2008.

StrengthsFinder 2.0 from Gallup and Tom Rath. Gallup Press, 1st edition, 2007.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For any additional questions regarding this program or if you would like to reach the Marching Knights Alumni Mentorship Program Committee, please contact us at marchingknights@ucfalumni.com.

You may also contact the staff liaison:

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