

# A Mentoring Guide for Mentees

Advice to help you become a successful mentee

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# What is Mentoring?

**Mentoring** means that there is a relationship between the mentor and the mentee. The mentor is truly invested in the mentee's success.

This is very different from **advising**, which is typically less personal and more related to successful academic progress.



# What is Mentoring

- It is a two-way **relationship** built on trust.
- It is a **skillful sharing of views**; both parties learn from experience.
- It provides opportunities for **self-reflection**.
- It provides **a safe space** to try new ideas.
- It allows for the mentor and mentee to **grow professionally**.
- It allows for both mentor and mentee **to contribute** to the discussion of what works and what doesn't.
- Mentoring involves **a process of exchanging ideas and information**, and does not promise or ensure a result other than the exchange.



# Getting Started: Who is your new Stetson Alumnus mentor?

Before you meet or connect with your mentor, think about ways to learn about your new mentor. Have they been in the profession long? When did they graduate from Stetson Law?

Internet research might include LinkedIn, search engine inquiries about publications or presentations, or volunteer roles in the community. Or you can ask Stetson staff and faculty!

Open communication is important to a relationship. Ask your mentor about interests, accomplishments, preferences, roles in the community, and hobbies.



# Who is your new Stetson Alumnus mentor?

- What is their practice area?
- Where do they live?
- When did they graduate?
- What organizations did they belong to in law school?
- What organizations do they belong to now?
- Did they go to law school full-time or part-time?
- Did they study abroad?
- Did they live on campus or off?



# Commonality and Shared Interests, Concerns or Passion.

You may or may not yet know some or all the things you have in common with your mentor. You do know that you are both part of the Stetson Law community.

In a community of practice, learning takes place over time, and bonds as well as benefits both mentor and mentee.



# Commonalities you may discover

- First in your family to go to law school - or conversely, a family with many lawyers.
- You are both explorers - when you began law school you didn't know which area of law would inspire you or draw your interest.
- You always knew you wanted to go to law school.
- Hobbies and interests.
- Hometown or home state.
- Study and work habits, learning styles, social preferences.
- Publications and conferences.
- Values and sense of fairness.
- Volunteer work.



# Your assigned Stetson Alumnus Mentor is probably not your first mentor.

Mentorship can be formal or informal. Sometimes a mentor is a relative, like a sibling or aunt or uncle or cousin; sometimes a coach, professor, or coworker takes on a mentoring role.

While your Stetson mentor is assigned, you may find and learn from, and share a mentoring relationship with many other mentors while in law school and beyond. You can have several mentors at once.





# Remember

- You do not need to accept ideas, advice, opinions, or words of wisdom, but always thank the giver.
- When you disagree, try to do so respectfully.
- Exchange ideas and thoughts, don't just give or take.
- Make time for your mentor and listen actively and carefully.
- Stetson Law is a community, so it's likely that members' paths cross again & again.
- Try not to ask for prescriptive answers; gather information and perspectives and think before you act.
- Take notes. Be prepared. Refer back to your notes so that your conversations with your mentor have continuity and flow.



## Self-Assessment/Reflection



- What do I hope to gain by participating in this mentorship?
- What am I looking for in this relationship?
- How does participating in this mentorship connect to my professional goals?
- What can I contribute to this relationship?
- How can I ensure that this relationship is built on professionalism, ethics, civility, mutual respect, and integrity?

# Preparing for your first conversation with your potential mentor

- **Make a plan:** establish your goals and expectations and how you plan to achieve them, think about what you may have to offer (skills and experience), and how can you build a mutually beneficial relationship with your prospective mentor.
- **Research your mentor:** What are your mentor's professional affiliations? What has your mentor published, and how can you bring this in the conversation? What commonalities exist between your career/academic interests and those of your mentor?
- **Set some structure for yourself and your mentor:** How accessible are you, how many times each semester do you have time to get together by phone, screen, or in person, how long the meetings will last, and think about how you want to introduce that subject.



# Preparing for your first conversation with your potential mentor

- **Develop some questions for your first conversation:** What are my mentor's goals and how can I help achieve them? What does my mentor expect from me? How will I discuss my skills and experience?
- If you know you have some bad habits, think about how you are going to invite your best self to show up for your sessions, and how you will self-assess.
- How are you going to introduce yourself and your reason for seeking a mentor?
- Make notes to remind yourself of your plan, your goals, and any specific points you want to make.



# What are the habits and practices of successful mentees?

- Never ask, expect, or allow the mentor to solve the problem.
- Take ownership of the relationship.
- Do their research in a timely fashion.
- Ask specific questions.
- Value different perspectives.
- Keep a journal or notes.
- Show genuine interest in the mentor's viewpoint.



# What are the habits and practices of successful mentees?

- Write things down during conversations.
- Are active listeners even if they don't share their mentors' views.
- Are positive and affirming.
- Always respect the mentor's boundaries.
- Learn how or know how to handle direct feedback.
- Focus on building a meaningful relationship.
- Follow up and share updates.
- Provide feedback to the mentor.



# Fundamental Don'ts

- **Don't** expect your mentor to fix a problem.
- **Don't** compete with your mentor.
- **Don't** rely on your memory; take notes so that you can pick up the conversation where you left off and can ask specific questions.
- **Don't** disappear.
- **Don't** condemn (mistakes or disagreement are not career altering disasters).
- **Don't** be silent if you notice that your relationship is not working.
- **Don't** be passive. Don't stay in the mentoring relationship when is no longer helpful.
- **Don't** be late and don't appear without appointment.
- **Don't** come unprepared and with bad attitude.



# What are some things to keep in mind?



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# Joann's 10 Tips for Maximizing Your Mentor/Mentee Relationship

- Reflect on the fifty percent you bring to this relationship.
- Establish roles and expectations.
- Develop goals and examine these goals periodically.
- Take initiative.
- When it's your turn to listen, listen and don't interrupt.
- Take notes.
- Stay connected.
- Encourage reciprocity.
- Provide opportunities for reflection.
- Communicate goals and agenda prior to the meeting.

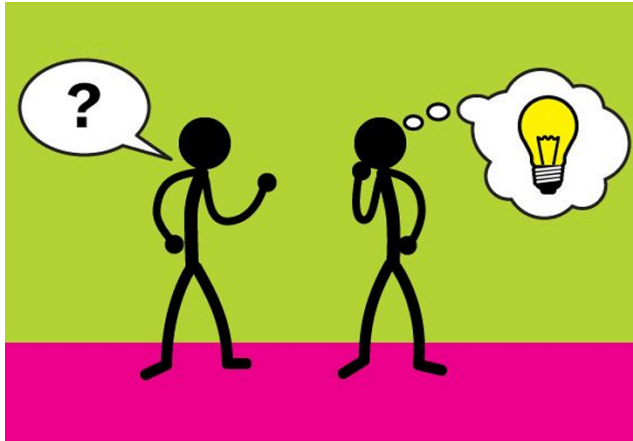


# Best Practices

- **At the beginning of your mentorship**, meet face-to-face if you can, to get to know each other, establish trust, decide the frequency of contact, confidentiality, and the focus of this relationship. If you aren't in the same city, use technology.
- **Take notes** during the meeting and recap at the end of the meeting.
- Wait until you meet to debrief to seek **feedback** from your mentor.
- **Explore alternatives** rather than solutions.
- Focus on **change over time** as opposed to radical change.
- Pay attention to **what your mentor is saying** during your meeting.
- Establish a **focus for each meeting**.
- Remember we value **professionalism, ethics, civility, mutual respect & integrity**.



# Provide feedback to your mentor



- In what ways do you feel your mentor is making the relationship a positive experience? (Think about advice, resources, timeliness, feedback, and professionalism)
- What are the strengths of your Mentor?
- How can your mentor improve their communications with you?

# We Asked Law School Mentors what they want from their Mentees:

## **They told us that mentors want law students to:**

- Come to a scheduled meeting prepared.
- Take notes.
- Be receptive to alternative ideas and points of view.
- Be honest about progress.
- Develop the ability to work independently.
- Enjoy their mentee roles.
- Express interest in them as a professional.
- Meet regularly and keep appointments.
- Maintain contact.
- Communicate needs.



# Reflecting on Your Experience



- As a mentee, it is important that you reflect on your experience. This helps you learn about your own professional identity.
- From time to time write a one- to two-page reflection on your experience as a mentee.
- Ask your mentor for feedback on your helpfulness receptiveness and fulfillment of expectations.
- Be open to improving and growing.
- Believe in yourself and your ability as well as your mentor's.



# Thank you!



We are all different and each of us has a different learning curve and style when working with someone new. In the Office of Career and Professional Development, we have resources, information about best practices, and ideas to share with you at any stage of your law school experience.

- If you have questions, or need resources or help, call the Office of Career and Professional Development at 727-562-7815 or write us at [career@law.stetson.edu](mailto:career@law.stetson.edu)
- Specific contact information for Cathy Martin and Joann Burnett is on the cover page of this toolkit.

