



Association of Environmental and Resource Economists

AERE Scholars Program

Best Practices for Mentors

The AERE mentoring program aims to engage a diverse group of early career environmental and natural resource economists in AERE while providing invaluable career guidance, skill development, and networking opportunities. We envision that as a result of this program AERE will exhibit substantially greater diversity and will help make economics a field that is respected both for its contributions to addressing the world's problems and for embracing an inclusive culture. After reviewing a number of resources (cited below), we identified the following commonly acknowledged best practices for mentors and added input from the group. We realize that getting to know a stranger and building trust can be difficult and have created additional resources for this (also on the AERE website). Your peer group and the AERE Scholars committee program and chair are our point people for any challenging issues that may arise.

The best practices for AERE Scholar Program are for mentors to:

1. Establish norms for meeting frequency and structure
2. Emphasize a shared responsibility for success (i.e. the mentee should set agendas once relationship is established, the mentor and mentee should jointly determine what success looks like)
3. Agree on goals by working with the mentee/scholar on individual development plan (IDP)
4. Acknowledge that the mentor will not know everything and will seek additional input when appropriate.
5. Rely on the mentor pods and resulting peer mentoring to generate ideas and support networks
6. Understand that professional and personal circumstances are not separable
7. Emphasize the creation of a supportive environment to help build a more diverse and inclusive culture
8. Emphasize success holistically with attention to professional accomplishment and overall life satisfaction
9. Communicate that there is risk and reward in giving and acting on advice, but encouragement and advocacy are always net positive

The mentoring best practices according to our starting point (Nick et al 2012) are as follows:

- 1. Achieve Appropriately Matched Mentors and Mentees.** There is evidence that having mentees and/or mentors provide input results in better match outcomes.

We paired administratively using:

- specified criteria (research/teaching interest, background, and professional aspirations)
- mentee indicators of the “ideal mentor”

- 2. Establish Clear Mentorship Purpose and Goals.** The Individual Development Plan (IDP) will outline
 - expectations
 - time commitments
 - long and short-term goals for the program and mentee career.

- 3. Solidify the Mentor-Mentee Relationship.**
 - create collegiality
 - listen reflectively
 - establish regular communication
 - exchange regular feedback from mentor and mentee
 - build a supportive environment
 - have the mentee set up the meeting agendas
 - build trust (i.e. use openings and closings for your meetings among other things)

- 4. Advocate for and Guide the Mentee**
 - provide psychosocial support
 - achieve life balance
 - advise on career progression.

- 5. Integrate the Mentee into the Academic Culture.**

References

- Baich, Tina. Elements of Good Mentoring. IUPUI Mentoring Symposium, Indianapolis, IN, November 27, 2018. <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/handle/1805/17829>
- Nick, J.M., T.M. Delahoyde, D. Del Prato, C. Mitchell, J. Ortiz, C. Ottley, P. Young, S.B. Cannon, K. Lasater, D. Reising, and L. Siktberg. 2012. “Best Practices in Academic Mentoring: A Model for Excellence.” *Nursing Research and Practice* 2012:1–9.
- University of Michigan. 2012. “How to Get the Mentoring You Want: A Guide for Graduate Students.” Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor. <https://rackham.umich.edu/downloads/student-mentoring-handbook.pdf>

Resources

- New style of mentoring: <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2013/07/22/essay-calling-senior-faculty-embrace-new-style-mentoring>
- Be a coach, not a guru: <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2013/07/29/essay-coaching-style-mentoring>
- Mentoring for diversity and inclusion: <https://cfe.unc.edu/2018/10/mentoring-for-diversity-and-inclusion/>

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