

# FAMILY OF MENTORS PROGRAM



## Mentor Handbook

Career Development Center

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<b>Welcome to Family of Mentors! .....</b>	<b>3</b>
FMP Description.....	4
FMP Mission.....	4
FMP Goals.....	4
Mentors.....	4
Matching .....	5
Duration of the Mentor-Mentee Relationship .....	5
Ending the Mentor-Mentee Relationship .....	5
Mentoring Workflow .....	5
Mentoring Agreement .....	6
Goal Setting.....	7
S.M.A.R.T. Goals .....	8
Examples of S.M.A.R.T. Goals for Mentees .....	8
Exploratory Questions.....	9
Discussion Prompts and Resources .....	9
Mentor-Mentee Tips.....	9
Mentor of the Year.....	11

# Welcome to Family of Mentors!

Welcome to the SUNY College of Optometry Family of Mentors Program (FMP)! This is a signature program of the Career Development Center (CDC) and it was developed to meet the College's strategic goal to provide students, residents and alumni with the services to succeed in their career. Your decision to participate in the development of our student body is one I hope you find rewarding and worthwhile.

Mentoring relationships have been shown to be transformative especially for students navigating medical educational programs. As an optometry student, your mentee faces a rigorous course load and challenging clinical rotations along with extra-curricular activities that leaves little time for the ever-important relationship building with a mentor. Moreover, our students hail from all parts of the country and from other countries. Thus, FMP was developed to overcome these these challenges and meet the need of connecting students and residents to caring professionals.

As a mentor you will have the opportunity to advise, guide and share your experiences with your mentee as she navigates through her educational path. Your mentee will need to make a number of decisions important to his career development from deciding whether to pursue a residency to choosing externship sites and will need guidance and support. But, just as importantly, your mentee will be developing soft skills such as communication, leadership, and time management to just name a few, which as a mentor, you will be an integral part in shaping and refining.

The benefits of mentoring are not solely for the mentee. As a mentor you can expect to build your communication and leadership skills as you work with your mentee through her career development. Additionally, you may find opportunities to build your coaching, counseling and motivating skills.

Ultimately, participating in FMP is an investment in the development of a future colleague and I'd like to thank you for your generosity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Quy H. Nguyen', written in a cursive style.

Quy H. Nguyen, O.D.  
Executive Director, Career Planning & Development

## FMP Description

FMP is an online and in-person program developed to enhance students' and residents' personal, academic, and career development and to expand professional networks for students, residents and mentors. FMP seeks to capitalize on the vast network of SUNY alumni, professional organizations and partners from which to recruit the most talented mentors to develop our outstanding student body.

## FMP Mission

The mission of FMP is to connect students of optometry and residents with mentors in order to foster a trusting and long-lasting relationship that helps to develop students and residents personally, academically and professionally and allows the mentors opportunities to share wisdom and expertise, develop interpersonal communication, motivation, coaching, counseling, and leadership skills, and build professional networks.

## FMP Goals

1. Establish strong relationships between students and residents and mentors that last beyond matriculation at SUNY Optometry
2. Enhance students' and residents' career development
3. Increase students' and residents' overall experience and satisfaction at SUNY-Optometry
4. Provide a meaningful avenue for alumni, professional organizations and partners to stay connected with SUNY Optometry

## Mentors

For the first time ever, we will be leveraging SUNY Optometry's very own alumni network, the SUNY Eye Network ([www.sunyeyenetwork.org](http://www.sunyeyenetwork.org)), to seek mentors. This platform was created uniquely to allow alumni to stay connected to the College, as well as offer alumni an opportunity to work with students and residents.

## Matching

The mentor-mentee relationship will be established mutually between the mentor and the mentee. Mentees will be allowed access on the SUNY Eye Network, search for a mentor that fits their needs, and send in their ask to the career center. Mentors will be reached out by Dr. Quy Nguyen and Jennifer K. Campbell from Alumni Affairs for matching.

It is totally up to you, the mentor, to decide if the student in question is who you'd like to work with. Once you accept a request, we will send your prospective mentee an email with your information so that they may contact you to set up the first meeting.

## Duration of the Mentor-Mentee Relationship

The mentor-mentee relationship is for one year, ending at graduation for our 4th years in usually late May. At that point, if the mentee will be a student the following year, and your relationship is going well, your mentee may ask you to extend the mentorship. Ultimately, our goal is to create long-lasting relationships that extend the duration of professional careers (but not in an official mentorship capacity like this).

## Ending the Mentor-Mentee Relationship

As in any relationship, you may experience growing pains and bumps in the road, and the Career Development Center will be available to facilitate, mediate, and help address issues that may arise during your mentor-mentee relationship. Should the relationship, however, reach a point where either the mentor or mentee feel that the relationship is no longer beneficial, a mentor or mentee may choose to dissolve the mentor-mentee relationship with facilitation by the Career Development Center.

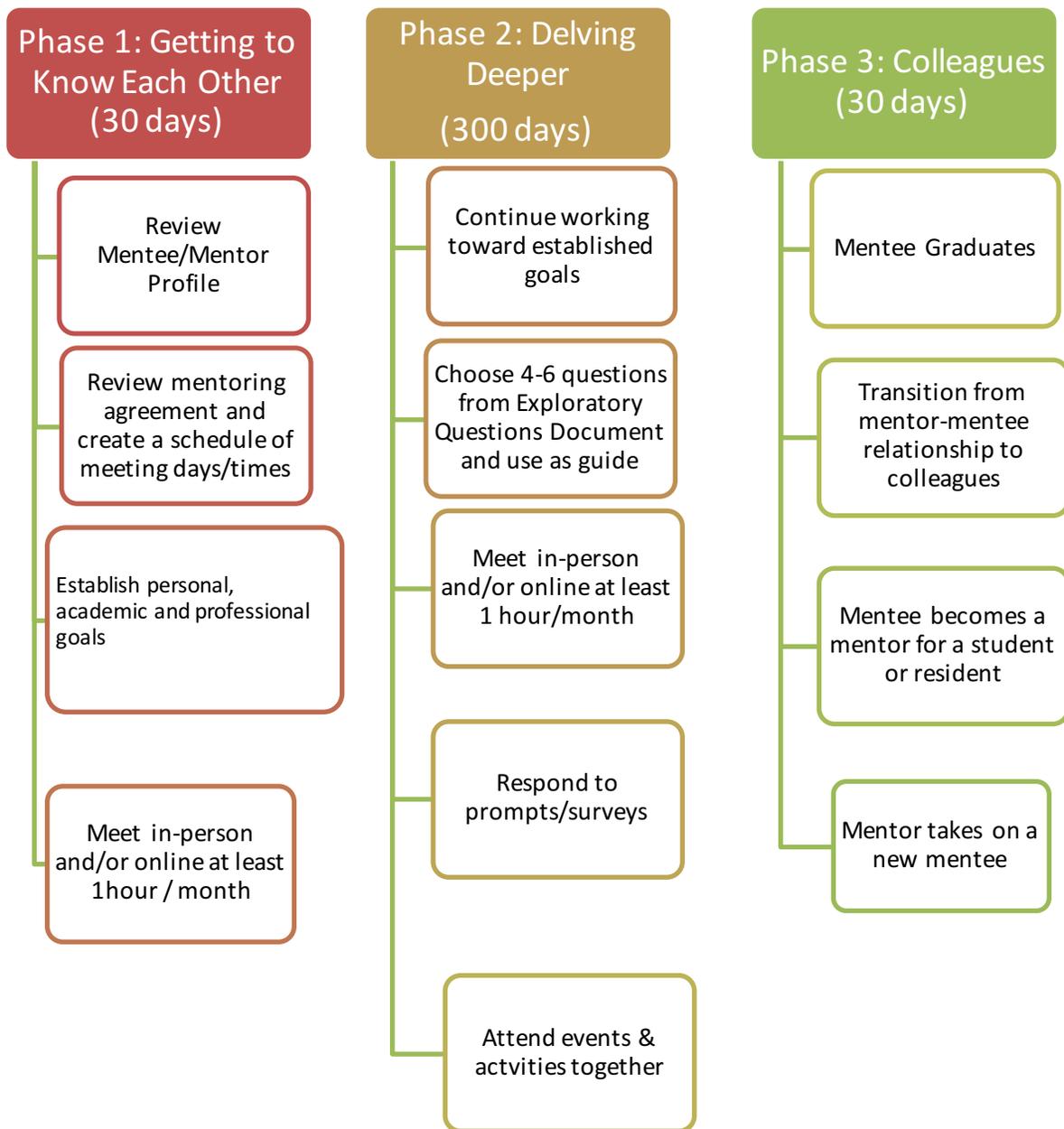
## Mentoring Workflow

The workflow consists of 3 phases:

Phase 1: Getting to Know Each Other

Phase 2: Delving Deeper

## Phase 3: Colleagues



## Mentoring Agreement

The mentoring agreement will serve as a promise between you and your mentee to fulfill the expectations and roles of participating in FMP. You and your mentee should review and discuss the mentoring agreement at the beginning of your match as indicated in the

workflow chart. The mentoring agreement can be found on our FMP website: [www.sunyopt.edu/mentoring](http://www.sunyopt.edu/mentoring).

## Goal Setting

Setting goals with your mentee is a great way to help your mentee create a roadmap for the mentoring relationship. During Phase 1, you could use this opportunity to discuss the goals that your mentee wants to achieve during your mentoring period. Once the goals are established, the mentee should track his/her progress and goal achievement periodically with you. The goals you and your mentee set should focus on three key areas in your development: 1) Personal Goals; 2) Academic Goals; and 3) Career Goals.

1) **Personal goals** are goals related to your mentee's personal skills or traits. For example, your mentee may want to have a goal to better manage her stress during exams and assessments or improve her conflict management skills. Helping your mentee improve her personal skills and traits will prove useful in other areas of her life.

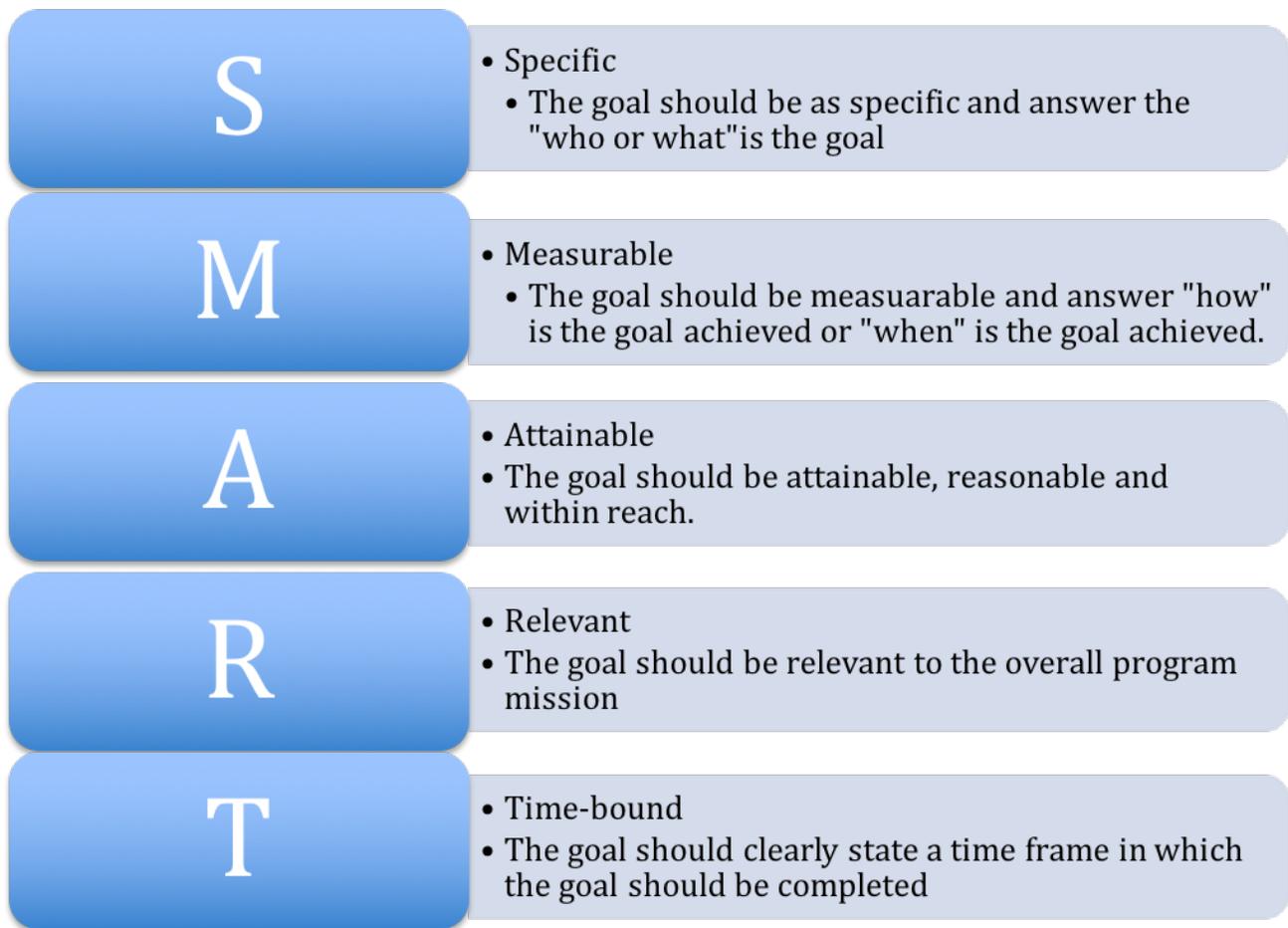
2) **Academic goals** are essential as the professional success of your mentee hinges on his ability to do well in school and gain the clinical skills necessary to pass the Boards and earn a license to practice optometry. As each academic year brings new challenges, your mentee's academic focus may be overcoming a difficult course or clinical skill development or landing a coveted externship rotation.

3) **Career goals** are important for your mentee as he prepares to enter the workforce. During her time in school, your mentee will have a chance to explore different specialty areas in optometry, go to various externship sites and experience different modes of practice. His

career likes and dislikes will begin to be refined with your guidance through these experiences. Additionally, your mentee may require help with writing a curriculum vitae and cover letter, refining interviewing skills, learning how to network or enhancing his network, etc.

## S.M.A.R.T. Goals

When crafting goals with your mentee, focus on creating S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound) goals. S.M.A.R.T. goals are effective ways to write clear



goals that are time-bound and will hold your mentee accountable. The graphic below illustrates S.M.A.R.T. goals.

## Examples of S.M.A.R.T. Goals for Mentees

Not S.M.A.R.T.	S.M.A.R.T. Goal
Write a CV	Work with my mentor to draft, revise and finalize my CV by the end of the fall semester.
Shadow an optometrist	By July, identify an optometrist to shadow in the Queens area that practices in a health center.
Network with more optometrists	Attend 2 optometry events this academic year and engage with at least 3 optometrists at each event and exchange business cards. Follow-up with each optometrist after the event.
Find a job	Find a full-time position in Washington D.C. with an OD/ MD practice one month after graduation.
Pass Ocular Disease 2	Study 20 hours per week leading up to the final exam and score at least an 80%.
Be a leader	Run for and win position as NYOSA Trustee next

## Exploratory Questions

Exploratory questions are designed to guide you and your mentee through points of discussion and ensure that your mentee is considering the appropriate career questions based on her year in school. Exploratory questions are divided by year; however, questions can be explored in a different sequence depending on the developmental needs of your mentee. For example, a first year mentee may be interested in learning about a residency program and a resident mentee may want to examine his values.

## Discussion Prompts and Resources

To increase engagement, periodically, discussion prompts and any relevant personal and career development resources will be made available to you on the SUNY website, and to mentees through our Moodle portal. They are meant to stimulate a dialogue between you and your mentee.

# Mentor-Mentee Tips

## Relationship Building

Establishing a strong and trusting relationship with your mentee will take time and effort.

The foundation of the relationship should be built on mutual trust and respect. Achieving this foundation will be a product of consistent and clear communication and follow-through. Below are some Do's a Don'ts to build a strong relationship:

- Do open up to your mentee and share your experiences
- Do provide regular feedback
- Do praise and encourage your mentee for achievements
- Do be an active listener
- Do be yourself
- Do NOT make assumptions about your mentee's culture, race, sexuality, religion, politics or values
- Do NOT be judgmental or overly critical
- Do NOT feel that you have to have all the answers.

## Communication

Clear and understanding communication will help maintain your mentor-mentee relationship. It is important that your mentee feel that your communication is genuine and addresses his/her needs. Below are some Do's and Don'ts:

- Do be an active listener
  - Summarize or restate what your mentee has communicated
  - Use phrases such as, "just to be clear" or "if I'm understanding you correctly you are saying" or "what I hear you saying is"
- Do provide constructive criticism
  - Identify what your mentee can change or improve and how you feel that making the change or improvement will help her achieve her goals
- Do respond in a timely manner

- Do follow-through on promises
- Do be honest
- Do NOT write abbreviated and/or unresponsive emails
- Do NOT assume your mentee will always follow your advice
- Do NOT take it personally if your mentee does not follow your advice
- Do NOT lie

### Coaching

Your mentee will face challenges whether it is deciding to run for a leadership position in a student club or prepare for a job interview. Coaching your mentee to meet these specific goals will mean providing encouraging words to help your mentee overcome doubts, fears, apprehensions or indecisiveness. Letting your mentee know you genuinely believe in his abilities is a great way to coach your mentee to success.

- Do provide encouraging words
- Do say things like, "I believe in you," "You can do it," "I support you"
- Do focus on your mentee's strengths
- Do NOT put-down your mentee for failing
- Do NOT set unrealistic expectations or goals for your mentee

### Advising

Providing advice your mentee is a large part of the mentoring terrain. Your experience and expertise is crucial in helping your mentee make personal, academic and career decisions.

- Do provide your mentee with your recommendations and opinions
- Do base your advice on sound information and facts or your testimony
- Do give advice that is in the best interest of your mentee
- Do NOT provide biased advice

## Mentor of the Year

A Mentor of the Year will be chosen at the end of the academic year. The mentor of the year will be nominated by the mentee and have exemplified outstanding qualities, inclusive of but not limited to, exemplary commitment to the FMP mission, mentee development, leadership, and advice.

## Contact Us

Should you have any questions or concerns during the duration of your mentoring relationship, please don't hesitate to contact us:

Career Development Center

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