Informal Mentoring Program for Academic Departments

Mentoring is a deliberate, conscious, voluntary relationship based on mutual respect. It is a relationship between staff that do not generally have any supervisory affiliation and is beneficial to all parties—the mentor, mentee, and Brown University. The purpose of the informal academic department managers'/coordinators’ mentor program is to match the interests and talents of a mentee, often someone new in their role as an academic administrator at Brown, with the university’s needs and development opportunities through the guidance of a seasoned academic department manager/coordinator who is recommended and asked to serve as a mentor.

Tips and Guidelines for the Mentor

- Get to know the person you are mentoring: what excites her/him, challenges her/him, what does she/he value.
- Help your mentee learn to manage the mentor relationship. In doing so, be open to your mentee’s ideas and help him/her take the initiative in moving forward towards his/her goals for the mentor relationship.
- Recognize that at times, you must take the lead and suggest activities that will help the mentee meet his/her goals.
- Always ask if you can make a suggestion or offer constructive feedback before doing so.
- Identify the principles that have made you successful and help your mentee put those principles to use in the context of his or her skills, personality and goals.
- Put yourself in her/his shoes—What did I want to know when I was in her/his situation?
- Share your experiences and provide knowledge on the formal and informal processes of the university.
- Make mentoring a priority—Meet your commitments (meetings, deliverables, etc.)
- Spend more time listening than advising.
Providing career guidance.

Maintain confidentiality.

Suggest other people within the university that your mentee should observe or contact e.g., Academic Resources, HR Generalist etc.

Stick to what you know. Don’t try and be all things to the person you are mentoring.

Express appreciation for help given to you by your mentee. In many instances, a mentee comes to the position with a unique skill set e.g., database experience that you, the mentor, can learn from the mentee.

Recognize that the more formal mentor-mentee relationship will end after 6-12 months.

Keep the door open for your mentee to return in the future.

Tips and Guidelines for the Mentee

Identify your goals for the mentor relationship and communicate them to your mentor.

Recognize that both you and your mentor have a finite amount of time to spend together. It is important to make each interaction as succinct and productive as possible.

Be an active listener.

Consider all advice your mentor gives to you.

Be openly receptive to constructive feedback from your mentor. Solicit it early on in the relationship.

Explain how you have used information from your mentor and express appreciation for his/her assistance.

Recognize that the more formal mentor-mentee relationship will end after 6-12 months.

Keep the door open to return to your mentor for advice or help in the future.

Be sure to keep in touch after the mentor-mentee relationship has ended by updating your mentor on your progress and by saying thank you.