



## **Guidelines for a Good Mentoring Relationship**

Attitudes are important, and clear communication is key!

Mentors have a lot to offer current students and alumni in terms of experience, guidance and support. One of the most important attributes of a mentor is good listening skills. Students and young professionals need to feel that their questions and concerns are important to you to foster trust and good communication, so that you both benefit from the mentoring experience.

Both mentor and mentee need to respect the other in terms of timeliness of responses to e-mails. Many professionals are working longer hours and traveling more than ever. Students are juggling course work and other activities. Young alumni professionals are learning a lot on the job and taking on new responsibilities, as well as dealing with the differences between college and the work environment. In addition, both have social and personal commitments.

If you receive an e-mail that you cannot respond to in a timely manner, please acknowledge it quickly and let the other person know when you will be available to respond. Respect for one another and the courtesy of a timely reply are essential for a good relationship. (For instance, if you are going on a vacation or business trip and will be unreachable for a period of time, an e-mail informing your mentee or mentor would be appropriate).

Courtesy and professionalism is expected on both sides of the relationship. Set limits, as necessary. As a mentor, if much of your work is confidential or deals with proprietary information, share that with your mentee as appropriate. If it is better to use an alternate e-mail address because of constraints at work or system security, let your mentee know that.

### **Getting started**

**Mentors** - Don't hesitate to ask mentees for information about their background, career goals and expectations. Some mentees might be uncomfortable about contacting you, not knowing what to ask first. Break the ice by asking them their needs. Mentors should be willing to initiate discussions and give advice and guidance based on their professional experience.

**Mentees** - Feel free to initiate the online exchange with an e-mail telling your mentor about yourself. Remember that the mentor has volunteered to help and is expecting questions from you. Don't be concerned if it seems awkward at first. As you become comfortable together, communication will become easier.

*(Adapted from the Society of Petroleum Engineers eMentoring Web site)*

If you have additional questions, contact the UMass Amherst Alumni Association at 800.456.UMASS or [alumni@admin.umass.edu](mailto:alumni@admin.umass.edu)