

Magnifying Black Voices

Mentor Guide



Table of Contents

Introduction

- 3 Magnifying Black Voices
- 3 Scarborough Charter on Anti-black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education

The Value

- 4 Why is Mentoring Important?
- 4 What is the Role of a Mentor?

Relationship Building

- 5 Getting Started
- 7 Sample Questions for Mentors to Ask

Evaluation

- 7 Frequently Asked Questions
- 8 Contact Information



Introduction

Congratulations on beginning your journey with the mentorship program designed specifically for Black students at UNBC. This guide will assist you in navigating this unique opportunity.

The Magnifying Black Voices program was originally launched with funding from UNBC's **Ignite & Inspire Investment Fund** in 2024. Now a recurring program, it continues to evolve through the support of the Office of Equity and Inclusion and ongoing collaboration across the university community. This initiative is also grounded in UNBC's ongoing commitment to the **2021 Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education**.

The Scarborough Charter focuses on combating anti-Black racism and promoting Black inclusion in Canadian higher education, outlining principles and actions to address systemic issues and enhance the experiences of Black individuals within academic institutions. It emphasizes the need for equity, diversity, and inclusion to create a more supportive and just educational environment. The University of Northern British Columbia was one of 46 universities and colleges that signed this charter on November 28, 2021.



The Value

Why is Mentoring Important?

In joining our initiative, mentors at UNBC play a pivotal role in shaping the future of our academy and our mentees. This mentorship opportunity offers several key benefits:

1. Cultivating Impactful Relationships

Mentors have a unique chance to contribute significantly to both the success of UNBC and the growth of the mentees. This dual impact fosters a stronger, more inclusive community.

2. Exemplifying Leadership and Communication Skills

Engaging as a mentor provides an excellent platform to refine leadership and communication abilities. This experience allows mentors to enhance their own skills while guiding others.

3. Gaining Fresh Perspectives

Offers a valuable opportunity to gain new insights and perspectives. This exchange of ideas enriches the learning environment for both mentors and mentees.

What is the Role of a Mentor?

Mentors within the vibrant community of the University of Northern British Columbia embrace the profound responsibility of guiding, supporting, and empowering their mentees towards achieving their full potential.

The role is multifaceted, deeply rooted in the principles of personal growth, inclusivity, and the promoting a supportive environment where every voice is heard and valued.

- **Guidance and Experience**

Mentors provide personalized advice and guidance, drawing from their wealth of experience and expertise. Serving as a sounding board, mentors offer mentees a safe space to explore their aspirations, challenges, and opportunities within the academic and professional realms.

- **Navigational Support**

Mentors assist mentees in understanding and navigating the complexities of the academy and the broader academic and professional landscapes. Their role includes offering a non-threatening platform for inquiries about the academy, profession, and life, encouraging open dialogue and exploration.

- **Encouragement and Advocacy**

As champions for their mentees, mentors encourage stepping out of comfort zones, trying new endeavors, and embracing the learning journey. Mentors celebrate successes and provide constructive support in times of setbacks, promoting resilience and growth.

- **Resources and Development**
Identifying and recommending resources for personal and professional development is key. This may include books, workshops, networking opportunities, and other learning tools, tailored to support the mentee's growth trajectory and towards academic and professional success.
- **Critical Feedback and Risk-Taking**
Encouraging calculated risk-taking, mentors guide mentees through potential consequences of decisions, aiming to prevent pitfalls and promote informed choices.
- **Confidentiality and Trust**
The cornerstone of mentorship is the assurance of confidentiality and the nurturing of trust. This foundation enables a genuine, open, and impactful mentor-mentee relationship, conducive to mutual learning and growth.

Relationship Building

To build a successful mentorship relationship, it's essential to identify the common goals between mentors and mentees, develop trust, set objectives, outline strategies for achieving these goals, and commit to consistent meetings. The initial interactions are pivotal in establishing a strong foundation for the mentor-mentee relationship.

Building Rapport

The first meeting is crucial for establishing a connection. This is an opportunity to:

- Share personal and professional backgrounds to identify common ground and appreciate differences.
- Mentors should provide insights into their role within the academy, offering a glimpse into their professional life and contributions.

Developing Goals Together

- **Collaboration:** The mentor and mentee should work together to pinpoint specific, achievable goals that align with the mentee's career and personal aspirations. This process creates a partnership where both parties contribute to defining the direction and outcomes of the mentorship.
- **Clarity:** It's essential to articulate the goals, purpose, and expected results of the mentorship clearly. Both mentor and mentee should have a mutual understanding of what they aim to achieve, ensuring that both are working towards the same objectives.

Logistical Planning

To ensure smooth communication and consistent meetings, discuss and agree on:

- Optimal times for meetings and preferred frequency. Setting a regular schedule is recommended.
- A convenient and public meeting location.
- Preferred communication methods for ongoing discussions.
- Expectations for engagement between meetings.

Establishing Boundaries

It's important to set clear boundaries to foster a respectful and effective mentorship:

- Openly discuss the scope of topics, including the appropriateness of discussing emotional issues.
- Clarify expectations around confidentiality, specifically identifying topics or information that should remain private.
- Address potential challenges, such as scheduling conflicts or other barriers, and plan how to overcome them.
- Set goals and priorities for the mentorship, considering the timeframe and the roles you both play.

Action Plan

Strategic Steps

Develop an action plan that lays out step-by-step tasks and milestones necessary for achieving the set goals. This plan should serve as a roadmap, guiding the mentorship's progression towards the desired outcomes.

Responsibilities

Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of both the mentor and the mentee within the action plan. This clarity ensures that each party knows what is expected of them and who is accountable for each aspect of the plan.

Standards for Success

Measurable Criteria

Establish specific, measurable criteria to evaluate progress towards the goals. These criteria will help in objectively assessing the effectiveness of the mentorship and the achievement of targets.

Regular Assessments

Plan for regular check-ins and assessments to monitor progress, celebrate achievements, and adjust the action plan as necessary. These assessments should be used as opportunities to reflect on what has been accomplished and what needs to be refined to continue moving forward effectively.

An effective mentorship relationship thrives on continuous communication and the willingness to adapt. Flexibility in adjusting the action plan and goals, as needed, is key to responding to new insights and challenges that arise during the mentorship journey.

Note: The project team will conduct overall check-ins with mentors and mentees every two months to offer support, gather feedback, and ensure the program continues to meet the needs of participants.

Building Rapport

The first meeting is crucial for establishing a connection.

Sample Questions for Mentors to Ask their Mentees

- Can you share what led you to choose your current study focus, and how it aligns with your career aspirations?
- What skills or areas in your education/career are you looking to enhance, and how can I support you in that journey?
- What do you envision as your next academic/career milestone, and what barriers do you perceive in reaching it?
- What long-term goals do you have for your academics/career, and how do they reflect your values and interests?
- How do you balance your professional commitments with personal interests to maintain a healthy work-life?
- Who are the people or what resources (like books or events) have significantly shaped your perspectives and academic/career path?
- What do you need to help you move forward or feel supported at this time?

Evaluation

Consistent feedback regarding your experience in the program ensures ongoing communication about the mentee's progress.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is required to become a mentor?

Mentors should be UNBC faculty or staff and able to commitment to at least two meetings per month with their mentee.

What does the mentor's role encompass?

Mentors act as coaches, teachers, motivators, guides, advisors, and role models. They share academy knowledge, provide candid feedback, identify opportunities and pitfalls, offer current challenge solutions, act as sounding boards, and motivate the mentee.

What benefits do mentors gain?

Mentoring offers personal growth opportunities in leadership and management, builds meaningful relationships, and contributes to the academy's leadership development and talent retention efforts.

How should I prepare for my role as a mentor?

Familiarize yourself with mentorship guide to ensure a comprehensive understanding of your responsibilities and the mentorship process.

How can mentors and mentees engage effectively if they are not co-located?

Leverage technology such as phone calls or video conferencing to maintain consistent communication, overcoming potential geographical barriers.

Where should mentor-mentee meetings take place?

Choose informal settings like cafes for a neutral atmosphere conducive to open discussion. If in-person meetings are not feasible, virtual meetings are a suitable alternative.

What topics should be discussed during mentorship meetings?

Focus on setting clear goals for skill development, academic/career guidance, and professional growth, using necessary tools and templates for structured conversations.

How long will the Mentorship program last for?

This mentorship program now runs for the duration of the academic year, from September to April. At the end of every round, mentors will be required to submit new applications for future mentorship opportunities.

How to measure mentorship success?

Success can be gauged by consistent meeting attendance, mutual satisfaction, actionable insights gained, and a positive challenge to the mentee.

What if the mentee leaves the relationship?

Contact the program team for guidance on how to proceed.

Contact Information

Office of Equity and Inclusion

Charles J. McCaffray Hall CJMH-2063

Email: edi@unbc.ca

Phone: 250-960-5736

unbc.ca/equity-diversity-inclusion