

MENTORING MEETING AGENDA

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At our school, we do not superimpose a mentoring meeting template on this time between you and your mentor. However, some schools do have a formal agenda that the two of you need to work through. But whether there is an imposed formal agenda or not, there are some common things that will probably be discussed at each meeting.

Connecting Time

The two of you will naturally want to start each meeting with some connecting time. Ask each other how the other is doing? Ask how your week was? While this might seem like idle chitchat, it is important to reconnect each time. Besides, if something away from the internship site is taking place in one of your lives with is important, that actually might become the source of discussion for the week.

Ministry Discussion

In most internship settings, you will have some type of ministry responsible. Part of the purpose of this meeting time is to discuss what is happening in your ministry areas. Your mentor might want to ask you what ministry has taken place since the last time the two of you met? What went on in that ministry? What questions or issues were raised for you by the experience? What did you learn from the experience? Is there anything that you would do differently in that situation? What do you plan to do in the future?

Student's Learning Goals

The sad part is that too many mentoring meetings never get past these first two topics. Keep in mind that the purpose of the internship is to focus on your development. In setting the agenda for this meeting, make sure that there is ample time to review and discuss you learning goals for the internship. How does the ministry activity relate to the goals set forth in the learning covenant? Are you making satisfactory progress toward those goals? Are you actually learning from these ministry experiences or just going through the motions? What ministry priorities need to be set for the next two weeks to move you in the right direction toward meeting his or her goals?

Spiritual and Vocational Implications

Finally, it is important to move from the “doing” focus of the internship to the “being” part of the internship. I will be discussing later in much greater detail the importance of theological reflection in an internship. But for now remember to always leave time in your mentor meeting to discuss the issues of the heart. How is God working through your ministry experiences to reveal Himself and to mature you? How are your

experiences in ministry informing, reforming, affirming, or calling in to question your call and sense of giftedness? What should you do to advance the growth and discovery process? Are there personal roadblocks, blind spots, and fears that you would like to discuss? And always conclude with how can I specifically pray for you this week?

Suggested Mentoring Meeting Agenda Questions

Connecting Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How are you doing? ▪ How was your week?
Ministry Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What ministry has taken place since we last met? ▪ What went on in that ministry? ▪ What questions or issues were raised for you by the experience? ▪ What did you learn from the experience? ▪ What do you plan to do (differently?) in the future?
Student's Learning Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does the ministry activity relate to the goals set forth in the learning covenant? ▪ Are you making satisfactory progress toward those goals? ▪ Are you actually learning from these ministry experiences or just going through the motions? ▪ What ministry priorities need to be set for the next two weeks to move you in the right direction toward meeting his or her goals?
Spiritual and Vocational Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is God working through your ministry experiences to reveal Himself and to mature you? ▪ How are your experiences in ministry informing, reforming, affirming, or calling in to question your call and sense of giftedness? ▪ What should you do to advance the growth and discovery process? ▪ Are there personal roadblocks, blind spots, and fears that you would like to discuss ▪ How can I specifically pray for you this week?

The Role of the Student Intern in the Mentoring Time

As has already been stated repeatedly, you will need to take a “proactive role” in the mentoring relationship as well as in the mentoring meetings. These mentoring meetings help process what you experience in your leadership opportunities. It is ultimately your responsibility to see that these meetings take place and that the experience is beneficial.

The mentor cannot read your mind, so you must communicate clearly the items that you want on the agenda. When I have my initial meeting with the student and the mentor, I will usually ask the student to come up with a list of questions that he or she wants to ask the mentor during the course of the internship. These can be questions dealing specifically about the internship site, but these can also be questions about issues of life as well.

The Role of the Ministry Mentor in the Mentoring Time

The ministry mentor is to see this time together as an opportunity to encourage your personal and professional growth and development. The mentor must provide an atmosphere of openness and trust for you. Again Regina Coll writes, “[The mentor’s role] is not to lecture; it is to respond to the concerns of the seminarian, to interpret situations from another perspective, to provide alternative views, to call attention to recurring themes, to point out strengths and inconsistencies, but especially to support, encourage, and challenge.”¹ Throughout the internship, the mentor will serve as a listener, prodder, affirmer, confronter, and teacher as you bring issues surfaced in the ministry experience.

Instructing

While every mentor will have his or her own style, there are some common components of good mentoring.² First, there is an element of instruction. Mentors must provide their interns with the knowledge necessary to lead at their particular level in the ministry. The mentor will be able to use his or her ministry level, but the mentor will use books, seminars, and the expertise of other staff as well.

Modeling

Second, there is an element of modeling. Conveying knowledge alone is not sufficient. When possible, good mentors model what they are teaching their interns. Modeling moves the intern from the theoretical understanding to observation of actual or simulated ministry experience.

Observing

Third, there is an element of observation. Not only do good mentors instruct and model competent leadership and ministry, they observe emerging leaders as they attempt to follow what the leader has modeled. They let the developing leaders lead and minister, involving them in the process.

Evaluating

Finally, there is an element of evaluation. Good evaluation, when the mentor evaluates how the intern is progressing, is sprinkled throughout the mentoring process. After emerging leaders have ministered, they need to know how well they accomplished a particular task. Periodically the mentor also will assess their overall performance. In particular, the mentor looks for the intern’s strengths more than his or her weaknesses, which makes for an encouraging experience for the intern.

¹ Regina Coll, *Supervision of Ministry Students* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 77.

² Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 155.

Good Mentoring Processes

Instruction	Mentors must provide their interns with the knowledge necessary to lead at their particular level in the ministry. The mentor will be able to use his/her ministry level, but the mentor will use books, seminars, and the expertise of other staff as well.
Modeling	Conveying knowledge alone is not sufficient. When possible, good mentors model what they are teaching their interns. Modeling moves the intern from the theoretical understanding to observation of actual or simulated ministry experience.
Observation	Not only do good mentors instruct and model competent leadership and ministry, they observe emerging leaders as they attempt to follow what the leader has modeled. They let the developing leaders lead and minister, involving them in the process.
Evaluation	Good evaluation, when the mentor evaluates how the intern is progressing, is sprinkled throughout the mentoring process. After emerging leaders have ministered, they need to know how well they accomplished a particular task. Periodically the mentor also will assess their overall performance. In particular, the mentor looks for the intern's strengths more than his or her weaknesses, which makes for an encouraging experience for the intern.

SOURCE: Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 155.