Kansas State University
APDPro Mentor Program

APDPro Mentor Guide
Congratulations, and thank you for becoming an APDPro Mentor for the College of Architecture, Planning & Design at Kansas State University. A Mentor is defined as a wise, trusted and influential supporter. Mentors teach our students important aspects of professional life including attitude, professionalism and work ethic. The time you put into developing a professional relationship with your mentee will be a rewarding experience for you both.

Mission
The mission of the APDPro Mentor Program is to afford design and planning students the opportunity to learn from skilled and practiced professionals who can help guide them and provide advice as they transition to their career.

Mentor Matching
APDPro Mentor Program staff will provide a match recommendation, along with information about your mentee so you can begin to get to know him or her. Your mentee will be notified of the match, reminded of the program’s expectations and instructed to contact you. The student is responsible for making first contact.

Although all eligible students in APDPro are strongly encouraged to participate in this program, they are not required to do so. The students who choose to apply are looking for the type of career guidance that you can provide.

First Meeting
We encourage you to meet your mentee for the first time in person, but realize this may not be possible. If you’re unable to have your first meeting in person, a phone call or video chat is perfectly acceptable.

If you meet your mentee in Manhattan, meeting on campus will probably be the most convenient and comfortable location for your mentee. Your mentee may give you a tour of campus, Seaton Hall or APDWest (2nd-5th year students’ temporary home during Seaton Revitalization) if you haven’t been on the K-State campus for a while. You can also meet for lunch or a cup of coffee. Bosco Plaza has a variety of food trucks, and the K-State Student Union (currently under construction) has a coffee shop. There is another coffee shop in the Leadership Studies Building, an Einstein Bros Bagels in Hale Library, or you can head to nearby Aggieville for more options.

Students are advised to dress casually for the first meeting, unless coming to your place of work, which will also help them be more at ease the first time you meet. A first meeting usually lasts an hour.

The main goal for the first meeting is to get to know each other. It’s also beneficial to set some expectations in regards to the relationship, as well as how often and what method you’ll use to communicate. We have a Mentoring Agreement available as a resource to help facilitate some of those initial expectations. Some suggested conversation starters for the first meeting include:

- **Talk about yourself.** While you have been able to review your mentee’s application, your mentee will not know much about you until the first meeting. Talking about your career and personal life, when applicable, will allow the student to get to know you, and will often start other topics of conversation.
- **Ask your mentee if there is something you can assist them with.** They may be afraid to ask you if you don’t let them know that you are there to help them.
- **Ask about their career aspirations.** This will help you to better understand what your mentee may be looking for out of the relationship.
- **Ask about their fears, whether in college or beyond graduation.** Knowing what your student is afraid of will give you an idea of the areas in which he or she may need more coaching.
Ongoing Professional Relationship
Your mentee is expected to take initiative in this relationship. He or she should contact you at least once a month and follow through on items the two of you discuss.

Our office will help facilitate communication by sending emails alerting you of difficult times in the year, such as mid-terms, reviews and finals, as well as tips for maintaining positive interactions.

While the academic year will perhaps be the time when you will be most active with your mentee, it is a good idea to maintain contact during breaks. Summer jobs and internships bring questions for your mentee as well as many opportunities for learning from you.

Your professional relationship will consist of at least one interaction per month and will last for your student’s career at K-State.

What do you do with your Mentee?
Just being able to talk with a member of the profession is great help to a student; however, there are several activities that will enhance both of your experiences in the APDPro Mentor Program.

- Help your mentee create a strategic plan for their academic career and professional advancement year to year. This can include looking for relevant part-time jobs or searching for the best internship. Help your mentee achieve their goals.
- Give your student clear, objective feedback regarding their attitude, presence and other skills, such as hand-shaking and smiling, then offer suggestions on how they can improve on them.
- Even if you’ve already seen it, you can ask your mentee to send you their portfolio and resume or cover letter. You can review it and offer feedback, and even have the human resources department in your company do the same. If it is appropriate, you can offer to be a reference.
- Suggest your mentee join a professional organization in their career of choice as a student member, and encourage them to join soft-skill enhancing programs, such as student chapters of service clubs or civic organizations.
- Invite your mentee shadow you during your workday, accompany you to meet a client, join you at a business meeting or go with you to a professional networking session. This will give your mentee a real view of professional life.
- If you come across a news article that you think might be of interest to your mentee, send it to them. You can also encourage them to subscribe to publications you think are useful.
- You can give your mentee short assignments, such as doing research on top design or planning firms. This assignment will not only give you topics for conversation for your interactions, but it will also expand your mentee’s view about the industry they are about to enter.

Contact
Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns or would like to share a story about your experience:

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