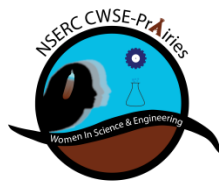


Faculty of Agricultural & Food Sciences

Mentorship Program

Mentoring Handbook



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Agricultural
and Food Sciences

Welcome to the Mentorship Program!

On behalf of the Faculty of Agricultural & Food Sciences (FAFS) at the University of Manitoba, we welcome you to the FAFS Mentorship Program for Women. We believe that you will reap huge benefits from this experience as you share your career passions, goals and insights with one another. This program is made possible with the support of the Province of Manitoba (Agriculture), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the University of Manitoba.

Overview

Program Overview

The FAFS Mentorship Program, an initiative of the Prairies NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering (CWSE) program, connects University of Manitoba faculty and agriculture industry mentors with Faculty of Agricultural & Food Sciences diploma, degree and graduate students. The student-led initiative introduces students to the structure and environment of the professional world in a supportive community. Students will have the option to explore their career goals, network with women in the field and develop new skills with the guidance of their mentor. The mentoring relationship also enables mentors to promote their disciplines, support future industry members and share their passion for agriculture with a larger network.

The structure of the program facilitates the broadening of horizons for the student, matching each student with two mentors, one academic and one industry, based on mutual interests, goals and disciplines. With each mentor, the student will outline goals and expectations for themselves and the program. The mentoring relationship will take place during networking events, in face-to-face meetings, online contact, and phone calls, mutually agreed upon between the partners. These interactions occur from October to March.

Program Goals

The goal of the FAFS mentorship program is to provide the opportunity for women studying in the Faculty to grow their professional network, develop lasting relationships with professional mentors and to continue offering valued leadership within the agriculture industry, government and academia upon graduation. Through the student-mentor relationship, there is also the opportunity to encourage interest in the agriculture industry and retain graduates in the agricultural field.

For the **student**, this program is expected to provide:

- Insight into potential agricultural careers;

- A vision of how they see themselves in an agricultural career;
- Skills in workplace communication and comportment;
- The opportunity to network with agriculture professionals.

For the **mentor**, this program is expected to provide:

- An opportunity to share their passion for their career and agriculture;
- Experience in mentoring, coaching and developing personal relationships;
- The opportunity to be a role model and influence future professionals;
- The opportunity to network with agriculture professionals.¹

The Mentorship Experience

What is Mentorship?

Mentorship focuses on the professional development of the female student through the guidance of an experienced female professional. The relationship develops on a foundation of mutual trust and respect and allows the mentor an opportunity to share their passion and work experience to the student, providing an understanding of and insight into the student's career choice. The student gains advice and assistance to achieve goals they have set for themselves. A successful mentoring relationship should provide positive outcomes for both student and mentor through the expansion of knowledge and skills and be a safe place to confidentially discuss work-related challenges and solutions.

A mentoring relationship does not replace formal training nor will it guarantee career success for the student. Rather, mentorship provides long-term personal and professional development through a knowledge-sharing process that strengthens the expertise, networks and careers of both the mentor and student.²

Benefits of Mentorship

For women in agriculture, a mentoring relationship can be a rewarding way of sharing and enhancing knowledge and skills. Having a role model can help women advance themselves by providing guidance and positivity.

One of the objectives of the Prairies NSERC CWSE program is to celebrate women role models in science, agriculture and engineering professions and enable female students to access mentors through formal mentorship programs. This is important because women networking opportunities have demonstrated a positive impact on the retention of women in the science, agriculture and engineering fields.

In a 2015 survey conducted by Supporting the Advancement of Women in Agriculture (SAWA), 40 per cent of respondents indicated they pursued mentorship as a way to

advance their career. Of those who had a mentoring relationship, 86 per cent felt it had helped them achieve their career goals.²

Benefits for Students

“Mentoring relationships will open up doors for you, but you need to take the steps.”

Mentorship can be a powerful tool. By building a relationship with a mentor, students can:

- Accelerate personal growth and development;
- Receive expert feedback on their approach and performance;
- Practice their skills and discuss strategies;
- Enjoy expanding networking opportunities, build professional network;
- Feel more empowered and supported;²
- Develop time management, leadership and communication skills;
- Gain clarity on career, academic and personal plans.³

Benefits for Mentors

The mentoring relationship also benefits the mentor by helping them:

- Enhance their existing leadership skills;
- Enhance their interpersonal and communication skills;
- Learn new approaches from their younger peers;
- Be a role model to the next generation of leaders;
- Support the development of the female talent pipeline;²
- Give back some of the support and inspiration they may have received in their careers;
- Make additional contacts within the industry and build a professional network;
- Develop and maintain connections and contribute to building a stronger industry and community.³

Setting Expectations

Ground Rules

Mentors and students can enter a mentoring relationship with assumed expectations of each other. Sometimes disappointment arises when expectations aren't met; however, it may be that the expectations weren't even discussed. To prevent this, be clear of your expectations and responsibilities from the beginning. A mentoring relationship is a partnership, with all parties respecting and supporting one another.

The following ground rules can help enhance the mentoring relationship. Mentors and students can also add their own ground rules to this list.

The mentor(s) and student will:

- Discuss expectations and work towards goals for the mentoring relationship;
- Work together to communicate and arrange meetings as needed;
- Attend FAFS Mentorship Program events together;
- Maintain confidentiality and a professional conduct at all times throughout the mentoring relationship.¹

The Student

As an individual, the student will strive to:

- Actively participate in the mentoring relationship;
- Be flexible in the mentoring relationship and understand its bounds;
- Listen to what their mentor has to say;
- Be respectful of the mentor's social and cultural environment.

As a prospective agricultural professional, the student will strive to:

- Be open and clear about expectations of the mentoring relationship;
- Formulate and articulate their career goals;
- Ask questions of their mentor and take advantage of advice and wisdom received in a non-defensive manner;
- Be proactive in pursuing opportunities and networking relationships;
- Provide the mentor with honest and constructive information and feedback.

The Mentor

As an individual, the mentor will strive to:

- Actively participate in the mentoring relationship;
- Be honest and realistic;
- Be supportive and encouraging;
- Be flexible and reliable in the mentoring relationship;
- Help build confidence in the student and other members of the program;
- Be respectful of the student's social and cultural environment.

As a career coach, the mentor will strive to:

- Establish a foundation for clear, open communication with the student;
- Help the student articulate their career goals;
- Advise the student on career paths and development opportunities;

- Provide guidance in networking and business relationships;
- Share their experience, knowledge and wisdom with the student;
- Provide the student with honest and constructive information and feedback.¹

Transparency

During your first meeting as mentor and student, it is a good idea to set goals and expectations. Items to cover should include the following points:

- Discuss and clearly outline **mentoring expectations**/ground rules with one another;
- **Introduce** yourself by sharing your work experience, your experience with mentorship, and your motivation for joining the mentorship program (Sheet 1);
- Discuss the student's **Learning Goals** (Sheet 2) and use them to build an **Action Plan** together (Sheet 3), indicating how each individual can help achieve these goals;
- Set a **schedule** for meetings, either in person or via email or phone. This may include setting a rule for cancellations to avoid frustrations later on;
- Read through and sign the **Mentoring Agreement** together;
- Mentor(s) can discuss what they hope to share with their student and any items they may have planned (Sheet 4).

Commitment

To ensure that both student and mentor are satisfied with the relationship commitment, it is a good idea to set up a meeting schedule. Mentors and students should meet at least once a month, but they can also agree to meet more frequently.

- How frequently would you like to meet?
- Which communication method is preferred between meetings or formal FAFS events? Phone, email, text?
- Do you prefer to meet in person or will meetings via phone or video chat fit your schedule better?
- What happens if you are unable to make a scheduled meeting?²

Successful Relationships

As in almost any relationship, the key to success is communication. You use important communication skills every day – networking, giving feedback, evaluating ideas, asking questions, brainstorming, and leading discussions. These same skills are an important part of a successful mentoring relationship. Be open, honest and transparent within your mentoring relationship to ensure that all individuals have fun. Be you!

Professionalism

All forms of professionalism should be maintained in the mentoring relationship. One of the most important ways students learn from mentors is simply by observing them. The mentor can help the student develop professional skills by encouraging them in:

- Time management;
- Diplomacy;
- Networking;
- Reliability;
- Etiquette.³

Checking In

Checking-in with your partner(s) is a simple way to ensure that the mentoring partnership is working effectively together to further the student's career goals. Discuss these questions every couple months.

- Are we meeting with appropriate frequency and for the right length of time?
- Do we often have to reschedule? If so, why? Is there a way to make the meeting time more convenient?
- Are we following up on our action items after each meeting? If not, what can we do differently?
- What skills are we building as a result of our monthly meetings?
- Are we achieving the goals discussed in the Action Plan?
- What are you enjoying the most in the mentoring relationship? What would you like to improve?²

Challenges

Occasionally problems arise: communication breaks down, disagreements happen, or one participant is not able to keep their program commitments. It is important to remember that, as in any relationship, individuals don't always get along perfectly or agree on every point.

For example, sometimes mentors and students feel that their match is not working because the student's career goal is different than the mentor's occupation or their personalities are dissimilar. Mentors and students do not have to be on the same path in order to connect and benefit from one another's experiences or passions.³

Remember that a mentoring relationship is teamwork. Even if you run into undesirable issues within your partnership, use the time as a learning experience. Act professional. This mentorship experience is an 8-month program. If you feel at the end of the time

commitment that the relationship has reached a natural end, so be it. Some of the most successful mentoring matches are based on sharing general information, ideas, guidance and experience concerning all aspects of career development and professional life, rather than specific discipline information or personal identity.

Establishing a strong mentor-student relationship should include:

- Realistic expectations;
- Willingness to share information, thoughts and ideas;
- Desire to actively participate in the program;
- Active listening, so everyone feels respected and heard.³

If problems arise within your partnership, try speaking directly with the individual(s) involved. If the issue continues, please communicate with the Program Coordinator.

Wrapping Up

For some individuals, this program will be the beginning of a life-long relationship with a fellow professional. For others, this mentoring relationship will reach its natural end much sooner. Regardless of the relationship's time frame, everyone will have gained valuable insight into their career decisions and had the opportunity to achieve some of their professional goals and met other women in the agricultural industry.

The mentoring relationship lifespan is dependent on many factors, including the student's goals and the pace of their progress. By recognizing the point at which the mentorship begins to deliver diminishing returns, the mentor and student can ensure that they continue to make the best use of their professional time.

At the end of the program commitment, be open about your view of the relationship.

- What have you learned from this relationship?
- What other actions can be taken to improve the relationship?
- Has the relationship reached a natural end?²

Resources

As a mentor, don't feel like you need to have the answer to everything! If you do not feel qualified in a certain capacity or cannot commit the time, then request additional support. Other mentors in the program may be able to help or know a contact that might be better able to answer your question.

Additionally, student's lives may get complicated by personal, financial, academic or health issues, which can be addressed in the context of a career. However, if these issues go

beyond the scope of your mentoring relationship or your comfort level, request support from the Program Coordinator. Your responsibility as a mentor is to introduce your student to the professional world.³

There are many on-campus resources that can aid students, including:

- Resume writing;
- Career decisions;
- Job searches.

Timeline

Date	Task	Method, Location
August + September	Mentor Recruitment	Emailing, e-news, contacts
September 26	Mentor Orientation Luncheon	U of M campus
September	Student Recruitment	Emailing, posters, e-news
September, October	Student Orientation	Agriculture Building
October 10	Partnerships set	Email
October 16	Mentorship Event #1	The Hub, U of M campus
November 23	Mentorship Event #2	Barley Brothers, Pembina
November 27	Program Assessment	Email survey
February 2	Mentorship Event #3	University of Manitoba – Panel Discussion**
March 26	Mentorship Event #4	TBD, Wrap-Up
April 2	Program Assessment	Email survey
May	Program Report	Email

**this event will be held in conjunction with the Faculty of Engineering’s sister mentorship program

Program Evaluation

Surveys

Assessment of the program and events will be administered to all participants at the mid-way point (December) and after program completion (April) in the form of email surveys. This feedback will help quantify the impact of the mentorship program and provide valuable information for future programming and events. A year-end report will summarize the findings.

All parties agree to provide confidential open and honest feedback about the FAFS mentorship program to each other and the Program Coordinator.¹

Sheet 1

Introductions²

The initial, kick-off meeting gives the mentor and student the opportunity to get to know one another and feel comfortable with the mentoring relationship. Share details of your work experience, your interests, and your motivation for joining the mentorship program.

- What are some highlights of your educational and professional background?
- What is your current role and how long have you been with the organization?
- What prompted you to choose the field you are in?
- What successes have you had in your career? What led to these successes?
- What are your short- or long-term career goals?
- What decisions are easiest for you to make? Which the most difficult? Why?
- What are some of your interests outside work? What are you passionate about?
- What is your most important role in life?
- What is one thing about you that is important for people to know?
- What do you think are the greatest strengths you can bring to this relationship?
- What motivated you to join this mentorship program?²

Sheet 2

Student Learning Goals²

The student is encouraged to complete this sheet prior to the first meeting with their mentor(s). Discuss these topics during your first meeting together. Information can be adjusted based on the mentor's input. The responses will be used to help create an **Action Plan** for the length of the program.

Additionally, the mentor may also find these topics relevant to themselves and their goals within the program.

Questions for the Student	Student Responses
Where do you hope to be in five years?	
What strengths will help you get where you plan to go?	
What are some areas of development you would like to focus on?	
What do you hope to gain from this relationship?	
What will be some measures of success?	
What role do you expect your mentor to play?	

Sheet 3

Action Plan²

Using the goals set by the student, the mentor(s) and student can work together to determine the actions that they and their supporting networks can take to further and achieve these goals. Plan on returning to this Action Plan as the mentoring relationship progresses and update it as needed.

MENTORSHIP GOAL #1:					
How will I achieve the goal?	Mentee actions	Mentor actions	Supporting network actions	Potential obstacles and solutions	Target completion date
Strategy #1					
Strategy #2					
MENTORSHIP GOAL #2:					
How will I achieve the goal?	Mentee actions	Mentor actions	Supporting network actions	Potential obstacles and solutions	Target completion date
Strategy #1					
Strategy #2					
MENTORSHIP GOAL #3:					
How will I achieve the goal?	Mentee actions	Mentor actions	Supporting network actions	Potential obstacles and solutions	Target completion date
Strategy #1					
Strategy #2					

Sheet 4

Suggested Activities

Each mentoring relationship will be unique. The program revolves around four set events organized for the participants and hopes that the student and mentor will meet at least once each month. However, the sky is the limit! If members of the partnership wish to take part in additional activities together or with other groups, there are endless possibilities to partake in. Share your contact information and plan some exciting events together to enhance your relationship.

Ideas can include:

- A mentor giving their student a tour of their work place
- Joining another mentoring group and go out for coffee or lunch
- Attending an agricultural event together (ie: Manitoba Ag Days)
- Volunteering together (ie: local conference or agricultural event)

References

A special thanks to the Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba's Committee for Increasing the Participation of Women in Engineering (CIPWIE) and the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council for allowing the use of some information from their mentorship and leadership documents in the creation of this handbook.

1. Mentoring Policy Statement. 2017. Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba's Committee for Increasing the Participation of Women in Engineering (CIPWIE). Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. 4 pp.
2. Supporting Leadership: A Toolkit for Mentors and Mentees. 2017. Supporting the Advancement of Women in Agriculture (SAWA). Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. 8 pp.

Information and ideas were also taken from the UBC Mentoring Program, Mentor Handbook.

3. Mentor Handbook. UBC Mentoring Program. Centre for Student Involvement and Careers. Vancouver, BC, Canada. students.ubc.ca/career, accessed July 2017.