Undergraduate Mentorship Guide
for Community-Building

School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences

Supported by

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SAFS Undergraduate Mentorship Guide
for Community-Building

Summary

● **Who is this guide for?**
  This mentorship guide is for **undergraduate students (mentees)** at the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences (SAFS) as well as for **graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and staff** (who may serve as mentors) at SAFS. This mentor relationship plays an important role in community-building and can help support SAFS undergrads.

● **What is the main goal?**
  The main goal is to encourage community-building within all of SAFS, so that the undergrads can find answers to any question they may have about their education and opportunities at the UW as well as in their future careers.

● **What should I read in this guide?**
  This mentorship guide is divided into two main parts:
  - one for undergraduate mentees (Section 1), and
  - one for graduate student, postdoc, and staff mentors (Section 2).

  Each section will have mentee- or mentor-specific content related to how to have a conversation in a single meeting or in a mentorship partnership. The guide includes how to start, grow, and end a mentorship-type conversation or partnership, expectations, resources, and training.

● **What are some benefits to getting involved with mentorship?**
  For undergrads, you may have questions that can be easily answered by folks at SAFS! You may learn about some interesting opportunities or career paths you had not thought about yet. For graduate students, postdocs, and staff, you have a wealth of knowledge and experience that you can easily share with undergrads, with flexibility in time commitments, but that can help someone navigate their education at SAFS and their future career in incredibly meaningful ways. Both mentee and mentor will likely learn from each other in one or several meetings, and especially as the relationship builds.

● **Who should I contact if I have any questions?**
  You can contact the SAFS Diversity Specialist, Michael Martínez (they/them), at mcfm@uw.edu.
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1. For Undergraduate Mentees

1.1. Introduction

Mentoring can occur through a formal mentorship partnership or a less structured format, such as a single meeting or at a mentorship event at SAFS. Mentorship has many benefits, and this guide can help undergraduate students reach out to graduate students, postdocs, and staff to gain insight just by having a conversation.

If you are an undergraduate student, thinking about becoming a mentee, you may be asking yourself what exactly do you want from a mentor?

There are many benefits, including receiving feedback and support on your ideas, gaining a different perspective, tapping into informal communication channels, expanding your access to different types of role models, having someone there for you during a transition phase, getting a more strategic view of the organization, learning about a variety of resources you may not know about at the UW and beyond, and social learning of what seems to be “unwritten rules”, but are norms, attitudes, and behaviors present in academic and work environments.

Many graduate students, postdocs, and staff have knowledge and experience about research and opportunities in aquatic and fishery sciences, options after graduation, scholarship applications, professional development, work-life balance, and diversity, or can help you get connected to people who know the answers to your questions. This guide lists a variety of topics to get you started.

The rest of this guide provides some suggestions on how to start, maintain, and stop a mentorship partnership, as well as some expectations, including boundaries for healthy and effective mentorship.
1.2. Potential topics for mentorship

- **Research and learning opportunities while in college**
  - SAFS Capstone project
  - Possible research topics
  - Internships
  - Joining a lab
  - Work-study program

- **After graduation**
  - Career aspirations and options
  - Graduate school vs. employment
  - Gap year before graduate school
  - Graduate School applications
  - Resume, CV, cover letter preparation
  - Mock interview

- **Financial**
  - Scholarship applications

- **Professional**
  - Professional societies
  - Scientific conferences
  - Professional development

- **Work-life balance**
  - Time management
  - Social interests
  - Goals in life

- **Diversity**
  - Being part of an underrepresented group in STEM
  - Affinity groups
  - Resources at the university, College of the Environment, and SAFS

1.3. How to start a mentorship partnership or meeting

- **What to ask?**
  - Think about what types of questions you could ask a mentor, but that you could not ask of an academic/research advisor.

- **Who to ask?**
  - Consider who could provide a new or different perspective than your own on your “What?” questions.
  - You may also want to try to fill out a mentorship network map (see section 1.4) to identify who to ask.

- **How to ask?**
  - Think about the questions in section 1.5 and be respectful of people’s time and energy. If possible, try to find answers on your own first.
It is okay to reach out to someone you haven’t met before. Say how you found their information and why you are interested in talking to them, specifically.

You can find a script/email template here, under the heading “How to inquire about an opportunity”. This is a professional way to ask an individual if they would be willing to mentor you or to set up a meeting to discuss mentorship.

- **When to ask?**
  - Consider the seasonal timing of events, e.g., capstone project, graduate school applications, and summer programs.
  - If you would like mentorship in preparing for a specific process/event, make sure to ask well in advance. A mentor cannot help if it’s already an emergency.

### 1.4. Mentorship network map

*Adapted from NCFDD*

![Mentorship network map](image)

### 1.5. Expectations and boundaries for the mentorship partnership

- **Level of commitment options to consider:**
  - Minimal: 2 hours/quarter
  - Moderate: 2 hours/month
  - Frequent: 1 hour/week
  - Other: Something else, but that is concrete & agreed upon.
● When to meet?
  o To be considerate of people’s time, schedule meetings in advance or at least agree
    on the expectation of how to plan meetings.

● Where to meet?
  o Choose a location that is convenient for the both of you and is a setting that
    allows for good conversations.

● What to talk about?
  o See section 1.2. Realistically, any one mentor will not be able to meet all of your
    needs. Be clear about which topics you most want to focus on.

● How to maintain the mentorship partnership well?
  o See sections 1.5 and 1.6.

● How to stop a mentorship partnership?
  o Come to an agreement beforehand. Keep in mind what you would like to get out
    of the mentorship partnership and tailor when to end it accordingly.

1.6. Mentee mindset

(Adapted from Rolfe 2021)

● Courage
  o For mentees, it takes courage to share your aspirations, goals, obstacles and
    difficulties.
  o It takes courage to give and receive feedback.
  o It takes courage to step up, accept challenges, and take action.

● Being Constructive
  o Feel ready to be empowered to achieve the outcomes you want.
  o Be ready to receive ideas that are new or different to you.
  o Build upon your strengths to shift from the present to where you’d like to be.

● Difference and Diversity
  o Consider partnering with someone different from yourself.
  o Remain curious and explore with an open mind.
  o Learn new information to make better informed choices.

● Responsibility
  o Remember that you, as the mentee, make decisions and take action.

● Dialogue
  o Ask questions and listen as part of a two-way conversation.

1.7. Online resources

● Becoming a Mentee, UW
● Undergraduate Opportunities & Career Resources, SAFS Advising
● Research and Internships, SAFS
● SAFS Faculty
● SAFS Graduate Students
1.8. Additional assistance, as needed and upon request

For example:
- Communication skills
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Handling a conflict of interest

See section 3 for contacts to ask about support.
2. **For Graduate Student, Postdoc, and Staff Mentors**

2.1. **Introduction**

Mentoring can occur through a formal mentorship partnership or a less structured format, such as a single meeting or at a mentorship event at SAFS. Mentorship has many benefits, and this guide can help graduate students, postdocs, and staff impart knowledge, experience, and insight to undergraduate students just by having a conversation.

If you are a graduate student, postdoc, or staff thinking about becoming a mentor, you may be asking yourself what exactly do you want when providing mentorship?

Mentorship can be very rewarding and also have many benefits, including being a positive role model, providing encouragement and support, challenging yourself and using your gifts to share your own expertise, knowledge and experience with someone, getting a better understanding of people different from yourself, networking and helping a student expand their contacts, reflecting upon your own career path, seeing SAFS from a newcomer’s perspective, refreshing your way of thinking and your attitudes, expanding and practicing your communication skills, and taking time for meaningful conversations.

Many graduate students, postdocs, and staff have knowledge and experience about research and opportunities in aquatic and fishery sciences, options after graduation, scholarship applications, budgeting, professional development, work-life balance and diversity, and can help mentees get connected to other people.

The rest of this guide provides some suggestions on how to start, maintain, and stop a mentorship partnership, how to navigate a less formal, one-off, mentorship meeting, as well as some expectations, including boundaries, for healthy and effective mentorship. There are also suggestions on how to maintain a good mentorship with tips about the mentoring dynamic, types of mentoring roles, phases of a mentorship partnership, how to offer advice, and the mentorship mindset from Rolfe (2021).

Mentorship from graduate students, postdocs, and staff can play an important role in creating a more connected and supportive community at SAFS!
2.2. Potential topics for mentorship

- **Research and learning opportunities while in college**
  - SAFS Capstone project
  - Possible research topics
  - Internships
  - Joining a lab
  - Work-Study program

- **After graduation**
  - General career advice
  - Graduate school vs. employment
  - Taking a gap year before graduate school
  - Applying for Graduate School
  - Resume, CV, cover letter preparation
  - Mock interview

- **Financial**
  - Applying for scholarships

- **Professional**
  - Professional societies
  - Conferences
  - Professional development

- **Work-life balance**
  - Time management
  - Social interests
  - Goals in life

- **Diversity**
  - Being part of an underrepresented group in STEM
  - Affinity groups
  - Resources at the university, College of the Environment, and SAFS

2.3. How to start a mentorship partnership or meeting

- Considerations when responding to a request:
  - What the mentee is asking for.
  - Whether you are the right mentor for them.
  - How the mentorship partnership or meeting will start, grow, and end.

2.4. Expectations and boundaries for the mentorship partnership

- Level of commitment options to consider:
  - Minimal: 2 hours/quarter
  - Moderate: 2 hours/month
  - Frequent: 1 hour/week
  - Other: Something else, but that is concrete & agreed upon

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● When to meet?
  o Find time that works well for both you and your mentee.

● Where to meet?
  o Consider convenience and a setting that allows the student to feel safe to share.

● What to talk about?
  o See section 2.2.

● How to maintain the mentorship partnership well?
  o See sections 2.5 –2.12.

● How to stop a mentorship partnership?
  o Come to an agreement beforehand. Keep in mind what you would like to get out of the mentorship partnership, what you can offer your mentee, and tailor when to end it accordingly.

### 2.5. Mentoring dynamic

- Support and challenge the mentee.
- Grow in your own learning on how to do this well.
- Balance imparting information and eliciting reflection.
- Ask questions, listen and then ask more questions.
- Be an empathetic ally.

![Diagram of the Mentoring Dynamic](image)

*The Mentoring Dynamic*

(ROLFE 2021)
2.6. Mentoring roles

A mentor can occupy many different roles:

- **Confidante**: Hold space for someone to share dreams, aspirations, and issues.
- **Catalyst**: Be supportive of change.
- **Sounding board**: Bounce ideas around and give feedback.
- **Link**: Connect to other people and resources.
- **Role model**: Provide an example from one’s own behavior and approach.
- **Adviser**: Offer knowledge, ideas, and opinions; elicit mentee’s thoughts before offering additional options or advice.
- **Guide**: Help mentee see potential consequences and potential adverse results; prompt insight or share own concerns with mentee.

(Rolfe 2021)
2.7. Phases in a mentoring partnership

Mentorship spans three main phases (starting, growing, and parting), which can occur throughout a partnership over several meetings, or even within one meeting.

2.8. Mentoring conversation

(=Rolfe 2021=)

When having a conversation with your mentee, try to:

- Ensure that there is suitable time and conditions for insight
- Build rapport and trust
- Maintain confidentiality
- Be free-ranging—taking a holistic approach to the person, life, education, and work
- Allow the mentee to talk about aspirations, ideas, and issues
- Facilitate reflection
- Help the mentee to create and capture insight, to make informed decisions, and to act upon them
- Draw out the mentee’s thoughts and feelings, find out what’s important to them and why
- Understand where the mentee is at, in their current reality, and only then potentially offer useful information
- Meet the mentee where they are at while staying future-focused, strategic, and practical: address where the mentee wants to be and how they want to get there
- When appropriate, provide the mentee support, encouragement, a plan, or practical techniques
- If pertinent, ask the mentee in a way that helps them re-evaluate, re-set goals, and consider what to stop or what to do differently
- When applicable, challenge the mentee to bring the best out of them
2.9. **Be slow and take care in offering advice**

People almost always want to be heard rather than offered advice. Offering advice may come from good intentions, but can have an impact of making the mentee feel weak or inferior. It is better to guide the mentee so they can find their own path and feel supported in doing so. Autonomy is a basic human need—to have control of one’s own life and make one’s own decisions. Below are some suggestions of how to offer advice from Rolfe (2021):
Here’s what to do instead of immediately giving advice:

- Ask questions – “tell me more”.
- Make sure you are getting to the real issues – remember the presenting problem is not the underlying issue.
- Find out about their needs, wants and values – what’s important to them.
- Draw out their ideas. Quite often they will have a strategy and your task is simply to assist them as they make it actionable steps – “so what would you want to do first?”

Only then, if they are unable to generate an approach that will work for them would you start to offer advice:

- Ask if they want your suggestions, opinion or input.
- Offer it as a possibility, one alternative or something to explore.
- Invite their further thoughts in a way that opens up choices – they make the decision about what to do, and that might be some more thinking or research.

Great mentors don’t withhold knowledge or experience, but they are slow to give advice because:

- Old paths and paradigms may be obsolete
- Telling people what to do weakens relationships
- Giving answers stops people thinking for themselves

2.10. Mentoring mindset

(Rolfe 2021)

- **Courage**
  - Be courageous in sharing ideas and experience, to let inspiration take hold, and to let mentees make their own decisions.
  - Give and receive feedback with courage.
  - Take courage to accept being in a mentoring role, which needs preparation and confidence.

- **Being Constructive**
  - Help mentee clarify their own aspirations, values, and vision.
  - Help identify mentee’s strengths.
  - Offer new or different possibilities.
  - Empower mentees to achieve the outcome they want.
  - Ask inquisitively and offer strategies and plans that produce results fulfilling to the mentee.

- **Difference and Diversity**
  - Set aside hierarchy to be equal yet different.
  - Overcome any discomfort and defensiveness, to really hear a different perspective and bring more intelligence to help with decisions.
  - When appropriate, name beliefs and opinions for what they are, and you may discover or strengthen values, clarify preferences, and understand motivations better.

- **Responsibility**
  - Remember that the mentee is the one responsible for their own decisions and actions.
  - Clarify that there are boundaries and that sometimes problems that the mentee brings up are outside the scope of the mentoring roles.
  - If needed, seek guidance (see section 3).
• **Dialogue**
  o Ask questions and listen as part of a two-way conversation.

2.11. **Listening techniques**

There are different listening techniques and we list several approaches here.

Listening is like downloading information in different ways:
  ● **Factual listening** to be able to repeat what was imparted
  ● **Empathetic listening** to be able to know what the mentee is feeling
  ● **Generative listening** to be able to elicit deeper discussion

Several techniques can be used for better listening, including
  ● **Stay silent** so as to not interrupt and jump in. Let them speak.
  ● **Focus on them**, including what they are saying and what they are not.
  ● **Minimize response** so as to let them know you are present all while encouraging them to say more.
  ● **Reflect** back what has been said with some of your own words and their words.
  ● **Ask good questions** to confirm or clarify their thoughts.

There are many more techniques and prompts provided in the *Communication Workshop* given by the SAFS Diversity Specialist, Michael Martínez, in April 2022. See Appendix A for the presentation slides and Appendix B for the handout.

2.12. **Online resources, books, and workshops**

  ● Quick reference for Existing or Potential Mentors, POD
  ● **Becoming a Mentor, UW**: This website provides information on why, who and how to become a mentor. It also includes information on how to become a *great* mentor with phases of preparing, negotiating, enabling growth and coming to closure.
  ● Undergraduate Opportunities & Career Resources, SAFS Advising
  ● Research and Internships, SAFS
  ● Communication Skills for Mentorship: This was a workshop offered at SAFS in April, 2022. See Appendix A for presentation slides and Appendix B for the handout.

2.13. **Additional support, as needed and upon request**

For example:
  ● Communication skills
  ● Giving and receiving feedback
  ● Handling a conflict of interest

See section 3 for contacts of staff at SAFS who can provide support.
3. Support at SAFS: Who to Contact

3.1. Diversity Specialist & Undergraduate Adviser: Michael Martínez

- Pronouns: they/them, elle (español)
- Email: mcfm@uw.edu
- Telephone: (206) 616-9771
- Office: Fishery Sciences Building, suite 116 room 114C

3.2. Assistant Director of Student Services and DEI: Samantha Scherer

- Pronouns: she/her
- Email: iamsams@uw.edu
- Telephone: (206) 543-7457
- Office: Fishery Sciences Building, suite 116 room 116B

3.3. Human Resources Manager: Krystyna Roman

- Pronouns: she/her
- Email: kroman@uw.edu
- Telephone: (206) 616-5893
- Office: Fishery Sciences Building, suite 116 room 116C
Group agreements

We are here to practice and learn. This means:

• Listening to understand
• Trying new things
• Making mistakes
• Asking questions/asking for help
• Helping people when they ask
• Treating each other with compassion
• Taking care of ourselves
Brené Brown on Empathy

Active Listening

Is about listening to *understand*, rather than *respond*

1. Pay attention
2. Withhold judgement
3. Notice and reflect feelings
4. Ask clarifying questions
5. Summarize/paraphrase
6. Respond: ask probing questions or share your own experience
Sentence Stems

- **Reflect** feelings
  - What I’m hearing you say is...
  - It seems like...
  - That sounds...
  - Let me make sure I understand...

- **Validate** feelings
  - It makes sense to me that...
  - I can see why you feel...
  - I can understand why you think...

- **Clarify**
  - Would it be accurate to say...?
  - What did you mean when you said...?
  - Can you tell me more about...?

- **Paraphrase/Summarize**
  - Let me make sure I understand...
  - It sounds like...
  - So you feel you’re saying that...

Let’s Practice: Active Listening

- Person A tells Person B about something they experienced recently (or are currently experiencing).
- Person B practices active listening. Go through as much of the process as you can.
- After 2 minutes, switch roles.
Asking Questions

Questions serve different purposes

• Teachers
  • Test questions: there is a correct answer
  • Authentic questions: getting students to share their ideas/thought processes

• Mentors
  • Investigative questions: getting information about a situation
  • Discovery questions: encouraging mentees to reflect and tap into their experiences
  • Empowering questions: exploring what happens next

Example Questions

• Investigative Questions
  • Who else is involved?
  • What have you accomplished so far?
  • When is this due?
  • Where do you think you lost focus?
  • How long have you been working on this?

Quick Reference

FOR EXISTING OR POTENTIAL MENTORS AT THE UW

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More Example Questions

• Discovery Questions
  • What have you learned from this experience?
  • What does it tell you about your approach?
  • What’s the best thing that could happen? The worst thing?
  • What could you have done differently?

• Empowering Questions
  • What is your next step?
  • What do you have to do to make it happen?
  • What resources do you have? What do you need?
  • What’s your goal?

Feedback

• Giving Useful Feedback
  • Regular and timely
  • Descriptive
  • Appreciative
  • Constructive

• Receiving Useful Feedback
  • Consider it a gift
  • Listen actively
  • Kernel of truth
  • Work with it

Turning Towards Each Other
A Conflict Workbook

Jovida Ross & Weyam Ghadbian
How to Have a Hard Conversation

1. Choose a good environment
2. Give the message **clearly** and directly
3. **Connect** with the other person: active listening, empathy
4. Ask questions—what does the other person want/need?
5. Move forward together

Nonviolent Communication

- Observations
- Needs/values
- Feelings
- Requests
Communicating What Matters

1. Affirmation
2. Observation
3. Feeling
4. Need/value
5. Impact
6. Assumption check
7. Request

1. Active listening
2. Check for understanding
3. Clarifying questions
4. Apology
5. Response to questions
6. Context (if wanted)
7. Options
8. Commitment

Scenarios

• Your mentee said/did something that was inappropriate and/or hurtful. (to you, to another person)
• Your mentee is not responding to communication from you.
• Your mentee has not followed through on a commitment.
Sources & Further Reading

Brené Brown: “On Empathy”
UW Professional & Organizational Development: Mentoring Tools and Resources
Jovida Ross and Weyam Ghadbian: “Turning Towards Each Other: A Conflict Workbook”
Meenadchi: Decolonizing Non-Violent Communication
The Center for Nonviolent Communication

Questions? Email Michael Martínez at mcfm@uw.edu

Hyperlinks from slide image:
- Brené Brown: On Empathy
- UW Professional & Organizational Development: Mentoring Tools and Resources
- Jovida Ross and Weyam Ghadbian: Turning Towards Each Other: A Conflict Workbook
- Meenadchi: Decolonizing Non-Violent Communication
- The Center for Nonviolent Communication
Communication Skills for Mentors

Active Listening

Parts of Active Listening
1. Pay attention
2. Withhold judgment
3. Notice and reflect feelings
4. Ask clarifying questions
5. Summarize/paraphrase
6. Respond: ask probing questions or share your own experience

Clarify
Would it be accurate to say…?
What did you mean when you said…?
Can you tell me more about…?

Paraphrase/Summarize
Let me make sure I understand…
It sounds like…
So you feel that…

Reflect Feelings
What I’m hearing you say is…
It seems like…
That sounds…
Let me make sure I understand…

Validate Feelings
It makes sense to me that…
I can see why you feel…
I can understand why you think…

Asking Questions

Investigative questions
Get information about a situation
● Who else is involved?
● What have you accomplished so far?
● When is this due?
● Where do you think you lost focus?
● How long have you been working on this?

Discover questions
Reflect and tap into experiences
● What have you learned from this experience?
● What does it tell you about your approach?
● What’s the best thing that could happen?
  The worst thing?
● What could you have done differently?

Empowering questions
Explore what happens next
● What is your next step?
● What do you have to do to make it happen?
● What resources do you have? What do you need?
● What’s your goal?

“Asking Questions” from Professional & Organizational Development, “Quick Reference for Existing and Potential Mentors at the UW”

Workshop by Michael Martínez for UW SAFS, April 2022
Having a Hard Conversation
1. Choose a good environment
2. Give the message clearly and directly
3. Connect with the other person: active listening, empathy
4. Ask questions—what does the other person want/need?
5. Move forward together

Communicating What Matters
Giving Useful Feedback
- Regular and timely
- Descriptive
- Appreciative
- Constructive

Receiving Useful Feedback
- Consider it a gift
- Listen actively
- Find the kernel of truth
- Work with it

Process for Giving and Receiving/Responding to Feedback
Person giving feedback:
1. Affirmation
2. Observation
3. Feeling
4. Need/value
5. Impact
6. Assumption check
7. Request

Person receiving feedback:
1. Active listening
2. Check for understanding
3. Clarifying questions
4. Apology
5. Response to questions
6. Context (if wanted)
7. Options
8. Commitment

"Communicating What Matters" from Jovida Ross and Weyam Ghadbian, “Turning Towards Each Other: A Conflict Workbook”

Workshop by Michael Martínez for UW SAFS, April 2022