



Mentoring Guide

All You Need to Know about Being an ACDA Mentoring Program Mentor

Adapted with permission from the Stanford Alumni Mentoring Program, Career Development Center, Stanford University.



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THE ACDA MENTORING PROGRAM: AN INTRODUCTION

The mentor is the person able to demonstrate the solid foundation upon which the protégé truly wants to build their own vocation and life balance. The mentor knows the axioms of the trade. This is a person who can teach principles and values. The mentor may or may not have already mastered technique or theory, but is still working on it. A mentor is able to excite the wonder and inspiration for a particular area, even after years and years of practice. The mentor has the confidence that comes by means of repeated successes, but has not yet reached satisfaction with his or her own success.”

– Tim Sharp, *Mentoring in the Ensemble Arts*

What is an ACDA Mentor?

As a mentor in ACDA’s Mentoring Program, you are a guide, friend, and resource who shares your education, preparation, and professional experience to help pave the way for students to succeed as they transition into the profession or graduate education worlds. An ACDA mentor derives satisfaction from helping students and new conductors fulfill their potential.

“Research shows that mentors [who] want to be mentors, typically are indeed good mentors. Apparently, the acknowledgement by an individual that he or she wants to pass on knowledge, skills, and life lessons to another individual is the leading indicator of the conductor and leader’s eventual success in this process.

– Tim Sharp, *Mentoring in the Ensemble Arts*

As a Mentor You Play Several Roles, Including:

Motivator: Expresses belief and confidence in the mentee’s abilities, and encourages the mentee to try new things.

Resource: Teaches and advises the mentee on how to make professional contacts, and introduces the mentee to new people, places, or ideas.

Supporter: Encourages open and honest dialogue, and listens to and responds to the needs of the mentee.

Coach: Helps the mentee develop, and work to achieve, realistic and meaningful goals.

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The Mentoring Relationship

For mentoring to be successful there must be a reciprocal, comfortable relationship between mentor and mentee. Both parties must work at the relationship to make it successful by being open-minded, respectful, and keeping to the expectations they have set for the relationship. Ideally, the mentoring relationship will be mutually beneficial one, as the mentor learns from the mentee and the mentee from the mentor.

“It has been my experience that important and significant lessons are more readily “caught” than “taught,” and once again, this is where the mentoring process gains credibility. By observing each other, and by staying in proximity to each other, lessons can be discovered, tested, and evaluated. In the best of mentoring environments, this is the essential flow.”

– Tim Sharp, Mentoring in the Ensemble Arts



THE MENTORING EXPERIENCE: BENEFITS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE MENTOR

“For the mentor, the desire to pass on information and life experiences is a part of generativity – contributing to the good of the profession and to the good of another individual.” – Tim Sharp, *Mentoring in the Ensemble Arts*

How Will I Benefit as a Mentor?

We believe that mentoring will be a positive and enriching experience for you. Specifically, we hope you will:

- ✓ Refine your coaching and mentoring skills.
- ✓ Develop meaningful connections with students and new conductors.
- ✓ Learn about the choral learning environment of today and the next generation.
- ✓ Expand your professional network.

What is Expected of Me as a Mentor?

Our mentors say that one of the best aspects of volunteering with ACDA as a mentor is that it is flexible – you and the mentee can decide how the relationship will work. We do, however, have some expectations of our mentors, including:

- ✓ Spend at least two hours per month building the mentoring relationship.
- ✓ Set expectations with mentees for how and when you will contact each other.
- ✓ Help your mentee identify and set goals, track progress, and make changes.
- ✓ Approach the mentoring relationship with an open mind, professionalism, and respect.
- ✓ Support the mentee’s professional and personal development.
- ✓ Respond to all communications in a timely manner.
- ✓ Maintain and model professional behavior. Define professional behavior if needed.
- ✓ Communicate problems with the mentoring relationship to ACDA Mentoring Program staff at mentoring@acda.org.

What is *Not* Expected of Me as a Mentor?

- ✓ To offer jobs or internships to your mentee.
- ✓ To have all the answers for your mentee.
- ✓ To initiate all contact with your mentee.

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THE MENTORING EXPERIENCE: BENEFITS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE MENTEE

“As a protégé, I didn’t expect my mentors to tell me the secrets of their success. I only appreciated their willingness to give me proximity to them and to observe their process of work so I could discover those axioms and secrets on my own.”

– Tim Sharp, *Mentoring in the Ensemble Arts*

How Will the Mentee Benefit?

Following are some general ways we hope students and new choral conductors will benefit from being in a mentoring relationship:

- ✓ Build a professional network.
- ✓ Develop and enhance professional and communication skills.
- ✓ Connect academics and career; acquire advice on experiences and courses that would be of greatest benefit.
- ✓ Explore new ideas and areas of interest.
- ✓ Gain exposure to career options, advice, and job search tips.

What is Expected of the Mentee?

Before a mentee can search for a mentor, they agree to the following expectations:

- ✓ Spend at least two hours per month building the mentoring relationship.
- ✓ Make the first contact with the selected mentor and respond to *all* communication.
- ✓ Set specific goals for the mentoring relationship with mentor.
- ✓ Agree and commit to expectations and goals set with the mentor.
- ✓ Be appropriate in their requests of their mentor, in particular, in NOT asking for a job or sponsorship.
- ✓ Approach the mentoring relationship with an open mind, professionalism, and respect.
- ✓ Be receptive to suggestions and feedback.
- ✓ Communicate problems with the mentoring relationship to the ACDA Mentoring Program staff at mentoring@acda.org.

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HOW THE ACDA MENTORING PROGRAM WORKS

The Matching Process

Potential mentees register with the ACDA Mentoring Program and review the program benefits and expectations. After completing the agreement and submitting their profile, the mentees request mentors based on search criteria that they select using our search engine. We do not match mentors with students. If you receive a request, you have the option to accept or decline.

Mentoring Sessions

The mentoring sessions run for approximately eight months. At the end of the mentoring session we formally release you so that you are able to work with another mentee (or mentees), and your mentee can work with a new mentor. The ACDA Mentoring Program goal, however, is to develop ongoing relationships, so we encourage you to continue your relationship on an informal basis.

When a Student Requests You as a Mentor

If student(s) request(s) you as a mentor, an email will be sent to your primary email with *Subject: ACDA Mentoring Program: Mentee Request*.

- ✓ Mentees can only request one mentor at a time. Please respond within **three days**.
- ✓ You can either **accept or decline** a request. If you choose to decline, please send a message to the potential mentee with your reason when prompted.
- ✓ If you accept, **contact information** is emailed to both parties.

You Are in Control!

By logging in to the ACDA Mentoring Program website, you can:

- ✓ Choose the maximum number of mentees you want during any given session.
- ✓ Change the number of mentees you want to work with at any time.
- ✓ Take yourself in or out of the mentor searchable pool at any time.

BUILDING THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP: SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR MENTORS

Every mentoring relationship is unique. In fact, there is so much to learn that there are entire books devoted to how to build a mentoring relationship. Following are a few guidelines for you to consider:

Set Goals with Your Mentee

- ✓ Setting goals with your mentee at the **beginning of the relationship** is critical because it gives direction to the relationship and informs you about how to help the mentee. See Appendix B and C in the *Mentoring Guide* for goal setting help.
- ✓ If your mentee doesn't know his/her goals, this can be your **first mentoring moment**. You can ask questions such as "What made you sign up for the mentoring program?" or "What about my profile stood out to you?" or "What are your specific concerns and questions right now?" or simply "How can I help you?"
- ✓ Remember, goal setting can be a **process**, so make a point to check in and ask the mentee if his/her priorities are changing or evolving.

Set Expectations with Your Mentee

- ✓ **Stick** to the decision you made with your mentee on how and when you will communicate with each other. Renegotiate as needed.
- ✓ If the mentee is **unresponsive** at any point in the relationship, initiate contact. Some students will be overwhelmed by how much they are doing and forget to contact you.
- ✓ If your mentee doesn't respond to you after multiple attempts, please **contact** the ACDA Mentoring program staff at mentoring@acda.org.

Get to Know Your Mentee

- ✓ Ask **thoughtful** questions about the mentee's interests, experiences, and background.
- ✓ **Follow up** on any important steps the mentee has taken, such as a job interview or a leadership experience, and ask what she/he learned.
- ✓ Be an **active listener** by feeding back what the mentee says, avoiding interrupting and showing interest in your voice and posture.

Offer Options Versus Solutions

- ✓ **Avoid** giving quick solutions. Ask the mentee what he/she is thinking and help him/her process his/her own ideas.
- ✓ Make **suggestions** of things the student might try, for example, "Have you looked into . . ." or "Something I found helpful when I started to conduct . . ." versus "You should . . ." or "You need to . . ."
- ✓ Remember, oftentimes people will not do what we say, so **don't get discouraged** if your mentee does not heed your advice.

Adapted with permission from the Stanford Alumni Mentoring Program, Career Development Center, Stanford University.

Share Your Story

- ✓ Telling your mentee **about yourself** and your experiences builds trust and rapport.
- ✓ Think about how you have learned from your **mistakes** and how your mentee can learn from them.
- ✓ Share the **lessons you learned** during your student and early years and beyond with your mentee.

Be a Coach!

- ✓ Encourage your mentee to **take risks**. They may need a little push, but it will help them in the long run.
- ✓ Remember, students have much to learn from a **professional like you** – everything from how to dress to being on time.
- ✓ Don't hesitate to **give your mentee feedback** if he/she is not acting in a professional manner – it could make a huge difference for his/her first interview, job, and other life experiences.

Coordinating Schedules

- ✓ It may be difficult to find the time to talk or meet with your mentee, so schedule your next conversation at the end of each meeting.
- ✓ Keep the relationship a priority and ask your mentee to do the same.

How to Relate

- ✓ Ask about the mentee's **choral or conducting experience**, as you have that in common.
- ✓ Share what you might have **done differently** if you were a student again.
- ✓ **Refer** to the "Suggested Mentoring Activities" in the *Mentoring Guide* for some ideas of what to do together or talk about.

SUGGESTED MENTORING ACTIVITIES

You may know as a mentoring pair what you want to do during your time together. But if you need some ideas on what to do, the following list is a great place to start.

Career Conversations

- ✓ Discuss the mentor's educational background and the role of educational preparation in his/her field.
- ✓ Talk about a current event or issue in the mentor's field.
- ✓ Schedule a shadow visit, if appropriate.

Job Search Process

- ✓ Review the mentee's resume and/or cover letter.
- ✓ Lead the mentee through a mock interview.
- ✓ Discuss how to best look for jobs/internships in the mentor's field.

Graduate School Consultations

- ✓ Share what the mentor learned about navigating graduate school.
- ✓ Discuss how the mentor worked with advisors.
- ✓ Talk about how the mentor prepared for the transition from school to the professional world.

Mentor's Story

- ✓ Talk about how the mentor has balanced personal life and career and what to expect.
- ✓ Discuss what the mentor would have done differently at university if he/she could do it over again.
- ✓ Talk about how the mentor has dealt with personal or professional challenges.
- ✓ Discuss the ways in which being active in a professional association has helped the mentor.

Networking Pursuits

- ✓ Introduce the mentee to colleagues or other contacts.
- ✓ Attend a professional association meeting or conference together (ACDA national and/or division conferences are great opportunities)
- ✓ Guide the mentee in how to conduct an informational interview.



THANK YOU ACDA MENTORING PROGRAM MENTORS!

We want to extend our deepest gratitude for your participation in the ACDA Mentoring Program. This program would not be possible without your commitment and enthusiasm to connect with choral conducting students and new conductors and your willingness to share your life and experiences.

This guide will evolve with the ACDA Mentoring Program. As we work together, we welcome your suggestions for improving our written materials as well as our program. Your participation in this process will help the ACDA Mentoring Program make a valuable contribution to our field.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

Sharp, Tim. 2011. *Mentoring in the Ensemble Arts: Helping Others Find Their Voice*. Chicago: GIA.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at mentoring@acda.org or 405-232-8161, ext. 200.

Tim Sharp
Executive Director

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Add Eastern Division contacts?

In preparing this Mentoring Guide, we relied on the work and experience of the Stanford Alumni Mentoring (SAM) Program and their materials. SAM, in turn, used material from its sister institutions. They particularly acknowledge using material from University of Minnesota Alumni Association Mentoring Handbook 2008 and Cornell University Alumni-Student Mentoring Handbook 2008.

Appendix A

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MENTORING AGREEMENT: SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS

To get the most out of your mentoring experience, the ACDA Mentoring Program recommends that you talk about the expectations and goals that both the mentee and mentor have for the mentoring relationship.

Agree on Expectations: How will the relationship work?

1. **Meeting together:** What works best? (Remember, you want to have at least one real-time meeting or conversation.) Will we meet:
 - In person
 - Skype
 - Phone
 - Email
2. In general, **how often** would we like to meet/interact (e.g., once per week, every other week, once a month)? Renegotiate as needed.
3. If an **email/voice mail** is received, we will get back to our partner within:
 - 24 hours
 - 1-2 days
 - 3 days
 - Other
4. If we can't make an expected meeting/interaction, how will we get in touch?
5. When will we meet or talk **next**?

Agree on Goals: What do you hope to gain from the relationship?

1. What are the **mentee's goals** for this mentoring relationship? (See ACDA registration form.) Is there any clarification needed?
2. What are the **mentor's goals** for this mentoring relationship?
3. What **actions** can you and your mentoring partner take to achieve these goals?

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Appendix B

GOAL SETTING

“Intentional mentoring requires deliberate and thoughtful planning. Choosing a mentor and choosing a protégé is like investing. . . . Purposeful protégés will identify the particular lessons and skills they desire to attain from the more experienced mentor, and will seek to honor those shared values with an investment of a part of their own life of learning and modeling.” – Tim Sharp, *Mentoring in the Ensemble Arts*

Purpose of Goal Setting

Setting goals helps people strive to achieve. Although goal setting may be challenging, it is worthwhile. The intention is to increase efficiency and effectiveness by specifying desired outcomes. Hellreigel, Slocum & Woodman (1992) and Martens (1987) find goals to be important because they:

- ✓ Guide and direct behavior
- ✓ Provide clarity
- ✓ Reflect what the goal setters consider important
- ✓ Help improve performance
- ✓ Increase motivation to succeed
- ✓ Instill pride and satisfaction in achievements
- ✓ Provide challenges and standards
- ✓ Bolster self-confidence and decrease negative attitude

Goal-Setting Model

The SMART guidelines can help set effective goals that will help you to achieve success.

SMART means:

Specific – A goal of getting a choral conducting position is too general. Specify how this will be accomplished.

Measurable – Establish criteria for how to achieve a goal. Measurable does not refer to a timeline; it means determining a way to measure your success in completing the long-range goal.

Action-oriented – Be proactive in taking action that will result in reaching the desired goal.

Realistic – Strive for attainable goals; consider the resources and constraints relative to the situation.

Timely – Allow reasonable time to complete each goal, but not so much time that you lose focus or motivation.

Source: University of Minnesota Alumni Association, *2008 Mentor Handbook*. SMART adapted from *Discovery Focus on Your Value and Accomplish Your Goals* (1996).

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Appendix C

GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

First, discuss the mentor's background. Then discuss student's major coursework and work experience to date.

Next, the mentee can indicate their level of interest in the following activities. Rate interest level as low (L), medium (M), or high (H).

Insight into mentor's own academic experience	L	M	H
Introduction to colleagues or contacts	L	M	H
Attending a professional meeting or program with mentor	L	M	H
Critiquing mentee's resume/portfolio/CV	L	M	H
Developing interviewing or informational interview skills	L	M	H
Discussion of how personal and professional life can fit together	L	M	H
Review of mentor's resume/CV	L	M	H
Decision to attend graduate school	L	M	H
Guidance on how to seek a job or internship in the field	L	M	H
Discussion on how mentor navigated graduate school/working with advisors	L	M	H
Shadow mentor at workplace	L	M	H
Discussion of academia vs. industry	L	M	H

After completing the above, discuss ways that the mentor might be able to help the mentee with items rated high or medium interest.

Using the SMART model, determine two short-term and one long-term goal that the mentee wants to work on.

Source: University of Minnesota Alumni Association, 2008 Mentor Handbook.

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