**Guidelines for Student Mentees in the Leadership Program**

**Honors Program, Clarkson University**

“A mentor is someone whose hindsight can become your foresight” (Anon)

Each student in the Leadership Program will benefit from mentoring by a Clarkson alum with whom they will consult at least once per semester. In each meeting students will discuss topics related to the leadership theme of the semester, but as with the True North Discussion you and your mentor are encouraged to mutually establish your own agendas and dynamics. Your mentor will be able to provide you with a wealth of wisdom and experience from beyond the academy and to provide you with advice that will help you for real world leadership and followship.

Generally we expect that the value of the mentorship relationship depends upon your mentor’s sharing work-life experiences and strategies for success that are largely independent of their particular career field, position, or personal identity. Also, for practical reasons, it would be difficult to evenly match students with their mentors, so we prefer to make a random assignment. However, some students may want express a preference for gender, and, if so, we will do our best to match you.

**Benefits for Leadership Mentees**

* Chance to personally engage with professionals and leaders in the real world
* Learn about leadership and followship in the workplace
* Understand the play of purpose, strategy, and serendipity in work-life stories
* Enhance of your networking and communication skills
* Assistance in defining career goals, strategies and outcomes
* Knowledge of workplace expectations
* Build self-advocacy skills and confidence to be successful

**Guidelines for Mentees**

There is no single formula for good mentorship as there are many different mentoring styles, degrees of formality/informality, and levels of engagement, so we encourage mentors and mentees to work out their own unique relationship. Mentors will provide different amounts and kinds of attention, advice, information and encouragement, but please note that it is generally inappropriate to ask your mentor to

write letters of recommendation, make introductions, or provide employment opportunities with their employer. Among other things, a good mentee is respectful, responsive, and appreciative. Here is a list of the rules of engagement:

**1. Be respectful.** Always be considerate and respect your mentor’s time. Give advance notice if you need to cancel an appointment. Be thorough, but succinct in your conversations. Watch for clues or politely ask if you are going on too long.

**2. Take responsibility.** Experience has shown that relationships of this kind are most successful when the mentee takes the responsibility for managing the relationship. Use e-mail, letters, or phone calls to maintain communication with your mentor.

**3. Help your mentor help you.** Mentors are most helpful when you’ve got a clear idea of where you need advice and guidance. You should have a clear sense of your strengths and weaknesses, and of the areas where you think you need the most advice. It may be helpful to share a vision/mission statement, a career development plan and a resume with your mentor.

**4. Be prepared for each meeting.** Identify the goals you have for each meeting and share them with your mentor beforehand. For example, you could identify some areas in which you would like some help or ask some questions that you would like to have answered (see “Some suggested topics of conversation” below).

**5. Listen Carefully.** Use active listening skills during discussions with your mentor. Be careful not to interrupt, unless you need to clarify a point. Ask good questions. Towards the end of the meeting **s**ummarize key things that you’ve learned and express appreciation for the meeting.

**6. Solicit feedback.** Demonstrate that you are open to hear new ideas and suggestions to bring out

your best and overcome any blind spots. Ask for an honest assessment of your resume or how you come across to others. Be willing to take constructive criticism without being defensive.

**7. Show appreciation.** Express your appreciation for advice and any assistance you get. It is especially valuable to show how you have acted upon advice or followed through on commitments.

**8. Maintain Confidentiality.** Your mentoring relationship may well involve sharing information that it is not appropriate to broadcast to others. Both mentors and mentees are subject to the expectation of professional confidentiality. Although this confidentiality is legally limited, neither of you should share the content of your discussions with anyone else without the written permission of the other.

**Some suggested topics of conversation**

For personal growth:

* ask your mentor to suggest an article or book for you to read
* ask them about a challenging situation they have faced and how they came up with solutions
* ask how they cultivated their leadership skills

For professional growth:

* ask your mentor for help developing your “elevator pitch”
* ask for feedback on your communication skills and seek suggestions on how to improve on them
* ask for feedback on assignments for the Leadership Program such as your journals, vision statement, and reflective essays
* explore your career goals and strategies to attain them
* ask your mentor to conduct a mock interview and give feedback on your performance.
* discuss personal branding/marketing and talk with your mentor about what makes you unique