SCHOOL *of* INTERNATIONAL SERVICE
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY • WASHINGTON, DC

Mentee Tips & Talking Points
2010 – 2011

The Initial Meeting

- Once a match has been confirmed, and the information is sent to each participant, the student is responsible for contacting his/her mentor as soon as possible. Contact between the participants can be in the form of mailings, phone calls, e-mail, or personal meetings. The initial contact should be an informal one. It should be kept friendly and light-- the goal is to have both parties at ease with each other. At the end of the meeting, arrangements should be made for the second meeting. For many of you, the "Kick-off Reception on September 15th will be your first in-person meeting with your mentor. Be prepared: research your mentor's employer and be familiar with your mentor's current position and any biographic information you can find. Dress in professional attire for the first and all subsequent meetings.

Questions for the Mentor and the Mentee to Ask of Each Other

- What do you expect from this relationship?
- How often would you like to meet?
- Where should those meetings take place?
- Let's discuss some of any concerns about trying to establish this relationship?

Mentor's Role in Career Development

- Advising on career options
- Discussing particular fields of interest
- Sharing experiences of working in a particular field
- Guiding and supporting through the process of:
    - Researching and selecting specific employers to work for
    - Developing resumes and cover letters
    - Preparing for interviews
    - Introducing mentee to a variety of information and resources to assist in preparing for specific careers/jobs

Possible Meeting Topics:

- Discuss the overall goals and expectations of the program:
    - Address specific communication preferences for the mentor and mentee
    - Discuss how to handle changes in plans
    - Mentor describes current job, early/first job(s):
        - What is a day-in-the-life like for your mentor?
        - What does mentor like most about his/her profession?
        - What skills matter most?
        - What does mentor and mentor's employer look for when hiring a new employee?

        - What skills do mentor/mentor's employer wish more applicants had?
        - What skills are best learned on the job?

- Discuss networking:
    - Discuss your knowledge of effective networking.
    - Discuss the value of networking.
    - Discuss mentor's approach to networking.
    - Explore mentor's contact circle by utilizing the mentor spreadsheet.
    - Ask for suggestions regarding networking opportunities.

- Resume and cover letter:
    - Review your current resume.
    - Review a cover letter you have written. You may want to write a sample cover letter in advance of this meeting.
    - Discuss elements of a strong resume and cover letter.

- Job interviews:
    - Discuss your mentor's interview experiences.
    - Discuss interview strategy.
    - Role-play interviews.

- Fields of Interest:
    - Discuss your current interests.
    - Be open to expanding your awareness of related fields and areas of employment.
    - Discuss realistic expectations for entry level positions.

- Job shadowing or interning (when possible):
    - When given the opportunity to shadow your mentor for a day, come prepared and act professionally.
    - Ask questions in advance.
    - Write thank you notes to all colleagues you meet during your job shadowing experience.

These are merely suggested guidelines. Be open to innovative, creative and personal ways in which you can maximize your experience in the SIS Alumni-Student Mentoring Program. Communicate with your fellow mentees by sharing experiences and ideas. Communicate regularly with Judy Donner to enable her to facilitate a dialog between mentors and mentees throughout the year.