

# How the UB Law Mentoring Program Works



## Thank you for considering being a part of the UB Law Mentoring Program!



The professional development of our students and new graduates is one of our top priorities, and mentors can play an important role. Our Mentoring Program connects students mentors whose valuable experience, knowledge, and perspective can help the student step outside the classroom to learn desirable professional values and the culture of the legal profession.

## Matching

- Students and alumni enrolling in our Mentoring Program are asked about their backgrounds and interests, particularly those that are likely to shape their career decisions.
- We aim to assign mentors to students and alumni who have at least one common experience or enthusiasm – such as college alma mater, practice area of interest, or type of practice sought – so that every mentor/mentee relationship has a comfortable point of connection.
- At the same time, we encourage students not to seek or expect made-to-order mentors who possess a predetermined list of skills, connections, and experiences. Part of the benefit of the mentoring relationship to students is that it can expose them to practice areas and career paths that they had not previously considered.
- Mentors who are particularly interested in working with students with specific backgrounds, interests, or career goals are invited to let us know their preferences, for use in matching students.

## Meeting

Once mentors and mentees are matched, we encourage mentors to reach out to introduce themselves and to suggest a time to meet and get to know each other. One convenient option is to meet at the annual mentoring reception that we host to give mentors an opportunity to meet their mentees on campus and to connect with us and with their colleagues who have also volunteered to serve as mentors.



## The Mentor/Mentee Relationship



Mentor/mentee relationships can develop organically in a variety of ways, and we encourage mentors and students to develop modes and frequencies of contact that feel comfortable to them. As the more experienced member, mentors should expect to take the lead at first, inviting mentees to meet with them and checking in with their mentees regularly. The need for this effort should lessen over time as mentees grow more comfortable with their mentors and with the relationship.

## Support

- Almost all successful practitioners have a surfeit of wisdom, know-how, and understanding to offer to students.
- We recognize, though, that some mentors, particularly those taking on the role for the first time, may be unsure of what students are expecting, of what works and what doesn't work in a mentoring relationship, or of the things that veteran practitioners take for granted that may be of tremendous value to students.
- To provide new and experienced mentors alike with greater awareness of the opportunities for enrichment for the students, with suggestions of topics for discussion or types of interactions that may prove fruitful, and with strategies for identifying and dealing with situations that might prove awkward or might lessen the effectiveness or agreeability of the mentoring relationship, UB Law will be producing a series of 10-minute webinars – quick doses of advice on how to make the most of the mentoring relationship, in which mentors can participate live or which they can access at their convenience from our Mentoring website.
- Rarely, mentors may encounter difficulties – personality clashes, changes to their own schedules or commitments, etc. – that may more seriously threaten the mentoring relationship. In such cases, please notify the UB Law Mentoring Program, and we will help to resolve the situation by providing additional resources, by reaching out to the student, or, in particularly challenging situations, by reassigning the student to a new mentor. We strive to ensure that mentoring is a rewarding undertaking for both student **and** mentor.

## Outcomes

Where the mentoring relationship goes is up to you and your mentee. While we do request that mentor volunteers commit to at least a full semester, the relationship need not be limited to such a period. Our goal is to provide mentoring support to our students throughout their time at UB Law, and a student may continue in one successful mentoring relationship through all three years, or may engage in a series of mentoring relationships. Regardless of what course any particular relationship takes, our goal is for students to take away practical knowledge and insight, and for both mentor and mentee to make a connection that may last a lifetime.

