

FSLI Mentoring Guidance

Mentoring is a vital part of leadership development. The goal of the mentoring program is to ensure each individual FSLI Fellow has the opportunity to experience expert guidance in their individual leadership development goals. Each FSLI fellow will work with one or more mentors who can assist with the development of particular leadership goals, objectives, and skills. The mentoring portion of the FSLI provides fellows with expert guidance in the development of specific skills, the opportunity to gain exposure to higher level administrative responsibilities or strategic functions, and the chance to build a relationship with another dynamic professional.

In addition, the following are some commonly cited mentoring benefits, some of which may become objectives for the FSLI mentor-mentee relationship:

- Broadening the mentee's exposure to other areas of the organization and to senior leadership
- Career advice, including goals, strategies, advancement guidance, and more
- On-the-job training
- Role modeling
- Preparing for greater leadership responsibility
- Strategic thinking and planning
- Political savvy
- Learning to build support for new initiatives, projects, policies, etc.
- Effective ways to communicate both within and outside of the organization
- Constructive feedback on performance
- New perspectives on institutional culture and operations
- Networking opportunities with new contacts both within and outside the organization
- Guidance on managing stress, including balancing work and personal lives

Expectations

Each FSLI Fellow should develop individualized expectations for the mentoring experience, to be shared with the mentor(s). It is expected that FSLI fellows and mentors will meet at least 4 times over the course of the first year of the FSLI, but more frequent meetings are encouraged. Interactions may take place in person, over the phone or through other modes of communication comfortable to both the fellow and the mentor.

Selecting a Mentor

Reflection on the Fellow's personal leadership development objectives can assist in selecting a mentor. Review your Personal Development Plan and decide what portion you wish to use the mentoring experience to help achieve those goals. Also consider what help you might need in developing and carrying out your project. Use the mentoring contract to formulate your mentor plan. The contract is an optional form to use with your mentor but we encourage you to use it at least as a worksheet to develop a plan.

Fellows may have diverse objectives and project ideas, so consider having several mentors who can contribute to the leadership development experience. Fellows may select multiple mentors for a variety of reasons, including specialized mentoring guidance for specific goals or limited time availability from a single mentor. In some cases a “mentoring team” may be employed, with multiple mentors working together to aid the leadership development of an FSLI Fellow.

Think broadly about who could be a mentor. While mentors have traditionally had seniority compared to mentees, this may create unnecessary restrictions on the potential for beneficial relationships. You may instead think of mentors as coaches, as individuals with knowledge or experience from which you can benefit.

Recommendations for the Fellow

- Formally request a mentoring relationship with the potential mentor, if you have not already.
- Develop clear expectations and/or objectives for the mentoring relationship, share them with the mentor, and be prepared to discuss these at your first meeting.
- Be specific with questions you may have for your mentor.
- Any matters discussed between the mentor and mentee should be treated as confidential by both parties
- Prepare an agenda and identify specific points of discussion for each meeting.
- Share your individual development plan, or portions of it, with your mentor. The mentor may have experience or contacts that can assist you with various personal goals and objectives.
- Take the initiative: it is up to you to schedule the meetings with your mentor. Everyone suffers from limited time, and mentors often have severely restricted schedules, so schedule meetings well in advance.
- Be flexible: your work with your mentor may go in unexpected directions, your objectives may change, and new benefits may arise.
- If possible, invite the mentor to observe occasions when you are practicing newly learned skills or share those skills in some other format.
- Reassess as needed: mentors and mentees may discover that through no fault of either partner, they must change their expectations or discontinue the relationship.
- Be considerate of your mentor’s time; abide by time limits set.

Recommendations for the Mentor

- Review the mentee’s expectations and objectives for the relationship and provide ideas, suggestions, and other feedback.
- Ask your mentee how they would like you to assist them in their leadership development goals. As the relationship progresses, ask them how you have helped them, how they have changed as a result of your interactions.
- Any matters discussed between the mentor and mentee should be treated as confidential by both parties
- When possible, choose one or more leadership activity, special project or initiative, or administrative responsibility in which you may involve the mentor.



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- Help the mentee see alternative perspectives, interpretations, and approaches
- Observe an occasion when the mentee attempts to try out his/her new skills (If possible)
- Invite the scholar to observe you implementing the skills that the mentee is trying to build (if possible)
- Key mentoring skills include listening actively, building trust, building capacity, and encouraging and inspiring others.
- Be inquisitive- ask questions to assist the mentee analyze their objectives. Too much direct recommendation on how to handle specific situations can lead to dependence on your guidance.
- Suggest reading material or other resources that might help the scholar in his/her development.