

# Engage in Mentoring

This mentoring guide and resources list is adapted from the National Association of Plant Breeders Borlaug Scholars Mentoring Guide



The following information is an excellent resource for mentors and mentees and was originally developed by NAPB for the Borlaug Scholars Program. NAPB has graciously allowed us to adapt and condense it for our ASA, CSSA, and SSSA mentoring program. Learn more about the [NAPB Borlaug Scholars Program](#).

## Welcome to Mentors and Mentees

Your commitment to addressing challenges in global food security is commendable. We welcome you to our program as well as our devoted mentors who will guide you in taking steps towards careers in which you will continue to contribute to feeding the world.

## Expectations

- Both mentors and mentees are encouraged to extend the mentorship beyond the timeframe if deemed beneficial.
- Should all mentorship objectives be achieved or if the pairing no longer provides value to the mentee, mentors and mentees reserve the option to conclude the mentorship.

## Kickstarting the Mentorship

Both mentors and mentees are encouraged to take the initiative in scheduling their first meeting. For the first meeting and all subsequent meetings, mentees should feel empowered to proactively engage with their mentor by suggesting meeting topics, setting up meetings, and contributing ideas for discussion. Mentees are encouraged to take the lead in the mentorship and to shape their experience as they achieve their goals within the program.

Here is a list of suggested activities for your first meeting:

1. **Introduction and Icebreaker:** Start the meeting by introducing yourselves, sharing your backgrounds, and answering an icebreaker to get comfortable with one another.
  - a. Icebreaker examples:
    - i. If you could bring back any fashion trend, what would it be and why?
    - ii. What is your favorite meal to cook and why?
    - iii. What's the best piece of advice you have been given?
    - iv. What would you like to do when you retire?
    - v. How would you change your life today if the average life expectancy was 500 years?
    - vi. What is your favorite hobby/leisure activity outside of your work duties?

2. **Establish Goals:** Discuss and clarify the goals and expectations for the mentorship. This could include short-term objectives for the upcoming months as well as goals to accomplish by the end of the year-long mentorship.
3. **Establish Communication Preferences:** Determine the frequency and mode of communication that works best for both parties. This could include regular meetings, email updates, or check-ins.
4. **Discuss Roles and Responsibilities:** Define the roles and responsibilities of both the mentor and mentee in the relationship such as who will set up the meetings, who will suggest and set up the agendas, etc. Set clear boundaries and expectations.
5. **Explore Interests and Strengths:** Take time to explore the mentee's interests, strengths, and areas for growth. This will help the mentor tailor the mentorship to the mentee's needs.
6. **Identify Challenges and Opportunities:** Discuss any challenges or obstacles the mentee may be facing and identify potential opportunities for growth and development.
7. **Develop a Plan:** Collaboratively develop a plan of action for achieving the established goals. This plan should outline specific steps, timelines, and resources needed to reach milestones.
8. **Set Expectations for Feedback:** Discuss how feedback will be given and received throughout the mentorship. Establish a constructive feedback loop to facilitate continuous improvement.
9. **Schedule Follow-Up Meetings:** Agree on a schedule for future meetings and set dates for follow-up discussions to track progress and address any challenges.
10. **End on a Positive Note:** Wrap up the meeting on an encouraging note, expressing mutual commitment to the mentorship journey and the mentee's growth and success.

## Topics and Meeting Ideas

Below are potential topics and activities for mentors and mentees that can serve as a starting point for their meetings. To be clear, this is a guide for ideas and not a list in which the mentor and mentee need to check every box.

1. **Trends and Innovation in Scientific Area:**
  - Discuss emerging trends, technologies, and methodologies shaping your scientific area(s) of interest.
2. **Building Resumes and CVs:**
  - Review and edit the mentee's resume together.
3. **Grant Writing and Funding Opportunities:**
  - Review strategies for writing successful grant proposals and identifying funding sources.
4. **Publication and Presentation Skills:**
  - Discuss how to effectively communicate research findings through academic publications and presentations at conferences.
  - The mentee could present to the mentor (and possibly their peers as well) on a topic they are passionate about.
5. **Interviewing and Negotiation Skills:**
  - Mock interview with behavioral questions and interview panel made of mentor's peers.
  - Talk through the mentor's experiences with salary negotiation and talk about strategies to improve the outcome of negotiations.
6. **Networking and Collaboration:**
  - Discuss strategies for building professional networks, fostering collaborations, and engaging with peers in the plant breeding community.
7. **Career Planning and Advancement:**
  - Develop a career roadmap and set goals.
8. **Ethical Considerations in Research:**

- Explore ethical issues and considerations relevant to research, such as intellectual property rights.
- 9. **Work-Life Balance:**
  - Address strategies for achieving a healthy work-life balance while pursuing a career in industry, NGO, or academia.
  - Develop an action plan outlining concrete steps the mentee can take to achieve their work-life balance goals, which may include strategies for better time management, boundary-setting techniques, or seeking support from colleagues or supervisors.
- 10. **Continuing Education and Professional Development:**
  - Identify opportunities for continuing education, professional certifications, and skill development relevant to technology, job skills, management.
- 11. **Industry Insights and Career Paths:**
  - Provide insights into career opportunities within the scientific community, including roles in government, industry, NGOs, and research institutions (academic and non-academic).
- 12. **Change Management:**
  - Discuss coping strategies for effectively navigating change.
- 13. **Conflict Resolution and De-Escalation:**
  - For a real conflict situation, collaborate to brainstorm creative solutions that prioritize the interests of all involved parties.
- 14. **Generational diversity in the workplace:**
  - Reciprocal Mentoring: Have one meeting in which the mentee teaches their mentor something on which they are an expert such as innovative technology/ methodology, cultural trends, etc.
- 15. **Leadership:**
  - Collaboratively develop a leadership development plan outlining specific goals, action steps, and timelines for the mentee's leadership growth.
  - Help mentees identify or develop leadership projects or initiatives within their department, university, or virtual influencing sphere, where they can apply their leadership skills in a practical setting.
- 16. **Sexual Harassment/Respectful Workplace:**
  - Check-ins to discuss any concerns or incidents related to sexual harassment or respectful workplace behavior and provide ongoing support and guidance to mentees in navigating challenging situations and promoting a culture of respect and inclusivity.

## Resources to Explore

- Books:
  - How To Win Friends & Influence People by Dale Carnegie
  - The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey
  - There Are No Limits: Breaking the Barriers in Personal High Performance by Danny Cox
  - Grit by The Power of Passion and Perseverance - Angela Duckworth
  - Can't Hurt Me: Master Your Mind and Defy the Odds by David Goggins
  - How Non-Conformists Move the World by Adam Grant
  - Hidden Potential by Adam Grant
  - Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know by Adam Grant
  - Surprising Habits of Original Thinkers by Adam Grant
  - The Memo: What Women of Color Need to Know to Secure a Seat at the Table by Minda Harts
  - The Power of Broke: How Empty Pockets, a Tight Budget, and a Hunger for Success Can Become Your Greatest Competitive Advantage by Daymond John

- The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom by Don Miguel Ruiz
- Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead by Sheryl Sandberg
- Start with Why by Simon Sinek and Leaders Eat Last by Simon Sinek
- Videos:
  - **TED Talks** feature a wide range of speakers sharing insights and expertise on various topics related to professional development, leadership, communication, and career growth. You can explore TED Talks playlists dedicated to topics like "Career Advice," "Leadership," and "Personal Growth."
  - **LinkedIn Learning** offers a vast library of video courses and tutorials on professional development topics, including leadership skills, communication strategies, time management, and career advancement. Many of these courses are taught by industry experts and thought leaders.
  - **Harvard Business Review (HBR)** produces high-quality videos featuring insights from business leaders, academics, and practitioners on leadership, management, and organizational behavior. You can find HBR videos on topics like decision-making, negotiation, and effective teamwork.
  - **Big Think** features interviews and presentations by leading experts and thought leaders on topics including professional development, entrepreneurship, innovation, and productivity. Explore their playlists for curated content on career advice and personal growth.
  - **Simon Sinek**, a renowned author and speaker, shares insights on leadership, communication, and organizational culture through his YouTube channel. His videos often focus on topics like finding your why, building trust, and leading with empathy.
  - **Warren Buffett** is a successful investor, known for his value investing approach and long-term perspective, and **Charlie Munger** is Buffett's long-time business partner, known for his sharp wit, multidisciplinary approach to decision-making, and contributions to Buffett's investment philosophy. Their YouTube videos offer insights into various aspects of professional development, including mindset, decision-making, leadership, ethics, and more:
    - The Power of the Mind
    - Lessons from the 2008 Financial Crisis
    - Leadership and Management
    - The Importance of Ethics in Business
  - **Inclusion Works – Catalyst** – is a global nonprofit focused on advancing women in the workplace, offers a series of videos titled "Inclusion Works" featuring insights from experts on building inclusive cultures, promoting gender equality, and advancing diversity initiatives.
  - **Racial Equity & Social Justice - Stanford Graduate School of Business** provides a series of videos and discussions focused on racial equity and social justice in the workplace. These videos explore topics such as systemic racism, allyship, and creating inclusive environments for employees of all background