

UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND ARTS OF OKLAHOMA

The logo features the word "PATHWAYS" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. To the left of the "P", there is a graphic element consisting of a teal-colored curved line above a yellow arrow pointing to the right. Below "PATHWAYS", the words "ALUMNI MENTOR PROGRAM" are written in a smaller, black, all-caps sans-serif font.

PATHWAYS
ALUMNI MENTOR PROGRAM

MONTHLY DISCUSSION GUIDE

OCTOBER – CAREER MANAGEMENT

Competencies: Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals and identify areas necessary for professional growth. The individual is able to navigate and explore job options, understand and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understand how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.

Discussion Topics:

- Major/career selection
- Vocation: what it is and how to pursue it
- The mentor's USAO experience (benefits & opportunities)
- The mentee's USAO experience (advice on courses, skills, etc.)
- The mentor's industry (culture, opportunities, expectations)
- Networking (tips for responsible and professional social media activity)

NOVEMBER: PROFESSIONALISM/WORK ETHIC

Competencies: demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes.

Discussion Topics:

- Common mistakes made by young professionals
- What it takes to stand-out and be successful
- Overcoming obstacles and set-backs
- Goal-setting and prioritizing

DECEMBER: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION

Competencies: Select and use appropriate technology to accomplish a given task. The individual is also able to apply computing skills to solve problems.

Discussion Topics:

- Technical systems that are crucial to understand for this field
- How to learn these systems and develop the skills for them
- Challenges caused by technology in this field and how to address them

JANUARY: LEADERSHIP

Competencies: Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. The individual is able to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

Discussion Topics:

- Implementing values through leadership
- Inspiration: what inspires you and how to find it
- Examples of great leaders and lessons learned from them
- The types of qualities leaders look for when hiring
- Emotional Intelligence

FEBRUARY: ORAL/WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Competencies: Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.

Discussion Topics:

- Interview skills: How to prepare? Answering behavioral questions? Proper follow-up?
 - Recommended: Mentors provide a mock interview to mentees and offer constructive feedback.
- Resumes and cover letters: What are employers seeking in them? Tips for success?
 - Recommended: Mentors review mentees' resumes/cover letters and offer constructive feedback.

MARCH: CRITICAL THINKING/PROBLEM SOLVING

Competencies: Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret and use knowledge, facts and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

Discussion Topics:

- Constructive approaches to problem-solving and decision making
- Past examples of critical thinking that led to success
- Difficulties in the field and current attempts to address them
- Approaching the unknown: how and with what qualities?

APRIL: TEAMWORK/COLLABORATION

Competencies: Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure and can negotiate and manage conflict.

Discussion Topics:

- Examples of successful teamwork
- Responding to teammates who don't pull their weight
- Common forms of collaboration in the field
- How USAO experiences/opportunities build teamwork skills

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

USAO Experience

- What do you know now that you wish you would have known when you were a student?
- What courses/experiences/skills would be helpful for me to gain while in college?
- How did your experience at USAO help you advance professionally?
- What do you enjoy most about the alumni experience?

Career Direction

- I'm not sure what major/career I want. What helped you decide?
- How do you define vocation? How is it different from a career?
- What opportunities exist in this field?
- What does successful networking look like?

Professional Focus

- How would you describe the culture/atmosphere of your workplace?
- How do salary negotiations work in your field?
- How do you balance professional responsibilities with personal commitments (i.e. spouse, family, etc.)?
- Are there international opportunities in this field? If so, what are they?