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**Establishing an eMentor Program:  
Increasing the Interaction Between Accounting Majors  
and Professionals**

**Working Paper Series—07-04 | June 2007**

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June 2007

# **Establishing an eMentor Program: Increasing the Interaction Between Accounting Majors and Professionals**

In *Issues Statement No. 4, Improving the Early Employment Experience of Accountants*, the Accounting Education Change Commission (AECC) recommended that students should

- Seek opportunities to obtain first-hand knowledge of the business world and practice environment.
- Obtain information about career opportunities and the job search (AECC, 1993, 2).

Accounting departments can help students undertake these objectives by facilitating their interaction with accounting professionals. Indeed, increasing this interaction is even more important than ever, given the recent changes in the accounting environment that have resulted in a more complex professional workplace. For example, corporate accounting scandals such as those of Enron, Worldcom, and Tyco have placed accountants to a greater degree in the public eye and have prompted questions about their professional responsibilities. The resulting Sarbanes-Oxley legislation has increased the role accountants play in establishing controls in the reporting environment and has changed the scope of their work in both public and corporate accounting.

A mentoring relationship between accounting students and professionals can be an excellent way of accomplishing these objectives. However, for many universities located in traditional “college towns” (i.e., relatively small cities that are geographically distant from major metropolitan areas where most recruiters are located), frequent student-professional interaction presents a challenge. Utilizing e-mail can overcome not only this geographic challenge, but also addresses the challenge posed by the busy schedules of both professionals and students.

The primary objective of this article is to describe the development of an eMentoring program that brings students and professionals together in a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship. Linking students with professionals can enhance students’ abilities to network and increase their knowledge of the profession, thus facilitating their transitions from college to the “real world.” Professionals who serve as mentors can also benefit from such a program by experiencing satisfaction through helping students and by maintaining a connection with the accounting program and university. Indeed, this program also benefits our Accounting department by addressing two key elements of our college mission – preparing students for their professional careers and fostering a sense of community among our students, faculty, and alumni.

Additionally, we present the results of data analysis to assess the effectiveness of the program and to understand the nature of the communications between the mentors and students. Finally, we describe some challenges that we encountered during the evolving implementation of the program.

## **Program Implementation**

### ***Developing the Program’s Mission, Objectives, and Design***

The first step in the design of the eMentor program was the development of a mission and key objectives. A committee comprised of faculty members and professionals from our Accounting Advisory Council formulated the operating principles of the program. As a starting point, the committee used suggestions from “Practitioners as Mentors” (Weinstein and Schuele, 2003) which describes a mentoring program to recruit accounting majors to a university in a major metropolitan area. Following the recommendations of the AECC, we focused our mentoring efforts on the professional development of already-declared accounting majors, rather than as a tool for recruiting new accounting majors. Additionally, due to the geographic distance of our university from the primary location of the large public accounting firms and businesses that recruit our majors, we decided to have our program emphasize e-mail communications, hence the name, “Accounting eMentor Program.”

The committee then surveyed first semester accounting majors to gather ideas on the benefits and design of such a program and to determine what characteristics of professionals are important to them in assigning mentors (refer to Attachment 1 for the survey). From the data gathered, we drafted our

program’s mission and objectives which were presented to the accounting faculty and our Accounting Advisory Council for feedback and refinement. The resulting mission of our Accounting eMentor Program is “to bring accounting majors and professionals together in a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship.” The program’s objectives for students are:

- To provide students with insight, advice, and answers to questions from professionals regarding matters such as curriculum choices, goal-setting, careers, and interviewing.
- To enhance the students’ understanding of the industry they are preparing to enter.
- To enhance and complement faculty advising.
- To help students make informed decisions.
- To help students become more polished and improve their business etiquette.
- To enhance student motivation and improve retention.

The program’s objectives for professionals are:

- To provide professionals with a feeling of satisfaction through helping students.
- To provide professionals a continuing connection with the Accounting Department, the College of Business, and the University.

The accounting faculty and our Accounting Advisory Council then established the program guidelines, process, and responsibilities, which are listed in Table 1. We also developed guidance for the professionals in making the initial contact, improving their communications with students, as well as identifying potential topics for discussion (refer to Attachment 2).

**TABLE 1**  
**Program Guidelines, Process, and Responsibilities**

<p><b>A. General</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The program is not intended to be a job placement service or recruiting tool.</li> </ol> <p><b>B. Process</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professionals and students must complete a profile information form submitted via e-mail to the Program Coordinator to participate in the program.</li> <li>2. Professionals will receive information via e-mail (“A Primer on [the] University Accounting Program”) regarding the Accounting Program and the 150-hour law.</li> <li>3. Each student will be assigned a professional as a mentor, and both will be notified via e-mail of the other’s contact information.</li> <li>4. The frequency and type of contacts should be mutually agreed upon by the professional and student and will primarily be via e-mail, although other types of contact such as phone calls, short meetings, and shadowing visits may be part of the mentoring relationship and are encouraged.</li> <li>5. The normal duration of the mentoring relationship is until the student graduates.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If the professional or student chooses to withdraw from the program, the mentor partner and Program Coordinator should be notified.</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. Professionals or students who do not adhere to the program guidelines and code of conduct may be removed from the program.</li> <li>7. Contact the Program Coordinator if you have any questions, issues, concerns, etc.</li> </ol>
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**TABLE 1 continued**

<p><b>C. Responsibilities of Program Participants</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The professional should review the document, “A Primer on [the] University Accounting Program,” in order to be an informed mentor.</li><li>2. The professional is responsible for making the initial contact via telephone—an appointment for the telephone call should be set up via e-mail (refer to Attachment 2 for additional guidance).<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The initial contact should be made within a few weeks of the mentoring assignment notification.</li><li>b. Once the initial contact is made, the professional should notify the Program Coordinator via e-mail of the contact.</li></ol></li><li>3. Students and professionals should follow up on a contact made by the other <u>within a week</u> and should follow appropriate e-mail etiquette.</li><li>4. The professional is expected to initiate contact with the student at least once each semester.</li><li>5. Changes in contact information and/or job should be communicated to the mentor partner and to the Program Coordinator.</li></ol>
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We established two important program design parameters: (1) the program should be flexible for both the students and professionals, and (2) the program should be relatively easy to administer and assess. The first design parameter allows for the students and mentors to not feel constrained in the nature and direction of their relationship by encouraging other forms of interaction, such as phone communications and person-to-person contact and by allowing the student and professional to mutually agree on the frequency of contacts. The second design parameter was established to minimize the time commitment required to coordinate the program since this responsibility is performed by a singular member of the accounting faculty as a voluntary service assignment. As noted later in this article, this time commitment remains significant.

### ***Recruiting Professionals and Students to the Program***

The program has been in place for four semesters and has evolved somewhat over this period. Professionals have been recruited to participate in different ways: through e-mail invitations, personal contacts by members of the accounting faculty, and personal contacts by professional participants. Additionally, as student participants graduate and become “young professionals,” they will be solicited as mentors (this has not happened yet since the first student participants are just now reaching graduation). In order to simplify the recruiting process at the outset of the program, our mentors are all located in the state and are graduates of our university or are involved with our accounting program through recruiting and/or our advisory council. In the future, this regional focus will be expanded. Indeed, the use of e-mail as the primary mode of interaction makes geographical boundaries irrelevant to the implementation of the program.

Accounting majors with at least two semesters remaining until graduation are invited to participate through e-mail invitations and announcements made in junior-level accounting classes. Participation in the program is voluntary, but strongly encouraged; as an incentive, the authors allow

students who participate to earn a nominal amount of extra credit points in their respective courses. As a result, approximately half of our accounting majors have participated in the program.

***Program Processes and Participant Responsibilities***

In order to participate, professionals and students complete a brief profile information form submitted via e-mail. The student and professional profile forms are shown in Attachments 3 and 4, respectively. These forms collect contact information from the participants, as well as the student’s requests regarding the mentor’s type of firm (public accounting, industry, or government/nonprofit), and scope of firm (local, regional, or international/national). Students may also make requests specifying additional characteristics of their prospective mentor, but only a few of these requests have been made to date. The profile form also requires participants to provide electronic initials to acknowledge that they have read the program description and agree to follow the program guidelines and code of conduct.

Table 2 presents information regarding program participants from the four semesters that the program has been in place. Since the program’s inception, there have been 76 pairs of students-mentors. The profile of the professionals in the program indicates 65 percent are “young” versus 35 percent experienced, with 68 percent from public accounting firms, 24 percent from industry, and 8 percent from government. The profile of the professionals’ type of firm reflects the typical proportions of job placements of our graduates.

**TABLE 2  
Participant Information**

Total student-mentor pairs since program inception:	76	
Profile of professionals (n=63*):		
Experience level:		
Young professional (1-6 years)	41	65%
Experienced professional (> 6 years)	22	35%
Type of firm:		
Public accounting:		
Big 4	14	22%
Mid-tier	16	25%
Local	13	21%
Industry	15	24%
Government	5	8%
Survey respondents (of 76*):		
Students	71	93%
Professionals	63	83%

\* Some professionals have had more than one student assigned to them since the program’s inception. These professionals complete the survey at the end of each semester in which a new assignment is made and no more than one new assignment is made in a semester

The program coordinator assigns each student a mentor and notifies both via e-mail of the other's contact information; the mentoring relationship is intended to last until the student's graduation. Prior to the initial contact, professionals are responsible for reviewing background information sent via e-mail regarding the Accounting Program and the 150-hour law. The professional is responsible for making the initial contact via telephone within a few weeks of the mentoring assignment. Once the initial contact is made, the professional is responsible for notifying the program coordinator; the program coordinator follows up in situations where there is no notification. At the outset of the mentoring relationship, the professional and student mutually agree on the frequency and type of contacts, which will be primarily via e-mail; however, other types of contact such as phone calls, short meetings, and shadowing visits may be part of the relationship and are encouraged.

Other responsibilities for program participants include:

- the professional is expected to initiate contact with the student at least once each semester and to communicate changes in contact information to the student and program coordinator,
- students and professionals should follow up on a contact made by the other within a week and follow appropriate e-mail etiquette, and
- students and professionals should contact the program coordinator with any questions, issues, concerns, etc.

## **Evaluation of the Program**

### ***Survey Results***

At the end of the first semester of a new mentoring assignment, we survey both the students and professional mentors to assess their perceptions of the program's success, identify the types of questions asked, and solicit comments or suggestions to help us improve the program for future semesters. Attachments 5 and 6 present the surveys used for the students and professionals, respectively. The response rate was 93 percent for the students and 83 percent for the professionals.

Table 3 presents the results of students' perceptions of the program's mission and objectives for students, and Table 4 presents the results of professionals' perceptions of the program's mission and objectives for professionals. (An ANOVA statistical analysis indicates that there are no significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) in any of the evaluation responses across the four semesters that the program has been in place.) Overall, a high proportion of students and professionals agree/strongly agree (87 percent and 89 percent, respectively) that the program brings accounting majors and professionals together in a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship. The proportion of students who agree/strongly agree with statements regarding the program's objectives for students ranges from 93 percent for "the program provides students with insight, advice, and answers to questions from professionals regarding matters such as curriculum choices, goal-setting, careers, and interviewing," to 70 percent for "the program enhances student motivation and improves retention." The proportion of professionals who agree/strongly agree with statements regarding the program's objectives for professionals is 94 percent for providing a feeling of satisfaction through helping students and 96 percent for providing a continuing connection to the program and university. Additionally, 96 percent of professionals agree/strongly agree that the program is a worthwhile use of their time. These relatively high endorsements bode well for the continued success of the eMentor Program.

**TABLE 3**  
**Students' Evaluations of Accounting eMentor Program**

Statement	Percentage of Students (n=71)					Mean*	Std. Dev.
	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)		
Mission: The program brings accounting majors and professionals together in a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship (from the <i>student's</i> perspective).	41%	46%	11%	1%	0%	1.73	0.72
Students' Objective 1: The program provides students with insight, advice, and answers to questions from professionals regarding matters such as curriculum choices, goal-setting, careers, and interviewing.	51%	42%	6%	1%	0%	1.58	0.67
Students' Objective 2: The program enhances the students' understanding of the industry they are preparing to enter.	38%	39%	23%	0%	0%	1.85	0.77
Students' Objective 3: The program enhances and complements faculty advising.	23%	54%	17%	6%	0%	2.07	0.80
Students' Objective 4: The program helps students make more informed decisions.	38%	49%	13%	0%	0%	1.75	0.67
Students' Objective 5: The program helps students become more polished and improve their business etiquette.	25%	48%	24%	1%	1%	2.06	0.83
Students' Objective 6: The program enhances student motivation and improves retention.	28%	42%	27%	3%	0%	2.04	0.82

\* Mean calculated on a 5-point scale.

**TABLE 4**  
**Professionals' Evaluations of Accounting eMentor Program**

Statement	Percentage of Professionals (n=63)					Mean*	Std. Dev.
	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)		
Mission: The program brings accounting majors and professionals together in a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship (from the <i>professional's</i> perspective).	33%	56%	11%	0%	0%	1.77	0.64
Professionals' Objective 1: The program provides professionals with a feeling of satisfaction through helping students.	38%	56%	6%	0%	0%	1.66	0.57
Professionals' Objective 2: The program provides professionals a continuing connection with the Accounting Program, the College of Business, and the University.	48%	48%	4%	0%	0%	1.56	0.59
Overall: The program is a worthwhile use of my time.	48%	48%	4%	0%	0%	1.56	0.59

\* Mean calculated on a 5-point scale.



Student comments regarding the program include:

- The professionals in this mentor program show that they care about you as a student and want to help you.
- This is an excellent opportunity to not only become acquainted with a professional in our field, but ask questions and seek advice in a manner that is not intimidating.
- The effect depends on the attitude of the mentor and student. I have asked my mentor questions and have gotten great responses. If students do not put forth anything, they will not get anything out of this program.
- Great idea—good insights and “real world” contact.
- I really liked being able to talk with someone in the field and it totally complemented what I was being told by my advisors.
- My mentor was great! I would recommend this program to anyone who is interested in accounting. It really helped me see what options are out there and which path to take to get there.

Comments from the professionals include:

- I think this program is a great idea and my mentee seemed very appreciative of my time and the answers to his questions I was able to provide. He seemed very interested in learning the details of my experiences as a professional versus a student. Our conversation was very worthwhile.
- I think the major benefits to the professionals are the connection as alumni with [the] University. It is important for me to stay connected with the University and I enjoy helping students.

### ***Types and Frequency of Contacts***

As noted above, the design of the eMentor program establishes e-mail as the primary mode of mentor-to-student contact. Across all semesters, over 86 percent of both students and professionals participating in the program report at least one e-mail contact. Approximately 65 percent report two or more e-mail contacts, and about 12 percent of the respondents report more than five e-mail contacts.

Phone contact is also utilized, with about 87 percent of the participants reporting one or more phone conversations. The reported use of both e-mail and phone contact modes reveal that once the relationship is established, a significant amount of contact between the mentor and student occurs. In addition, face-to-face meetings also take place. These meetings generally occur on campus when mentors visit during recruiting. It should be noted that the students are not necessarily part of the mentor’s recruiting target during their visit. Rather, the face-to-face meetings are arranged as an unrelated activity.

### ***Topics Discussed***

Beginning in the second semester that the program was in place, we included additional questions to the survey. These questions are oriented toward determining the topics discussed during the contacts between the professionals and students, based on the suggested topics listed in Attachment 2. This data provides insights into the nature of the communications and can help inform and set expectations of the students and professionals involved in the program. Tables 5 and 6 present the results obtained from these elicitations from students and professionals, respectively. In general, students and professionals are reasonably aligned in their perceptions of the extent to which various topics are discussed.

**TABLE 5**  
**Students' Reporting of Topics Discussed – Perceived Degree of Discussion**

<b>Topic of Discussion</b>	<b>Extent to Which Topic was Discussed – Percentage (n = 49)</b>		
	<b>A Lot</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>None</b>
Advice for curriculum path in college (masters degree, double majors, certificates/minors, electives, etc. to meet the 150-hour CPA requirement)	39%	51%	10%
Importance of grades; skills to develop and extracurricular activities recommended during college.	20%	53%	27%
Benefits of internships, externships, fieldwork experience.	41%	35%	24%
Resume writing, conducting the job search, preparing for interviews, tips for the interview and follow-up.	8%	41%	51%
Professional certifications and preparing for these exams.	31%	47%	22%
Current economic outlook for job opportunities and salaries in accounting.	33%	35%	32%
Career path options; advantages and disadvantages of entry-level positions in public accounting, industry, government, including comparison of small, medium and large firms.	35%	47%	18%
Description of work performed by an entry-level professional in various types of firms.	22%	47%	31%
Ethical situations faced and discussion of how to deal with these situations.	6%	29%	65%
Advice for the transition from college to career.	20%	51%	29%
Balancing personal life and career.	24%	52%	24%

**TABLE 6**  
**Professionals' Reporting of Topics Discussed – Perceived Degree of Discussion**

<b>Topic of Discussion</b>	<b>Extent to Which Topic was Discussed – Percentage (n = 45)</b>		
	<b>A Lot</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>None</b>
Advice for curriculum path in college (masters degree, double majors, certificates/minors, electives, etc. to meet the 150-hour CPA requirement)	27%	58%	15%
Importance of grades; skills to develop and extracurricular activities recommended during college.	22%	53%	25%
Benefits of internships, externships, fieldwork experience.	31%	53%	16%
Resume writing, conducting the job search, preparing for interviews, tips for the interview and follow-up.	7%	36%	57%
Professional certifications and preparing for these exams.	22%	49%	29%
Current economic outlook for job opportunities and salaries in accounting.	11%	41%	48%
Career path options; advantages and disadvantages of entry-level positions in public accounting, industry, government, including comparison of small, medium and large firms.	20%	64%	16%
Description of work performed by an entry-level professional in various types of firms.	16%	60%	24%
Ethical situations faced and discussion of how to deal with these situations.	2%	9%	89%
Advice for the transition from college to career.	16%	51%	33%
Balancing personal life and career.	7%	51%	42%

The data indicate that the three topics most frequently discussed in the first semester of the mentoring relationship, based on the percentage reporting that they spent some or a lot of time on the topic, are: (1) “Advice for curriculum path in college (masters degree, double majors, certificates/minors, electives, etc. to meet the 150-hour CPA requirement),” (2) “Career path options; advantages and disadvantages of entry-level positions in public accounting, industry, government, including comparison of small, medium and large firms,” and (3) “Benefits of internships, externships, fieldwork experience.”

Despite the numerous corporate accounting scandals cited earlier, the topic least discussed in the first semester of the mentoring relationship is “Ethical situations faced and discussion of how to deal with these situations.” In the future, specific topics of discussion could be prompted if they are deemed important by the faculty or professional mentors, or to improve the nature of the communications. It should be noted that the topics discussed are during the first semester of the mentoring assignment and may evolve over the duration of the relationship as the student progresses through the Accounting Program.

### ***Challenges in the Implementation***

While the overall feedback on implementation has been very positive, the program, nevertheless, has resulted in some challenges. Some of the problems that the students and professionals have identified include the difficulty lining up schedules for the initial phone contact, lack of timely responses by the student or professional, and the desire to actually meet with each other, especially for the initial contact. In response, we revised the student profile form to include a question regarding the best time for the initial phone contact. Also, we added responsibilities for the professional to make the initial contact within a few weeks of the mentoring assignment and to notify the program coordinator once the initial contact is made. This allows the program coordinator to identify where additional follow-up is needed to make sure the initial contact is made. The program guidelines were also revised to emphasize that students and professionals should follow up on a contact made by the other within a week and that individuals who do not adhere to the program guidelines may be removed from the program. We also revised the program guidelines to encourage other types of contacts such as short meetings and shadowing in addition to the initial phone contact and e-mail.

It is also important to note that the administration of the program consumes a significant amount of time and energy by the program coordinator. The effort required does diminish once the program is underway; however, continuous monitoring and communication are necessary to ensure that new student-mentor pairs are established each semester and remain in contact until the student’s graduation. In addition, accurate record keeping is necessary to track the assignments of the student-mentor pairs, to maintain up-to-date contact information of the participants, and to ensure that participants are in contact with one another.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

This article describes the process undertaken to implement an eMentor program used as a co-curricular professional development activity for accounting majors at a university that is located in a geographic area distant from the primary location of its major recruiters. The key element of the program is the use of e-mail as a communication channel to link accounting and business professionals with students in our accounting program.

We also report data that was collected to determine the effectiveness of the program and generate insights on the implementation. Results of the data analysis indicate that the program is an overall success. Most student-mentor pairs have had several e-mail contacts and at least one phone contact in the first semester, with a majority of students initiating some contact. In some cases, professional mentors met personally with students to further their relationships. Professionals and students indicate that the key topics discussed in the first semester of the mentoring relationship are college curriculum choices and professional career path options, including the benefits of internships and externships. A high proportion

of both students and professionals agree/strongly agree that the program's mission and objectives are met, and virtually all of the professionals agree/strongly agree that the program is a worthwhile use of their time.

Administering the program does involve a significant commitment. Continuous monitoring and communication is needed to ensure that new student-mentor pairs are established each semester and remain in contact until the student's graduation. In addition, accurate record keeping is necessary to track the assignments of the student-mentor pairs, to maintain up-to-date contact information of the participants, and to ensure that participants are in contact with one another. However, our students benefit from the program by enhancing their abilities to network and increasing their knowledge of the profession and career opportunities, thus facilitating students' transitions from college to the real world. The professionals experience satisfaction through helping students. Our Accounting Department benefits by maintaining a connection with professionals, most of whom are alumni. Overall, we believe these benefits outweigh the significant time and effort required to administer the program. Indeed, the success of our eMentor Program has prompted our College's Strategic Planning Committee to recommend expanding the program to other disciplines within the College of Business.

Future research could examine the long-term results of the program implementation. For example, does participation in the program improve student retention rates within the accounting program? What is the relationship between students' participation in the program and their career choices, as reflected by the jobs they take after graduation? Will students who participated in the program serve as mentors after their graduation?

## **Acknowledgments**

We acknowledge the helpful comments and suggestions by Ken Lorek and reviewers and session participants of the 2007 American Accounting Association Western Region meeting.

## **References**

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## Attachment 1

Accounting Area  
College of Business — [the] University  
eMentor Program Survey — for Accounting Majors

The Accounting Area in conjunction with our Accounting Advisory Council are considering the establishment of an eMentor program, in which students would be mentored by accounting professionals, primarily via e-mail. In order to help us design the program, please answer the following questions:

1. Please evaluate the following statement: *I think this program would be beneficial to students.* (circle one)  
  
Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree
2. How do you think you could benefit from this program?
3. What would you like or expect in this program?
4. Should the program be (circle one):      mandatory      optional
5. How comfortable do you think you would feel in initiating contact with your mentor? (circle one)  
  
Very Uncomfortable      Somewhat Uncomfortable      Neutral      Somewhat Comfortable      Very Comfortable
6. Please indicate how important each of the following potential criteria is to you for matching you with a mentor (**1 = very important; 2 = somewhat important; 3 = not important**)—if you have a preference on the criteria, please circle your preference  
  
\_\_\_\_\_ gender (male or female or no preference)  
\_\_\_\_\_ ethnicity (caucasian or minority—specify \_\_\_\_\_ or no preference)  
\_\_\_\_\_ years since graduation (recent graduate or experienced professional or no preference)  
\_\_\_\_\_ type of firm (public accounting or industry or government/NFP or no preference)  
\_\_\_\_\_ scope of firm (international/national or regional or local or no preference)  
\_\_\_\_\_ other (please describe)

## Attachment 2

### Accounting eMentor Program Guidance for Professionals and Students

#### The Initial Contact and Improving Communications with Students

- Greet the student by name, be relaxed and warm. Introduce yourself and summarize your background for the student. Ask the student about himself/herself.
- Help the student feel at ease; reinforce the objectives of the mentoring program and that it is not a job placement service or recruiting tool and this is not an interview.
- Set a fixed length of time for the initial contact, which should be approximately 15-30 minutes.
- Agree on the frequency and type of future contacts you and the student will have. Encourage the student to e-mail you with their questions and topics for discussion.
- Conversational flow will be cut off if questions are asked so that only a "yes" or "no" reply is required. A good question might be, "What have you thought about taking next semester?" or "What are some things that made you think about accounting as a career?"
- Good mentoring requires effective listening. Listening is more than the absence of talking. Try to understand what the student is saying.
- A student may fear that the mentor won't approve of what he/she says. Mentors need to convey their acceptance of these feelings and attitudes in a non-judgmental way.
- Most people are embarrassed if no conversation is going on. Remember, the student may be groping for words or ideas. If a conversation goes silent, a good rule of thumb is to count to ten. Often a student will continue to explain and you will get a more complete picture of what he or she is trying to express.
- End the meeting at the agreed time. A comfortable concluding phrase might be, "Do you think we have done all we can for today?"

#### Potential topics for discussion

- Advice for curriculum path in college (classes, electives, certificates/minors, other majors, meeting the 150-hour CPA requirement).
- Importance of grades; skills to develop and extracurricular activities recommended during college.
- Benefits of internships, externships, fieldwork experience.
- Resume writing, preparing for interviews, tips for the interview and follow-up
- Professional certifications and preparing for these exams.
- Current economic outlook for job opportunities and salaries in accounting.
- Career path options; advantages and disadvantages of entry-level positions in public accounting, industry, government, etc. including comparison of small, medium and large firms.
- Description of work performed by an entry-level professional in various types of firms.
- Ethical situations faced and discussion of how to deal with these situations.
- Advice for the transition from college to career.
- Balancing personal life and career.



### Attachment 3

#### Accounting eMentor Program Profile-Accounting Students

***Instructions:*** Please read the Accounting eMentor Program description for information on the program's mission, objectives, program guidelines and code of conduct, identifying mentors and students, program design parameters, and administration and assessment of program. If you would like to be assigned a professional mentor, please complete the information below and return via e-mail as an attachment to the Program Coordinator, Professor [the] at firstname.lastname@[the].edu. We will notify you as soon as we have assigned a mentor to you. Thank you!

Name	
e-mail address (university e-mail account)	
Phone number	
Best time(s) for the initial phone contact	
Anticipated graduation date	
Type of firm requested: (no preference, public accounting, industry, or government/NFP)	
Scope of firm requested: (no preference, local, regional, or international/national)	
Other special mentor requests	

***After you have read the program description, please enter your initials and the date below to indicate your agreement to follow the program guidelines and code of conduct:***

<b>Initials</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

(For administrative use only): Name of assigned mentor	
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## Attachment 4

### Accounting eMentor Program Profile-Accounting Professionals

***Instructions:*** Please read the Accounting eMentor Program description for information on the program's mission, objectives, program guidelines and code of conduct, identifying mentors and students, program design parameters, and administration and assessment of program. If you are willing to serve as a professional mentor, please complete the information below and send as an e-mail attachment to the Program Coordinator, Professor [the] at firstname.lastname@[the].edu. We will notify you as soon as we have assigned a student to you. Thank you!

Name	
Preferred program start date (fall semester, spring semester, either)	
Employer name	
Job Title	
e-mail address	
Business address	
Type of firm (public accounting, industry, or government/NFP)	
Scope of firm (local, regional, or international/national)	
Past experience (briefly describe type of firm and position)	
Educational degree / year / university (list all)	
Professional certifications	
Ethnicity (optional)	

***After you have read the program description, please enter your initials and the date below to indicate your agreement to follow the program guidelines and code of conduct:***

<b>Initials</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

<i>(For administrative use only):</i> Name of assigned student	
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## Attachment 5

### ACCOUNTING eMENTOR PROGRAM SURVEY (STUDENTS)

*Please complete this survey if you participated in the Accounting eMentor Program. Thank you for your help so that we can assess the program and make any needed improvements to ensure the program's success!*

Estimated time

Please estimate the amount of time spent engaging in contact with your mentor this semester.

Indicate the types and frequency of contacts:

Type of contact

Number of contacts

Telephone

e-Mail

Other (describe):

Have you initiated any contacts? (check one)

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If YES, does your mentor respond on a timely basis? (check one)

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate how comfortable you feel in making contact with your mentor (place an "x" in the appropriate box below):

<i>Very Comfortable</i>	<i>Somewhat Comfortable</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Uncomfortable</i>	<i>Very Uncomfortable</i>

Please indicate the extent to which you have discussed each of the following topics with your mentor (place an "x" in the appropriate box below for each statement):

Topic	A lot	Some	None
<i>Advice for curriculum path in college (masters degree, double majors, certificates/minors, electives, etc. to meet the 150-hour CPA requirement).</i>			
<i>Importance of grades; skills to develop and extracurricular activities recommended during college.</i>			
<i>Benefits of internships, externships, fieldwork experience.</i>			
<i>Resume writing, conducting the job search, preparing for interviews, tips for the interview and follow-up.</i>			
<i>Professional certifications and preparing for these exams.</i>			
<i>Current economic outlook for job opportunities and salaries in accounting.</i>			
<i>Career path options; advantages and disadvantages of entry-level positions in public accounting, industry, government, including comparison of small, medium and large firms.</i>			
<i>Description of work performed by an entry-level professional in various types of firms.</i>			
<i>Ethical situations faced and discussion of how to deal with these situations.</i>			
<i>Advice for the transition from college to career.</i>			
<i>Balancing personal life and career.</i>			

Please evaluate each of the following statements related to the Accounting eMentor Program’s mission and student objectives (place an “x” in the appropriate box below for each statement):

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<i>The program brings accounting majors and professionals together in a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship (from the <b>student’s</b> perspective).</i>					
<i>The program provides students with insight, advice, and answers to questions from professionals regarding matters such as curriculum choices, goal-setting, careers, and interviewing.</i>					
<i>The program enhances the students’ understanding of the industry they are preparing to enter.</i>					
<i>The program enhances and complements faculty advising.</i>					
<i>The program helps students make more informed decisions.</i>					
<i>The program helps students become more polished and improve their business etiquette.</i>					
<i>The program enhances student motivation and improves retention.</i>					

Please provide comments or suggestions to help us improve the program.

***Thank you for completing this survey!***

## Attachment 6

### ACCOUNTING eMENTOR PROGRAM SURVEY (PROFESSIONALS)

*Please complete this survey if you participated in the Accounting eMentor Program. Thank you for your help so that we can assess the program and make any needed improvements to ensure the program's success!*

Estimated time

Please estimate the amount of time spent engaging in contact with your student this semester.

Indicate the types and frequency of contacts:

Type of contact

Number of contacts

Telephone

e-Mail

Other (describe):

Has the student responded on a timely basis to your contacts? (check one)    Yes \_\_\_\_\_    No \_\_\_\_\_

Has the student initiated any contacts? (check one)    Yes \_\_\_\_\_    No \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the extent to which you have discussed each of the following topics with your student (place an "x" in the appropriate box below for each statement):

Topic	A lot	Some	None
<i>Advice for curriculum path in college (masters degree, double majors, certificates/minors, electives, etc. to meet the 150-hour CPA requirement).</i>			
<i>Importance of grades; skills to develop and extracurricular activities recommended during college.</i>			
<i>Benefits of internships, externships, fieldwork experience.</i>			
<i>Resume writing, conducting the job search, preparing for interviews, tips for the interview and follow-up.</i>			
<i>Professional certifications and preparing for these exams.</i>			
<i>Current economic outlook for job opportunities and salaries in accounting.</i>			
<i>Career path options; advantages and disadvantages of entry-level positions in public accounting, industry, government, including comparison of small, medium and large firms.</i>			
<i>Description of work performed by an entry-level professional in various types of firms.</i>			
<i>Ethical situations faced and discussion of how to deal with these situations.</i>			
<i>Advice for the transition from college to career.</i>			
<i>Balancing personal life and career.</i>			

Please evaluate each of the following statements related to the Accounting eMentor Program’s mission and professionals’ objectives (place an “x” in the appropriate box below for each statement):

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<i>The program brings accounting majors and professionals together in a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship (from the <b>professional’s</b> perspective).</i>					
<i>The program provides professionals with a feeling of satisfaction through helping students.</i>					
<i>The program provides professionals a continuing connection with the Accounting Area, the College of Business, and [the] University.</i>					
<i>The program is a worthwhile use of my time.</i>					

Please provide comments or suggestions to help us improve the program.

*Thank you for completing this survey!*