



# STC Florida Chapter Mentoring Program

## Guidelines and Procedures

### 2018-2019

*The mentoring program coordinators for the 2018-2019 STC year are Bethany Aguad, STC Florida Chapter president and interim manager of the STC chapter's Education Committee, and Misty Arner, an officer in the Future Technical Communicators (FTC) organization at the University of Central Florida (UCF). Bethany is at bethanyaguad@gmail.com; Misty, at mistyarner@gmail.com.*

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### Mission

The mission of the mentoring program is to provide a structured approach by which mentors from the STC Florida Chapter provide one-on-one assistance to student mentees to help them establish themselves successfully as technical communicators. The mentor helps the mentee in a variety of ways, including but not limited to the following:

- Assist in job search and placement by reviewing and critiquing the mentee's resume, cover letters, and portfolios; providing career guidance; and helping to establish contacts for interviews for internships or career placements (either via personal contacts or by helping the mentee network within the chapter to find suitable contacts).
- Increase the mentee's opportunity to network with professional practitioners, and also help develop his/her ability to do so effectively.
- Provide insight into the role of technical communicators in the workplace.
- Review/critique the mentee's academic and/or job-related technical communication projects or written communiqués, providing constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement.
- Answer questions; if the mentee so desires, provide real-time advice to help him/her resolve problems and conflicts as they arise in school or in the workplace.

### Strategy

The mentoring program strategy for 2018-19 is as follows:

- Make the service available to any student, recent graduate,\* or early-career professional who requests help and meets the eligibility requirements listed under "Mentee Qualifications" below.
- Provide one mentor per student for a period of time of not less than 1 year and not more than 2 years. (The general expectation is that most mentor/mentee relationships will run for 1 year, but



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there is no imperative to end the relationship at that point if both participants wish to continue.)  
If the mentee has also been an active member of the STC Florida Chapter, he/she may qualify for entry into the chapter's Leadership Development Program (LDP).

\* Within mentor availability. If the number of prospective mentees exceeds the number of available mentors, the general guidelines for priority in assigning mentors are as follows: (1) graduating seniors or graduate students about to enter the workforce, (2) juniors or graduate students in the first year of a 2-year program, (3) recent graduates (within 3 years), and (4) early-career professionals (who are not recent graduates).

### Responsibilities

The three positions in the mentoring program are program coordinator, mentor, and mentee. Responsibilities of each are listed below.

#### Mentor Program Coordinator Responsibilities

*Note: If possible, it is preferable to have co-coordinators, one professional from the Education Committee and one student in FTC, one of the FTC officers. The support of the faculty advisor of FTC is also a key factor in the success of the program.*

- Assign mentors and mentee pairs, using data on application forms.
- Introduce mentors and mentees in a kick-off meeting
- Follow up by phone, email, IM, or alternative media to mentors and mentees to discuss progress, problems, and ideas at least once per month.
- Remain accessible to both mentors and mentees to deal with questions or problems.
- Report on progress of mentoring program to the chapter Administrative Council.
- Document program results in an appropriate STC forum.
- Ensure mentors get Active Member points (one per month of mentoring activity) for their participation.

#### Mentor Responsibilities

- Register with the STC MentorBoard.\*
- Agree to serve as a mentor for two college terms.
- Work with the mentee to define specific objectives of the mentor/mentee relationship and to define a plan and identify activities that will achieve those objectives.
- Agree to meet with the mentee an average of once per month in a suitable public setting.
- Contact the mentee approximately every 2 weeks by phone or email.
- Help the mentee write/edit/design his or her resume, cover letters, and portfolio.
- Help identify potential employers.
- Help mentee learn to network, including participation and attendance at STC meetings.
- Assist the mentee in other ways as mutually agreed.



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- Remain accessible to the mentee.
- Provide candid feedback in reviews and critiques, including constructive criticism as warranted, and recommend development activities.
- Be honest and open on expectations and commitments.
- Provide feedback to the mentor program coordinators on the progress of the relationship, including periodic email messages and a brief final report and survey.
- Serve as an example of a positive role model.
- Communicate experiences and challenges.
- Listen.

\* Mentors and mentees in the 2018-2019 may be asked to register for the STC MentorBoard in January 2019 purely for administrative purposes. Your program coordinators will keep you advised on this.

### Mentee Responsibilities

- Register with the STC MentorBoard.\*
- Consider technical communication as a primary or secondary career objective.
- Join STC as a student member (if not already a student member).
- Join FTC (if not already a member).\*\*
- If interested in assistance with job placement, actively seek employment in the Central Florida area, at least during the last 3 months of the mentoring period.
- Agree to meet with the mentor an average of once per month in a suitable public setting.
- Contact the mentor approximately once every 2 weeks by phone or email.
- Remain accessible to the mentor.
- Seek and accept candid feedback in reviews and critiques, including constructive criticism as warranted.
- Be honest and open on expectations and commitments.
- Provide feedback to the mentoring program coordinators on the progress of the relationship, including periodic email messages and a brief final report and survey.
- Ask questions.
- Listen.
- Communicate experiences and challenges.
- Network.
- Advise of academic breakthroughs.

\* Mentors and mentees in the 2018-2019 may be asked to register for the STC MentorBoard in January 2019 for administrative purposes. Your program coordinators will keep you advised on this.

\*\* Requirement is waived if the student or recent graduate is not from UCF but meets the other eligibility criteria.

### Qualifications



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The following qualifications define mentors and mentees.

### Mentor Qualifications

- Current or past member of the STC Florida chapter, any other STC chapter, or professional colleague of a current or past member of the STC Florida Chapter or any other chapter. At least 3 years' professional experience in technical communication (exceptions can be made if circumstances warrant).

### Mentee Qualifications

- Current member of the STC Florida Chapter or committed to join upon enrollment in the student mentoring program.
- Currently enrolled in UCF's technical communication program or in a related program/field, at either an undergraduate or a graduate level, or a recent graduate (within 6 months). Generally, undergraduate mentees are expected to be in their senior year, nearing employment, but exceptions can be made if circumstances warrant.
- Currently a member of FTC or committed to join.
- Currently enrolled in another Florida college or university studying technical communication or enrolled in a related program/field, at either an undergraduate or graduate level, or a recent graduate (within 6 months).\*
- A recent graduate (within 3 years) of UCF or another Florida college or university with a degree in technical communication or a related field who is an NTC (New Technical Communicator) member of STC.
- An early-career technical communication professional.

\*FTC membership requirement is waived for students or recent graduates who are not from UCF.

### Virtual Mentoring Options

In response to the continuing trend to online classes and in conjunction with the STC Florida Chapter's long-term objective to develop and sustain a statewide STC community that pairs industry and academe, the chapter is in the process of expanding our student mentoring program to accommodate more virtual options for mentoring and also to extend our long-term partnership with the University of Central Florida in Orlando to other colleges and universities throughout the state.

However, in so doing, *we remain committed to maximizing open 1-on-1 communication between mentors and mentees.* Wherever possible, we believe face-to-face meetings remain the surest way to develop a mutually beneficial mentor/mentee partnership. Therefore, we will continue to strive for pairings that permit regular face-to-face meetings or a blend of face-to-face meeting and virtual communications (**Option 1**). Key to this strategy is to re-establish STC's presence throughout the state and to partner with universities in their area that have programs in technical communication. Variations on this traditional successful approach include a primarily virtual mentoring partnership that includes at



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least one face-to-face meeting (at the kick-off) and, if possible, one other face-to-face meeting during the year (**Option 2**). The third possibility is an exclusively virtual mentoring partnership with no face-to-face contact (**Option 3**).

To assist with the learning and networking process, mentors and mentees may share information that is to remain confidential. They should both exercise good judgment when disclosing sensitive personal information, and both should keep the trust of that confidentiality. Program coordinators are governed by the same principle.

To summarize, the three paths for the STC Florida Chapter's student mentoring program as it evolves are as follows:

**Option 1: Primarily face-to-face** (facilitated by geographically driven mentor/mentee pairings), supplemented with virtual communication in a variety of media, particularly email.

**Option 2: Primarily virtual**, but with at least one face-to-face meeting (at program kick-off) and, if possible, one other face-to-face meeting during the year.

**Option 3: Exclusively virtual**, with the "kick-off" to be arranged by the mentoring program coordinators.

### Confidentiality

To assist with the learning and networking process, mentors and mentees may share information that is to remain confidential. They should both exercise good judgment when disclosing sensitive personal information, and both should keep the trust of that confidentiality. Program coordinators are governed by the same principle.