The College of Charleston offers several mentor programs across various disciplines and departments. Depending on your expertise and level of interest, the Career Center can help you connect to existing programs on campus to provide mentorship to students. Not only will you be providing an invaluable experience for a CoFC student, but you will also be giving back to the College and ensuring the future success of our graduates. To help you get started, please review the following common mentoring responsibilities and tips for building a successful mentoring partnership. careercenter@cofc.edu

Provide Career Advice

As a mentor, share your experience and guidance regarding career paths, industry and business trends, leadership and professional success factors, and strategies to prepare for and enter today’s competitive marketplace. Consider these tips:

- Discuss mutual expectations for the mentoring relationship, the frequency and preferred method of communication, preferences for participation in core and/or optional program components, and a timeframe for establishment of a shadowing experience
- Provide career guidance appropriate to the student’s level of career development (focused goals vs. exploratory stage)
- Share the successes and challenges you have encountered in building your career and succeeding in your profession
- Help the student explore functional areas, specializations and career alternatives
- Help the student assess strengths and weaknesses, and identify necessary success factors and action steps
- Recommend resources specific to your profession
- Provide advice and feedback on the student’s goals, resume, interview/presentation, internship or job search techniques, or graduate/professional school plans
- Encourage the student to take advantage of the many services, resources and programs offered by the College’s Career Center

Networking

It is common knowledge that networking is the number one source for developing internships, job leads and professional contacts. While networking is done on a daily basis in the professional world, many college students are networking for the first time, and often find the process intimidating. The mentor serves as a key resource in coaching the mentee regarding “best practices” for developing a network for their current planning and future professional development. As a mentor, you can help your mentee learn the art of networking by:

- Explaining your approach to networking and the value that it has played in your career
- Reviewing the do’s and don’ts of “networking”
- Introducing or referring your mentee to other colleagues that would be able to provide career information and advice
- Inviting your mentee to attend a business lunch or meeting with you to observe networking practices first-hand

Shadowing

A Shadowing Day is mutually arranged between the mentor and student and is designed to help the student identify and explore career options by observing the real working environment and meeting with professionals in areas of potential interest. Shadowing day components vary and may include:

- Have the student attend meetings or conference calls
- Bring the student on a sales calls or client meeting
- Allow the student to observe a business practice, court proceeding, etc., depending on your industry
- Give the student an opportunity to participate in a hands-on project
- Have the student meet with both junior-level and senior-level employees in various functional areas
- Help the student process what they’ve learned

Prepare to Launch

During their junior and senior years, students continue to solidify their career focus and develop a job search or graduate school plan of action that meets their career goals. As a mentor, you can provide feedback, support and advice to your mentee, including:

- Identification of key strengths and “selling points”
- Job search strategies
- Resume/cover letter review and update
- Interview practice and feedback
- Referral to contacts in your professional network
- Referral to prospective employers; tips for a long distance job search
- Recommend professional associations or groups
- Tips for the graduate/professional school plans, if appropriate
- Negotiating salary offers and benefits
- First year on the job “tips for success”
- Encourage active use of CoFC Career Center (details may be found at careercenter.cofc.edu)

Career Center | careercenter@cofc.edu | 160 Calhoun Street, Lightsey 216 | careercenter.cofc.edu