



Mentee
Handbook
2021-2022

The Raisbeck Aviation High School mentoring program is an integral part of our teaching and learning process. Our goal is to match each of our students, beginning in their sophomore year, with a mentor - individuals with knowledge, experience, and successful careers in and around aviation, aerospace, and a variety of STEM-related industries.

These professionals commit their time, skills, and expertise through a consistent one-on-one relationship with their mentee, helping him or her to achieve his or her academic and career goals. RAHS mentors are making a difference in the lives of our students by serving as role models, trusted counselors, and adjunct teachers. They provide valuable information, encouragement and advice to our students as they plan for their academic futures and careers.

Renee Olsen

**Work-Based Learning Coordinator
Raisbeck Aviation High School**

Overview

By participating in the mentoring program, RAHS students gain opportunities to observe and interact with successful professionals; receive personalized feedback and encouragement regarding their academic and career goals; acquire and improve their knowledge, skills, and attitudes; save time by learning shortcuts and strategies normally learned by years of trial and error; ask specific questions; gain practical resources and tools; and increase their network as they interact with their mentors and gain insight into their professional world.

Powerful things happen when a respected, experienced person shows interest in and goes out of his/her way to help another individual develop, especially when an individual such as a student is open to that influence. Research shows that:

1. We do most of our learning from *observing successful and unsuccessful models*. We watch people's actions, see what happens to them, and then emulate (or avoid) similar actions ourselves.
2. We respond well to positive reinforcement from certain people. We learn *faster and more effectively* when we receive positive feedback from *someone we respect*.
3. We learn best from positive reinforcement and from having "mastery experiences." We leap ahead in our learning if we are challenged to master something difficult.

Good mentors allow themselves to be observed and will encourage their mentees with periodic genuine praise. Students tuned into the process will make a point of watching and questioning their mentors and will give positive feedback to their mentors, which encourages the mentor to invest more energy in the relationship.

Students who take advantage of their mentoring partnership to set difficult but achievable goals learn a tremendous amount, build their self-confidence, and open doors to future career possibilities.

Ideas

- Develop a list of your strengths and areas where you want to grow. Identify how you can work together on these areas.
- Review your resume, practice interviewing.
- Talk about new, upcoming careers, research those of interest, discuss.
- Identify a fun project or outing to do together.
- Talk about tricky workplace / school situations - role play ways to handle.
- Job shadow your mentor, meet with co-workers.

Expectations

Formal mentoring at RAHS is different from informal mentoring experiences you may have had in the past with coaches, family members, or teachers. It differs in the following ways:

1. Partnerships are specifically arranged.

Before mentors and students are linked, prospective RAHS mentors complete a formal application, are screened, undergo background and reference checks, and attend an orientation or interview.

2. Partnerships are temporary.

Unlike informal mentoring relationships, which can go on for years, the RAHS mentoring program is designed to be short term. Each pair sets and achieves specific goals for a specified school year. At the end of the year, the pair may choose to continue the formal relationship for another school year, end the relationship, or continue on an informal basis.

3. The student receives most of the help.

The spotlight stays on the student throughout the entire length of the relationship. The focus is on the student's academic and career goals, not the agenda of the mentor.

4. Pairs may (or may not) have chemistry.

Mentoring relationships are formed for a specific purpose, so a pair may be a bit awkward at first. While chemistry is always nice to have, more important for this formal relationship is the mentor's expertise, mutual respect, and a willingness to share and listen. In many formal relationships, friendship eventually occurs.

5. Partnerships are monitored and supported.

The RAHS Mentoring Program Developer informally monitors and keeps track of all partnerships. He/she will phone, e-mail, or meet with mentors and mentees periodically to see how they feel about their arrangements and offer appropriate resources.

6. Students and mentors may participate in activities designed for them.

RAHS will assist in providing special learning, networking, and recognition and celebration events for mentors and students. Mentors are encouraged to attend school activities such as culminating project presentations or other activities which are important components of their student's academic or extracurricular activities. Mentors are also encouraged to coordinate with administration and faculty to assist in making a class presentation, judging student competitions and presentations, arranging field trips to their place of business, etc. Mentors are an integral part of the educational process at RAHS and are encouraged to contribute to the educational program of the entire school in ways they feel would be beneficial to all students.

What you can expect from your mentor

In the formal mentoring program, you can expect your mentor to:

- Have regular meetings in person, by telephone, or through e-mail communications.
- Provide fair, sound, and diplomatic advice and feedback related to your academic, career, and personal development.
- Keep confidences between you (*as long as maintaining those confidences will not result in damage to your emotional or physical safety!*)
- Follow through on commitments made.
- Help resolve any conflicts between the two of you.
- Evaluate the relationship at several points during the school-year.

What you should **NOT** expect from your mentor

While some of the following may occur, you should not expect your mentor to:

- Take you flying in his/her airplane, take you to special events, do your research on colleges, take you to his/her business, find you a job, etc. Special perks like these are privileges, not rights.
- Provide you with personal introductions to other people until – and unless – s/he wishes to offer them.
- Spend more time on the relationship than s/he is willing or able to give.
- Continue the relationship beyond the agreed-upon time period.

What your mentor will expect from you

Your mentor will expect you to:

- Respond **professionally and promptly** to communication.
- Accept the relationship on a one school-year basis or until one or both of you decide it is time to end. That said, many mentoring relationships continue for the remainder of the student's high school career.
- Take responsibility for discussing and establishing an appropriate meeting schedule. You should meet with your mentor once a month or more frequently. The schedule you set with your mentor will determine the pace of your progress.
- Ask for suggestions or advice.
- Listen to him/her, apply some of his/her advice, and let him/her know the results.
- Keep all commitments made.
- Honor confidences between you.
- Don't be shy, come prepared with some ideas on what to talk about - your mentor will appreciate it.
- Evaluate the relationship at various points during the school-year; consider what you have accomplished and what next steps to take.

RAHS expectations from mentor/mentee

RAHS expects that students and mentors will create a mutually beneficial and productive mentoring relationship. RAHS expects mentors and students to:

- Commit to a mentoring relationship for a minimum of one school-year.
- Create a meeting schedule. Regularly-scheduled Mentor Meetings are planned and are a great opportunity to meet with your mentor, as well as interact and network with other mentors.
- Open doors of opportunity whenever possible.
- Provide evaluation of relationship at the end of the school year.
- HAVE FUN! The mentoring relationship should be a pleasant and rewarding experience.

Note:

- To the extent possible, schedule meetings before school, during lunch and advisory, or after school (as long as staff members are in the building).
- Arrangements for any meetings not at RAHS during the school day, (e.g., a field trip to a business, a job shadow, attend special event, etc.) are strictly between the mentor and mentee and only with explicit written permission of the student's parent(s) or guardian. An email from a parent or guardian, granting permission is acceptable.

Final Suggestions for Students and Mentors

Being involved in a mentoring relationship is a *privilege* for both the student and mentor; go out of your way to be gracious, thoughtful, and respectful to each other. When you are unclear about what to do or how to act, seek advice from the Raisbeck Aviation High School Mentor Program Developer or Principal.

Etiquette

Etiquette: etiquette ('et i ket)

1. the forms required by good breeding or prescribed by authority to be observed in social or official life : observance of the proprieties of rank and occasion : conventional decorum <the strict *etiquette* of court functions>
2. an item of behavior prescribed by rule or custom the rules of conduct, action, or practice binding on members of a profession (as medicine or law) especially in their relations with one another
"etiquette." *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged.*
Merriam-Webster, 2002.
<http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com>
(21 Sep. 2008).

An unspoken etiquette exists in mentoring relationships. Unfortunately, since it is unspoken, it is often unlearned, and participants end up unknowingly and unintentionally doing the wrong thing. The guiding principle is to make the other person feel at ease, knowledgeable about what to do, and valued. In working with adults this means showing commitment, sincere interest, and a combination of good professional and social manners.

The guidelines on the next page will some commonly accepted etiquette. Keep in mind that since all mentors and students will come to relationships with different styles, motivation and expectations, you may expect some changes based on your personality and the personality of the mentor with whom you will be working. One of the first things you and your mentor should discuss are some of the ground rules for your relationship.

Do

- ✓ Take time to identify your academic and career goals.
- ✓ Be considerate of your mentor's time. Most are very busy professionals who are taking time from their jobs to spend time with you. Their time is very valuable.
- ✓ Return phone calls and e-mails promptly (i.e., within 24 hours)
- ✓ Be on time for appointments.
- ✓ Listen attentively of what your mentor has to say.
- ✓ Use correct grammar. Your mentor may not to "hip" to current slang.
- ✓ Be complete in your comments and explanations.
- ✓ Seriously consider all advice you receive.
- ✓ Show initiative. It takes the efforts of both the student and mentor to make the relationship work.
- ✓ Show evidence that you have utilized your mentor's help in making decisions or setting goals.
- ✓ Show appreciation for every form of assistance your mentor gives you. Say thank you, write a thank-you note, etc.
- ✓ Make it easy for your mentor to give you corrective feedback. Ask for it early.
- ✓ Assume the relationship will be strictly professional. They are not there to become your "best friend." However, a personal friendship may grow over time.
- ✓ Make positive or neutral comments about your mentor to others. If you disagree with your mentor's advice, share your perceptions with him/her. Just because your mentor may not be "cool" in your opinion does not mean that they cannot give valuable advice.
- ✓ Be prepared that the relationship may end with the school year. Mentor and students will evaluate the relationship at the end of each year. However, your relationship may continue throughout high school and beyond.
- ✓ Keep the doors open to return to your mentor for advice or later help.
- ✓ Keep in touch once you part company. Send a note or call from time to time to provide progress reports and say thanks. They have invested time in you.
- ✓ Come prepared with questions, suggest projects, identify things you would like to learn - make it easy on your mentor.

Don't

- ✗ Depend on your mentor to identify your goals for you.
- ✗ Assume that your mentor has unlimited time for you.
- ✗ Tune out when the topic seems irrelevant to your immediate needs.
- ✗ Ramble on, ignoring clues that you're talking too much.
- ✗ Say "Yes, but....."
- ✗ Argue.
- ✗ Convey boredom or disinterest with your body language, e.g., slouching in your chair, not maintaining eye contact, etc.
- ✗ Forget to share the outcome of the help your mentor gave.
- ✗ Take your mentor for granted or assume s/he has nothing better to do.
- ✗ Ask for personal favors (i.e., Take me for a ride in your airplane.) Privileges are earned and are provided when and if your mentor feels they are appropriate.
- ✗ Immediately defend or explain yourself or make excuses. Or worse, criticize your mentor.
- ✗ Talk negatively about your mentor behind his/her back. Negative comments have a way of getting back to the person you are criticizing.
- ✗ Hang on to your mentor indefinitely.
- ✗ Leave on bad terms.
- ✗ Move on without checking back with past mentors.

Skills for Students

In addition to being familiar with professional etiquette, students need to keep the following in mind:

1. Working with a Mentor

In many cases, high-school students have had limited experience in working with adults in a professional relationship; good mentors will help guide you in this process. Mentors can help introduce you to the world of business and professional relationships by:

- Modeling appropriate professional behavior and communication styles.
- Discussing the professional ethics and standards required to be successful in their field.
- Conveying their specific expectations and goals for time spent with you.
- Demonstrating how to negotiate agreements including agreements on goals, expected outcomes, confidentiality, feedback process, meeting agendas, logistics, etc.
- Make sure your student understands that your mentor's role is not to be your best friend. Your mentor's role is to serve as another teacher in helping you be successful.

2) Learning Quickly

Mentors enjoy working with students who learn quickly and take seriously any effort to teach them. Typically, your mentor will want you to be a “*quick study*.” You should work hard to directly and indirectly learn everything you can as rapidly as possible; specifically, you should:

- Apply the knowledge and skills presented and be ready to tell your mentor how you applied them.
- Observe carefully and learn indirectly from the modeled actions of your mentor.
- Study the materials given by your mentor as well as materials and resources they may direct you to.
- Integrate new learning into your framework for problem solving.
- Accept feedback non-defensively. Ask for specifics and be appreciative of the feedback.
- If your mentor has misperceived a fact, diplomatically tell him/her.

As the mentoring relationship proceeds and matures, you probably will have ample opportunity to debate and disagree with your mentor. Displaying a strong learning attitude will encourage mentors to share new ideas and information.

3) Showing Initiative

You are expected to show initiative in working toward their academic and career goals. Your mentor has been encouraged to help you lead the relationship from the beginning. However, your mentor will expect you to show the right amount of self-initiative. Specifically, your mentor may expect the following from you, particularly when the activities could have ramifications for him/her (e.g., visiting their place of business, approaching their valued contacts, etc.):

- Ask when and when it is not appropriate for you to take the lead.

- Ask appropriate questions to clarify and get more information.
- Pursue resources without mentor guidance.
- Take informed risks (stretch beyond your usual comfort level) in order to acquire new knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- Go beyond what your mentor suggests; that is, take their ideas and show creative or ambitious ways of using them.

Mentors vary in the amount and timing of initiative they like from their mentees. Discuss this early in your relationship to establish preferences and expectations and to negotiate arrangements that work for both.

4) Following Through

Mentors quickly lose interest in working with students who do not follow through on tasks and commitments and will quickly drop out of the program. Mentors' time is valuable. You can keep your mentor enthusiastic about your relationship by:

- Keeping all agreements with your mentor – especially meetings.
- Completing agreed-upon tasks on time.
- Trying out their suggestions and report results.
- Explaining in advance if you want to change or postpone a meeting.
- Persisting with difficult tasks even when you are discouraged.

The fastest way to frustrate and discourage a mentor from working with you (and all other students) is when you do not follow-through on your commitments.

5) Building the Relationship

Even when the mentor takes a strong lead, you need to take responsibility for helping to manage the relationship. Since the goal of the relationship is YOUR development, YOU must take the responsibility for its process and outcomes. To do this, you can:

- Describe what it means to be mentored – how it works for you and why you consider it beneficial.
- Stay up to date with mentors on issues, goals to reach, satisfaction with meeting schedule, etc.
- Analyze the current status of mentoring partnership, and determine where to go next.
- Prepare for the end of the formal mentoring relationship.
- Leave the relationship on friendly terms.

You will find it useful to keep a journal of your mentoring experiences.

Communication

Formal communication with professionals has a different set of rules than informal communication with friends. Learning how and when to communicate formally is an important skill for you to master as you prepare to explore and to enter the workforce.

Copy Ms. Olsen (renee.olsen@highlineschools.org) on your communications so that she can help coach you through meetings AND track your progress.

Before you meet:: Write a formal introduction; send it within 24 hours of being matched with your mentor

Formal salutation: Dear Mr. / Ms. / Mrs. / Dr. _____

Paragraph 1 (2-3 sentences): enthusiasm about relationship

Paragraph 2 (4-5 sentences): career goals or interests; tie into mentor's career or interests

Paragraph 3 (3-5 sentences): your interests, hobbies, clubs

Paragraph 4 (3-5 sentences): questions about mentor's career path; best time for you to meet

Paragraph 5 (1-2 sentences): appreciation

Closing: include 'Sincerely', first AND last name, and contact information

c: R. Olsen (renee.olsen@highlineschools.org)

After you meet: Write a thank-you note and follow-up letter; send it within 24 hours of conclusion of each mentor meeting

Formal salutation: Dear Mr. / Ms. / Mrs. / Dr. _____

Paragraph 1 (2-3 sentences): recap last meeting, highlight key points.

Paragraph 2 (2-3 sentences): confirm time, date, and location of next meeting. Ask if there is anything else you can or should do to get more out of the next meeting.

Closing: include 'Sincerely', first AND last name, and contact information

c: R. Olsen (renee.olsen@highlineschools.org)

Sample formal introduction

Dear Ms. XXXX,

First of all, I would like to say that I have been hearing about you from _____
_____. I am very excited to have you as a mentor and can't wait to meet you!

Although I'm still trying to solve the great mystery of what I want to do when I grow up, I have always been fascinated with math, music, and architecture. I studied Roman Architecture in 2nd grade, Mesopotamian Architecture in 6th, and Japanese in 8th. It's something that I thought was really cool to learn about, which led to me thinking it was something that would be really cool to do. I can't wait to see what an architect's career really looks like, and even at my own school!

There are lots of things I do outside of school. I play trumpet and baritone in the Highline High School band and jazz band before the Aviation day starts. I love pep band and jazz solos. However, my favorite instrument is cello. I've been playing with my two older sisters since age 6 and have an amazing teacher that helps me explore classical, jazz, and fiddle music. I also do sports after school. I actually just got back from a cross country meet, and my winter sport is Basketball. At Raisbeck Aviation I am secretary of National Honors Society, and participate in craft club (yes, arts and crafts) and debate team.

Enough about me, what I really want is to get to know you, but there will be lots of time to talk at our first meeting. It would be good to know what times work well for you. Tuesdays and Thursdays are best for me, and _____.

Thank you for being my mentor, and thank you Mrs. Olsen for finding such a great match,

Sincerely,

First Last

(c) 206.XXX.XXXX

cc: Renee Olsen (renee.olsen@highlineschools.org)

Sample formal follow-up note

Dear Ms. XXX,

Thank you for meeting with me this afternoon. I appreciate your insight into the steps it takes to become a flight test pilot; I knew it was a long road, but had no idea that engineers are the most valuable test pilots. That is important information for me as I consider classes and colleges.

I am eager to continue our conversation and am looking forward to our next meeting on XXX (day) at XXX (time) at XXX (location). Is there anything I can or should prepare to get more out of our next meeting?

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

First Last
(c) 206.XXX.XXX

cc: Renee Olsen (renee.olsen@highlineschools.org)