

The Center for Innovation

Start-Up E-Mentorship Program

Metropolitan State College of Denver



Mentor Handbook

E-Mentorship Program

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Start-Up E-Mentorship

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Welcome

Start-Up E-Mentorship is a collaboration between the Metropolitan State College of Denver's Center for Innovation and members of the Denver Metropolitan Area entrepreneurial community. The Center for Innovation E-Mentorship program offers advisement, support, expertise, resources, and start-up business ownership support for students. Historically, mentoring was done face-to-face. Today, technology provides a tool for mentoring —the Internet. Because of this, the Center for Innovation is able to meet the needs of these participants using today's technology.

The E-Mentor Cadre

Center for Innovation E-Mentors are experienced, knowledgeable, and highly successful educators who are committed to assisting students to acquire the skills necessary to be a successful entrepreneur. The E-Mentors are reflective individuals who possess the necessary people skills to help beginning entrepreneurs grow. Center for Innovation E-Mentors understand the commitment, availability, professional competence, and sensitivity are the key ingredients in a successful E-Mentorship program. The pool of potential Center for Innovation E-Mentors will come from the ranks of the following:

- **Current Entrepreneurs**
- **Angel Investors**
- **Venture Capitalists**
- **Entrepreneurial Coaches**

The E-Mentorship Process: E-Mentors

1. Application

A entrepreneurial professional who desires to become an E-Mentor completes an application, profile, and E-Mentorship Contract on the E-Mentorship home page on the Center for Innovation website. Center for Innovation staff use the responses to match the E-Mentee with an E-Mentor.

2. Pairings of E-Mentee with an E-Mentor

Pairings of the E-Mentee with the E-Mentor take place once the E-Mentor has submitted all Mentorship forms. Pairings of E-Mentee and E-Mentor will be determined by Center for Innovation staff. Considerations include:

- E-Mentor availability and expertise;
- Grade level;
- Entrepreneurial interests and goals;
- Other interests.

Once all previous steps are completed, the Mentorship Coordinator will advise the E-Mentee of the E-Mentor pairing, and your E-Mentorship begins.

3. Initial Contact/Getting Acquainted

The E-Mentee will initiate the first contact by e-mailing or calling the E-Mentor and scheduling a meeting at the office of the E-Mentor. If E-Mentee is a high school student, initial meeting can take place at the Denver Venture School.

The initial contact is an opportunity to share backgrounds/common interests. Both the E-Mentee and E-Mentor should post their bios that reflect personal background and professional/accomplishments in the private discussion group. The participants communicate initial expectations and agree upon common goals and expectations for the initial phase of the relationship.

4. Set Goals

During the first weeks of the E-Mentorship, E-Mentees should discuss their professional goals and interests with their E-Mentor.

5. Define Expectations of the E-Mentorship Relationship

The E-Mentee and E-Mentor clarify roles and expectations to ensure a successful E-Mentorship relationship. The participants should understand the E-Mentorship process and limits of the E-Mentorship relationship.

This is an appropriate point to emphasize that the E-Mentor will not arbitrate conflicts that occur in the E-Mentee's setting, including specific classroom problems, disagreements with administrative requirements, etc. The E-Mentorship complements and supplements the supports that the E-Mentee has in the school setting. Later, the E-Mentee can dialogue with the E-Mentor in their private discussion group on professional considerations inherent in the issue and how the issue was resolved.

6. Plan Communication

While the vehicle for communication is the asynchronous online discussion group, both the E-Mentor and E-Mentee should agree on best times for weekly communication. The E-Mentor and E-Mentee discuss personal schedules and availabilities that accommodate both participants. It is important to build in flexibility, but also ensure accountability. All communication should take place within the appropriate discussion group.

E-Mentorship “Mentor” Timeline

The following sequence illustrates the mentor selection and participation process in E-Mentorship

Step 1: The mentor applies to E-Mentorship via the Center for Innovation’s online application form at www.MetroStateInnovate.org, completing:

- Application
- Profile
- Contract

Step 2: The recipient receives the E-Mentorship Mentor Handbook

Step 3: The recipient is paired with a E-Mentorship Mentee

Step: 4 The mentorship begins with one face-to-face meeting between Mentor and Mentee.

E-Mentorship Home

The E-Mentor program will have an online home that contains the following elements:

- Topic-Oriented, Public Discussion Groups
- Private Mentor-Mentee Discussion Groups

The E-Mentorship Policies

By completing and signing the E-Mentorship application, profile, and contract, the E-Mentor agrees to the following E-Mentorship policies:

- Complete the E-Mentor application, contract, and profile.
- Use MetroState.BlackBoard as the primary email and newsgroup communication modality.
- After initial contact with your E-Mentee, describe expectations/set goals.
- Communicate with the E-Mentee in the private newsgroup weekly.
- Take a leadership role by initiating contacts, supporting areas of E-Mentee interest, providing feedback, discussing current models/theories, and complementing Center for Innovation mentorship programs.
- Assist the E-Mentee with resources, unit/lesson planning, classroom management, and other professional responsibilities.
- Provide substantive comments in response to posted messages regarding accomplishments and challenges.
- Demonstrate the attributes of an effective E-Mentor as described in the handbook.
- Participate in Best-Practices and Round-Table newsgroups.
- Refrain from arbitrating E-Mentee problems, issues, or concerns.
- Support Center for Innovation and E-Mentorship goals.
- Complete and return all Center for Innovation surveys by their due dates.
- Use effective and appropriate communication.

E-Mentorship Agreement:

The E-Mentorship is a one year commitment to between the Center for Innovation, and mentee. Upon mutual agreement by all parties, the contract can be extended in one or two year increments.

Professionalism:

I am agreeing to maintain professional standards in all of my contacts in the E-Mentorship newsgroups.

E-Mentorship Netiquette:

I am agreeing to refrain from the use of inappropriate language that is obscene or offensive. The Center for Innovation reserves the right to remove any posting that is off-subject, obscene, offensive or deemed inappropriate by the Center for Innovation Lead E-Mentor including inappropriate or sensitive materials. Illegal activity such as harassment, stalking, or assault is prohibited and will be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Confidentiality:

I am agreeing that I will not ask the E-Mentee to share confidential information in E-Forums including posting any identifiable information such as names, addresses, phone numbers, and personal identification numbers. Matters of a personal or sensitive nature should be discussed outside the E-Forum with the Mentorship Coordinator/Lead E-Mentor via private email or telephone.

Privacy:

I am agreeing that Center for Innovation E-Mentorship Program participation is password-protected and that only the E-Mentor approved by Metropolitan State College of Denver has access to its contents. I understand that my participation in public E-Forums is accessible to all participants and that while password protected, that no online medium can be completely secure.

Participant Opinions:

I understand that the E-Mentorship and the contents of E-Forums result in the expression of many points of view on the same issue. Participants must understand that the opinions expressed by individuals through email and on the E-Forums do not necessarily represent those of Metropolitan State College of Denver or the Center for Innovation E-Mentorship Program.

Personal Responsibility:

I understand that Center for Innovation E-Mentorship participants must take responsibility for what is posted to the E-Forums and that they maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of other Center for Innovation E-Mentorship participants. E-Forum messages may not be shared or used as documentation for any purpose/ reason.

Center for Innovation Research:

I understand that E-Forum messages may be used by the Center for Innovation for research purposes. Identity will be changed to protect the privacy of participants. Usernames and passwords are unique and may not be shared. Sharing usernames and passwords directly violates the privacy of Center for Innovation E-Mentorship participants. Non-compliance may result in restricted access to E-Forums.

During the E-Mentorship, the E-Mentor:

1. Provides E-Mentee Support, Guidance, and Feedback

Students and entrepreneurs experience many daily successes and setbacks. We expect that the E-Mentee will communicate these privately with the E-Mentor. This is an opportunity for the E-Mentor to identify what works and make suggestions for refinements that enhance the E-Mentee's academic/entrepreneurial practice.

While the role of the E-Mentor is to support the E-Mentee, the E-Mentor should avoid the perception of arbitrating issues regarding academic performance. The E-Mentorship should focus on professional goals and opportunities for entrepreneurial development.

Generally, the E-Mentee should feel that communication with the E-Mentor is private and protected. However, the E-Mentor might suggest that an issue or concern be shared with the Center for Innovation staff (or the Denver Venture School if the E-Mentee is a high school student). This should be discussed with the E-Mentee first with the suggestion that the E-Mentee share the concern directly. With E-Mentee approval, the E-Mentor can communicate E-Mentorship discussions and experiences with the Center for Innovation for the purpose of support.

2. Validate Personal Reflections and Professional Competencies

Effective learners reflect consistently on their professional practices. This can be facilitated in the E-Mentor and E-Mentee relationship.

Encourage the E-Mentee to archive activities, materials, reflections, etc. that demonstrate professional competencies and growth that can become the basis for weekly communication during the mentorship year. The E-Mentee can keep a journal, portfolio, etc. Artifacts/topics for reflection might include entrepreneurial practices, academic performance, interactions with fellow students/professionals, and school activities.

3. Supports Best Practices

During the E-Mentorship, the E-Mentee will participate in a variety of public discussion groups through the E-Mentorship program. This is the E-Mentee's opportunity to share best practices, accomplishments, obstacles and receive feedback from other E-Mentees and E-Mentors. While most of the E-Mentor/E-Mentee discussion will take place in the private E-Mentee discussion group, the E-Mentor should also participate in the public discussion groups several times each month.

Reflection and Evaluation:

1. Personal Reflection

One of the best methods of learning is to reflect on day-to-day experiences. The E-Mentor should encourage the E-Mentee to reflect on effective or ineffective outcomes in both academic and entrepreneurial settings.

2. Evaluate the Effectiveness of the E-Mentee and E-Mentor Relationship

The E-Mentorship evolves over time. Initial needs give way to insights and issues. Participants continue to address the changing status of the E-Mentee/E-Mentor relationship by evaluating the relationship and determine new goals, priorities, etc. throughout the E-Mentorship year.

E-Mentorship Goals and Objectives: E-Mentor

Goal 1: To establish effective E-Mentor communication

- Objective 1: The E-Mentor will demonstrate effective E-technology competencies.
- Objective 2: The E-Mentor will share professional background/personal interests with the E-Mentee.
- Objective 3: The E-Mentor will communicate with the E-Mentee weekly.
- Objective 4: The E-Mentor will respond to E-Mentee comments or questions within 48 hours.
- Objective 5: The E-Mentor and E-Mentee will network with other E-Mentorship professionals.
- Objective 6: The E-Mentee will request guidance and support from the E-Mentor.

Goal 2: To increase opportunities for entrepreneurial support and growth

- Objective 1: The E-Mentor will complete a profile indicating an area of interest in entrepreneurship.
- Objective 2: The E-Mentor will communicate areas of strength.
- Objective 3: The E-Mentor will communicate areas for refinement.
- Objective 4: The E-Mentor will communicate interest in entrepreneurial growth opportunities.
- Objective 5: The E-Mentor will suggest opportunities for the E-Mentee to share best practices and receive assistance in public discussion groups.
- Objective 6: The E-Mentor will provide opportunities for the E-Mentee to identify strengths and areas for refinement.
- Objective 7: The E-Mentor will share resources that support the E-Mentee's professional practice.

Goal 3: The E-Mentor will support the E-Mentee's interest in the profession of entrepreneurship

Objective 1: The E-Mentor will identify E-Mentee academic/entrepreneurial accomplishments during the mentorship.

Objective 2: The E-Mentor will describe effective professional competencies in the E-Mentee's professional portfolio artifacts.

Objective 3: The E-Mentor will assist the E-Mentee in formulating both long- and short-range goals at the end of each year of the mentorship.

E-Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

Take a leadership role by initiating conversations, raising issues

Help the E-Mentee set life and professional goals

Provide substantive feedback, including alternate perspectives

Discuss class experiences

Discuss business experiences

Assist the E-Mentee with time management

Ask probing questions

Create discussions based on topics of interest

Reflect about professional practice changes and improvements

Offer to collaborate on entrepreneurial planning

Share information resources

Assist the E-Mentee with academic assignments

Question and learn from other online participants

Share examples of best practices

Dialogue with other E-Mentors and E-Mentees

Evaluate accomplishment of E-Mentor goals

Characteristics of Effective E-Mentors

Willingness to be a role model for students

Is an advisor, teacher, confidant, and friend

Committed to the profession of entrepreneurship

Committed to lifelong learning

Takes a personal interest in others

Is willing to “give away” knowledge and skills obtained from years of experience

Reflective

Ability to share information and ideas

Flexible

Open-minded

Enjoys new challenges

Can facilitate problem-solving

Asks questions that prompt reflection

Offers suggestions in a productive manner

Is enthusiastic about entrepreneurship

Respects privacy and confidentiality

Has confidence in his/her professional skills

Can maintain a trusting professional relationship

Sees the E-Mentee’s potential

Sensitive and empathetic

Patient

Easily establishes rapport with others

Sees themselves as an equal among colleagues and those they mentor

Has high expectations for self and others