RHODY ALUMNI MENTORING (RAM)

A Guide for Mentees
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Introduction to RAM
The Rhody Alumni Mentoring (RAM) program gives you the opportunity to form meaningful, rewarding relationships with URI alumni that will help prepare you to be a better professional and future leader. As a mentee, you will connect with a mentor in the professional world who has similar interests and learn about their unique experience, knowledge, and skills.

Your mentor will act as a resource and guide in helping you develop personally and professionally with topics such as:

- Academic Guidance: course selection, study skills, and post-undergraduate planning
- Career Advice: networking, job shadowing, resume critiques, interviewing tips, and career insight
- Personal Development: interpersonal skills, professional etiquette, and balancing school-life obligations

Rhody Alumni Mentoring (RAM) Program
The RAM program is an alumni-student mentor program that is organized through a LinkedIn subgroup of the University of Rhode Island Alumni Association LinkedIn page. The relationship will begin while you are enrolled in the online internship and career focused course, ITR300. At the conclusion of the course you and your mentor may choose to continue a mentoring relationship outside of the structure of the program.

What is a RAM Mentor?
A RAM mentor is your guide and resource navigating URI and your future profession. The role of the mentor is to serve as a resource who guides you by sharing information about their URI education and professional experience, building trust, and modeling positive behaviors. The relationship will help pave the way for your success at URI and beyond.

A Mentor Plays Several Roles, Including:
- **Motivator**: Expresses belief and confidence in the mentee's abilities, and encourages the mentee to try new things
- **Resource**: Teaches and advises the mentee on how to make professional contacts, and introduces the mentee to new people, places, or ideas
- **Supporter**: Encourages open and honest dialogue, listens and responds to the needs of the mentee
- **Coach**: Helps the mentee develop and work to achieve realistic and meaningful goals
Matching

Once accepted into the program, you can view available mentors through the LinkedIn subgroup (see Appendix 1). You then select and reach out to the mentor that best matches your career and personal needs. URI Alumni Association and the Center for Career and Experiential Education does not match you with alumni. Once a request is made:

- The mentor receives a LinkedIn message with the request from the you, and can choose to accept or decline the your request
- The mentor informs you that they are willing to be your mentor
- If declined, you will be provided with a reason why your request was declined
- If declined, you can search the LinkedIn subgroup discussion board for another mentor and make a request

You can only request one mentor at a time. Alumni are asked to respond to the request within one to two business days. If there is no response to the request at the end of the two day period, you can search for another mentor.
Tips for Being a RAM Mentee

Finding a mentor is a combination of being open-minded and knowing what you want. It’s good to go into the LinkedIn group with a general idea of which professional field you’d like your mentor to have experience in. This can be a very specific career path that you know you want to follow, it can be a field that you’ve been interested in learning more about, or a general field that you are exploring.

Set your goals
Take the time to think carefully about what you want out of the mentorship. What kind of mentor you are looking for? What questions would you like answered? This will help you search for mentors that best match your interests. The clearer you can be with your own goals and intentions for the mentorship, the more your mentor can help you.

Types of interactions
Think carefully about what kind of interactions you’d like with your mentor. For example, if you’re set on having in-person meetings with your mentor, try to request a mentor who is in Rhode Island. If you’re thinking about moving to another state after graduation, contacting a mentor in that state is an effective strategy. There are so many great tools to connect with a long-distance mentor like Skype and Facetime.

Matching
Sometimes it may take several requests before you get a mentor match, but don’t let this discourage you. If a mentor does not accept your request it is most often because the mentor realizes that he/she is too busy, or he/she feels it wouldn’t be a good match. We are always growing our mentor database, so look for another great match!

Take the initiative
It’s up to you to make the most of your mentorship. Once you get a mentor match, try to contact your mentor within two days of getting matched. Not sure how to make that first contact? Check out our tips on your first conversation on page 5.

Be realistic
When you make your first contact with your mentor, take some time to establish expectations of how you’d like your relationship to be. For example, do you want more personal advice or more career advice/professional advice; will you meet once a week or once a month; will you meet in person, over the phone or Skype? Mentors will post this information in the LinkedIn group, so before you contact your mentor check their contact availability and preferences.

Location, location, location
Every time you interact with your mentor, you’ll want to set yourself up for success. The first step to doing this is setting yourself up in the right location. If you are planning a call or Skype with your mentor, find a quiet place where you won’t be disturbed and the background noise won’t distract you.
Be a good listener
It can get a bit intimidating speaking with an alum, especially if this is your first mentor experience. Luckily, you don’t have to talk all that much in a mentoring relationship. A good mentee is a good listener. This is not a job interview, so ask about their background and get to know your mentor, sooner the better.

Know Yourself
Before you ask a question, try to answer it yourself first and then ask the mentor to help you fill the gaps. “What should I do with my life?” is not as good a question as “I am debating between majoring in Economics or Public Policy, what can I do to make a decision?”

Keep it going!
If you haven’t heard from your mentor in a while, don’t be shy about emailing or calling them again. Often they have gotten busy and missed your call or email. Every mentor that has opted into the program wants to mentor a student. If you don’t hear from your mentor after several attempts, contact Corrie Haley (chaley@uri.edu).

Create a connection
Don’t go into the mentoring relationship with the sole purpose of networking or landing an internship, etc. These can be perks of mentorship, but should not be your absolute end-goal. Try to get to know your mentor on a more personal level. You’ll find that getting to know your mentor as both a professional and person will help you connect. Often you can get the most relevant and impactful advice through their personal experiences and stories.

Always see if there’s anything that you can help your mentor with! The strongest mentoring relationship are always a 2-way street. Don’t ever underestimate what you might be able to contribute to the mentoring relationship.

Consistency
Keeping a regular schedule of contact with your mentor can help you develop your relationship. Even if you can’t make contact with your mentor very often, try to keep it consistent (i.e. email them every couple of weeks). Sometimes there will be long periods between your communication, and you may feel like they aren’t interested, but this usually isn’t the case. Reach out and keep the relationship going!

Ask for help!
If you are stuck in connecting with your mentor, or would like advice on how to keep the relationship going, check the resources on our website!
The First Conversation
Creating a personal connection early on in your mentorship is extremely important! We encourage you to make your first connection with an in-person meeting, phone call or Skype chat.

The goal of your first conversation is to introduce yourself and build rapport. Building rapport simply means attempting to get to know someone on a personal level. How personal is too personal? It can helpful to know what your mentor is comfortable sharing, by rereading you mentor’s LinkedIn profile. This preparation will also help you come up with questions based on the information you find in their profile. You can also think about what you want to share with your mentor about your background, URI experience and interests.

Following are some suggested questions to ask your mentor. Choose a few beforehand to start your conversation and then let the conversation flow.

- Tell me about what you do for a living?
- What do you wish you did while you were at URI?
- What jobs have you had in the past?
- What did you like best about URI?
- Where are you from originally?
- Or what is it like to live in…?

Your URI experience will help you connect on a common topic and you’ll be able to relate on that level. Mentors are excited to talk with you and reconnect with URI, so don’t worry! Remember to communicate your gratitude about working with your mentor and your enthusiasm for learning from their experiences.

Setting Goals and Expectations
Our RAM mentors were introduced to the importance of setting goals and expectations for the mentoring relationship and we encourage them to take the lead this conversation. You have also developed a mentorship plan, or RAM Plan, which outlines your goals for your mentorship relationship. Share your plan with your mentor and use it as a guide to help drive your conversation and develop your relationship. Our is a helpful guide on what questions to answer, and can be found on the RAM website.
Developing a RAM Plan

Taking the time to develop a mentorship plan will help both you and your mentor outline your expectations and goals for the relationship. Maybe you want to expand your network, or learn more about future professions in your field?

By developing a strategy to accomplish these goals, you’ll be able to stay on track with your conversations and have more productive interactions. The worksheet below can help you start this conversation and be used as a tool to achieve your goals.

Mentor Name: _____________________________________________

Mentor Title: _____________________________________________

Mentor Employer: _________________________________________

Setting Expectations: How will the relationship work?

Time: A key aspect of establishing a mentor-type relationship is defining expectations about contact time.

1. Meeting together: What type of interactions work best (check all that apply)?
   - In Person
   - Skype/Facetime/Google Hangout
   - Phone
   - Email
   - Other: _______________________________________________

2. In general, how often would we like to meet/interact?
   - once per week
   - every other week
   - once a month
   - Other: _______________________________________________

3. If an email/voice mail is received, we will get back to our partner within:
   - 24 hours
   - 1-2 days
   - 3 days
   - Other: _______________________________________________
4. Identify dates that you and your mentor are not available (i.e. vacation, exams, business trips, etc.).

5. If we can’t make an expected meeting/interaction, how will we get in touch?

Creating Goals: What do you hope to gain from the relationship?
In establishing a mentor partnership, carefully evaluate what you need. For example, what specifically would you like to accomplish? Setting goals is critical to the success of your mentoring partnership. Goals give the partnership a distinct purpose and help you organize and articulate your expectations.

Goal Setting Worksheet
Indicate your level of interest in the following activities. Rate the interest level as a 1, 2 or 3; with 1 being the lowest and 3 being the highest. Share your worksheet with your mentor to help guide your conversations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain insight into the mentor's academic experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to professional contacts and colleagues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a professional meeting or event</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a staff meeting with mentor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow mentor at workplace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique of mentees resume or cover letter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop interviewing skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist with decision process to attend graduate school or obtain additional certifications</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance on how to best seek a job or internship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive information on relevant career journals and magazines</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive feedback on professional presence and conduct</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Define your Goals
Well-defined goals help determine the work done together, maintain the focus of the relationship, and once accomplished, signal the achievement of what you set out to do.

Work with your mentor to outline 3 goals for your mentorship below. Indicate what actions you will take to achieve your goals and set a deadline for completion. Your ITR300 course requires that you complete an information interview, therefore 1 of your 3 goals has already been set for you. Review your course syllabus to identify additional goals that will help you have a successful mentorship and successfully complete the course.

**Mentee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe your goal</th>
<th>What actions can you and your mentor take to achieve these goals?</th>
<th>Set a deadline: When will you accomplish your goal?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Informational Interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mentor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe your goal</th>
<th>What actions can you and your mentee take to achieve these goals?</th>
<th>Set a deadline: When will you accomplish your goal?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggested Questions to Ask Your Mentor

Learning more about career path/training

- What kind of education/training do you have?
- What was your experience at URI like?
- How did your time at URI prepare you for your career? Are your studies at all related to your career?
- How did you manage the transition from school to work?
- How did you get your first job post-graduation?
- What has your career path been like to date? Is it representative of most people in this kind of position?
- How important is a graduate degree, designation, or additional certificate in this field?
- Are you a member of any professional orders or associations? Which ones do you feel are the most important to belong to?
- What are the future prospects like in this field? What trends do you see developing over the next few years?
- If you could change any aspects of your career, what would you change?
- What is the best career advice you’ve ever received?

Learning more about current position/responsibilities

- How did you obtain your current position?
- What are your primary job responsibilities?
- What does a typical day/week in your job look like?
- What do you enjoy the most about your job? The least?
- What are the most challenging aspects of your job?
- What kind of professional development opportunities are available?
- Are there many opportunities for advancement in this position/organization?
- Who are the people who usually excel in this field/position? What personal qualities do you need to succeed?
Learning more about their work environment

- How many hours do you work in an average week?
- How much autonomy do you have in terms of what you focus on at work?
- What kind of supervision did you have when you were starting out? Currently?
- How is your performance evaluated?
- How much flexibility do you have in terms of dress, hours, vacation or job location?

Learning more about their future goals

- What advice would you like to have heard when you were starting out?
- How would you recommend I “try out” this line of work while I am still in school?
- Do you have any recommendations with regards to useful courses to take or extracurricular activities to be involved with?
- Are there any other fields or jobs you would suggest I research/explore?
- How do people find out about job openings in this field? Are they advertised? If so, where?
- When should I start applying for positions and forwarding my resume?
- How is a typical job interview in this industry conducted?
- Is there anyone else in this field you would recommend I talk to? When I call them, may I mention that you referred me?
Constructive Criticism

Criticism can be hard to take, but is a necessary part of growth. We often see criticism as negative, but criticism can also be positive, and can provide us with opportunities to evaluate our work and ourselves to improve. No matter what kind of criticism we are given, being able to receive that criticism and make it useful is crucial. Check out the article and video below on dealing with criticism:

The Best Ways to Deal with Criticism
8 Ways to Train Yourself to Accept Criticism

Common Issues that Arise During Mentorship

1. Excessive time and energy commitments. You or your mentor may find you have situations arise that infringe on the time you planned to spend together. The proper way of handling this is to be honest about the situation. It is unprofessional to miss scheduled appointments with your mentor and it is important to the relationship to be able to find time to meet or talk with her/him.

2. Inappropriate choice of mentor or mentee. You or your mentor may realize that you are not compatible. There are numerous possible reasons, including: you do not share the same technical area of interest; you or your mentor do not have some of the desired qualities; you or your mentor may sense that the other person is uninterested or not committed to the mentoring relationship. These differences do not necessarily warrant ending the relationship; you and your mentor should talk about ways that both of your needs can be met even if the match is not perfect. Be aware that these sorts of differences can be okay and can enrich your mentoring experience.

3. Unrealistic expectations for mentors or mentees. Both of you will feel frustrated if one or the other’s expectations for the mentoring relationship are not met. Clearly discussing the expectations and goals of the relationship, the amount of time, and activities will alleviate these problems (complete your RAM Plan).

4. Expectations of mentee failure. If you feel that your mentor does not have faith in your abilities, you should ask your mentor to reassess her or his perception of you. Is the concern valid or are negative assumptions or stereotypes being made? If the mentor cannot change her or his feelings, both of you should promptly end the mentoring relationship.

5. Mentee’s feelings of inferiority. You may feel intimidated by your mentor. It can be detrimental to the relationship if you are not confident enough to utilize your mentor or to even contact your mentor. Remember that your mentor wants to be part of this relationship with you and wants to help you map out a successful career path.
6. Strategizing about how to work with your mentor; and Ending the mentoring relationship. If you feel uncomfortable about something that is happening between you and your mentor, chances are something’s going wrong. You need the opportunity to at least talk it out with someone else. A confidential discussion with a friend for feedback may be all that is needed. In other cases, the nature of your discomfort may require more attention. If this is the case, please contact Corrie Haley, Career and Internship Advisor, chaley@uri.edu, (401) 874-5177.

Ending your RAM experience
At the end of your RAM experience, you may choose to continue your mentorship or end the relationship. Either way, you should have a conversation with your mentor about the next steps and end the mentorship on a high note.

- Talk about when the relationship should end
- Talk with your mentor about next steps
- Talk about future mentors that would be helpful for your career path
- Send a thank you email or card. Include in your card if you will be attending the RAM Networking Night, or send your regrets.
- Attend the RAM Networking Night on Thursday, December 10, 2015 at the URI Alumni Center

Thank you card
Your mentor is a professional with limited time, and has volunteered to help you in your career search. Though not required, it is recommended that you send your mentor a short thank you card or e-mail upon completion of the match. A thank you note is a great way to show your appreciation for their time and the information shared. Below is an example of a thank you e-mail sent after a mentorship experience.

To: mlaverty@shoremedia
From: apinterest@gmail.com
Subject: Thank you for your time and guidance

Dear Ms. Laverty,

It was a great pleasure to have you as my mentor over the past few months. The insight and information you provided regarding the URI courses that helped you in your career and the use of cutting edge technology further excited me about the field. Per your recommendation I submitted my work to the College of Business marketing competition was recently given the award of 2012 MVP for my marketing skills. I cannot thank you enough for your guidance and encouragement and look forward to seeing you at the RAM Networking Night on December 10th.

Sincerely,
Albert Pinterest
**RAM Networking Night**

The Alumni Association will host a RAM Mentor networking night at the conclusion of the semester. It is an occasion to meet and network with other mentors and mentees and to celebrate the close of the mentor program semester.

**Date:** April 28th

**Location:** Alumni Center, 73 Upper College Road
1. After logging into LinkedIn, search for the University of Rhode Island Alumni Association group, or follow this link (https://www.linkedin.com/grp/home?gid=39809).

2. Join University of Rhode Island Alumni Association group

3. Once accepted, join the Rhody Alumni Mentoring (RAM) Program sub-group found on the right hand side of your screen.