

*Mentoring Guide for Mentees*

*Prepared for*

*The Zicklin Honors MBA Leadership Mentoring Program*

2005

## Overview of the Program and Purpose

During the 2005 – 2006 academic year, the Zicklin School of Business will again offer a mentoring program open to first-year students in the Honors MBA Program. Formally known as the *Zicklin Honors MBA Leadership Mentoring Program*, it is a voluntary program that starts during the first semester and runs until the end of the second semester in May, 2006.

The Mentoring Program will link first-year MBA honors students with experienced and successful alumni and others with a strong connection to Baruch. They will be expected to meet for an hour or two about once a month, at mutually convenient times.

The purpose of the Mentoring Program is to promote the career and personal success of the student participants. It does so by giving the students regular and helpful exposure to dedicated alumni and others with a strong connection to Baruch who are already distinguished in fields of interest to students.

The Mentoring Program is not a program to help students get a job for the summer or after graduation. Instead, it is meant to build the student's long-term capabilities. By melding a mentor's experience and perspective with the student's self-assessments and new course learning, the Mentoring Program provides a rare opportunity for students to build their confidence and talents for future advantage. Of course, a wider network of contacts in their career field will often be a by-product of taking part in the Mentoring Program.

As explained below, the Mentoring Program uses a process of mutual selection to try to make satisfying matches, based on what is important to the mentors and to the students who volunteer for the program.

The rest of this brochure will explain more about what it means to be a mentor and a student participant, and how the Mentoring Program works.

## THE MENTOR

### What is a Mentor?

A mentor has, at various times, been described as a coach, advisor, guide, exemplar, master, leader, godfather or advocate. (See Murray, 1991) Although mentors have been defined in different ways, all definitions make it clear that mentors are helpful and a great aid to career and personal success.

### What Does the Mentor Do?

How do they do actually help? Research suggests that mentors seem to engage in two major, equally important, sets of activities:

- The mentor helps career growth and development, by pointing out how things get done, what is important, and even "sponsoring" the mentee for opportunities in an organization.
- The mentor can be a source of social support, by listening supportively and acting as a sounding board, especially in trying and stressful times.

Although most mentor-mentee relationships seem to arise spontaneously, good results have also been found in more structured programs, both in industry and in academic settings.

Mentors can perform various roles in their relationships with students. From previous programs, mostly in industry, we know a mentor may do a variety of helpful things. Margo Murray, an experienced consultant in mentoring, reports (1991) that mentors may agree to perform any of the following specific functions:

- "Act as a source of information on the mission and goals of the organization
- Provide insight into the organization's philosophy of human resource development
- Tutor specific skills, effective behavior, and how to function in the organization
- Give feedback on observed performances
- Coach the experiences that will add to experience and skill development
- Serve as a confidant in times of personal crises and problems
- Assist the (student) in plotting a career path
- Meet with the (student) at agreed time intervals for feedback and planning
- Agree to a *no-fault* conclusion of the mentoring relationship when (for any reason) the time is right"

### What is in it for the mentor?

There are a surprising number of benefits to being a mentor. Among the "payoffs" most often mentioned by people who have been mentors are the following:

- The satisfaction of passing along a legacy of knowledge, insight and experience
- Enhancing one's own coaching skills
- Improved understanding about how younger professionals view the world of work and their chosen fields
- The enhanced self-esteem and respect that comes from working with and helping a less-experienced professional
- A satisfying one-to-one relationship with a bright and interesting newer professional
- Learning about the techniques and processes in which current MBA students are trained

Accounts of various mentoring programs shows that many mentors report several of these benefits come from taking part in these programs. In Baruch's Mentoring Program, a positive payoff for mentors is likely to be helped along by their positive feeling for the school and having a deeper understanding than most people of where the students are "coming from."

Do you have what it takes to be a successful mentor?

Not everyone can be a good mentor. If you are interested in knowing if you would succeed, try answering the following questions:

- Do you enjoy being with and interacting with others?
- Would others describe you as good at talking with and listening to them?
- Do others regularly come to you for your ideas and opinions?
- Do you have an in-depth understanding of your firm and your industry?
- Are you skilled and experienced in the work of your profession or specialty?
- Have you supervised or managed others successfully?
- Do you have well-developed skills in planning and appraising performance, as well as in giving feedback and coaching?
- Are you willing to help others grow and develop?
- Can you step out of the limelight so others can take credit for their accomplishments?
- Can you encourage younger professionals and still have the patience to let them move at their own pace?
- Are you willing to share your personal experiences with more junior persons when that is relevant to their needs?

While not everyone can say "yes" to all these questions, the more you answer "yes," the more likely you are to be an effective and satisfied mentor.

## **So You Are Going to be a Mentor**

Alumni and others with a strong connection to Baruch who are selected to be mentors will have an orientation before they meet the student participant with whom they are matched. As part of their orientation, there will be a discussion of “tips” that have helped many mentors to be successful. Based on research done by Catalyst, a leading nonprofit research and advisory group, the following pointers will greatly help all mentors:

### **Tips for Being a Good Mentor\*** It Takes Practice to be a Good Mentor

1. **Build from Your Own Experience**
  - Think about what you wish you had known.
  - Think about who mentored you and what you learned.
  
2. **Share What You Know Now**
  - Translate the unwritten rules.
  - Explain the grapevine -- how information is transmitted informally.
  - Share your failures.
  
3. **Open Doors and Set Up Contacts**
  - Provide professional contacts for the mentee both inside and outside your organization
  - Arrange for the mentee to take part in high visibility activities within or outside your organization
  
4. **Provide Perspective**
  - Help your mentee to recognize his/her challenges-and to ride them out.
  - Serve as a reality check when your mentee faces organizational or personal conflicts
  - Be candid with your feedback
  - Help your mentee recognize and celebrate successes in the context of the new business culture
  
5. **Enjoy the Benefits of Being a Mentor**
  - Take advantage of a two-way source of advice and perspective.
  - Gain a sense of fulfillment from passing your wisdom to others.
  
6. **Know the Limits to Mentoring**
  - Respect confidentiality.
  - Don't feel you have to know all the answers.
  - Expect some failure, and don't let this get in the way of mentoring others.
  - Be willing to say good-bye. At some point, your mentee will move on -- especially if you have been a good mentor.

\*From “Creating successful mentoring programs: A Catalyst guide (2002)”

## The Student Participant

***What is in it for the Student?*** Several studies and many anecdotal reports show that professionals who have been mentored do far better than others in performance, pay, promotion and career satisfaction. In short, mentoring generally raises a person's capabilities, knowledge, self-confidence, and achievements.

More specifically, what happens? According to Murray (1991), here are some of the things that take place:

- Development Activities are Targeted.

Talking about one's development needs with an experienced mentor helps a person to specify and tailor developmental activities to one's particular needs, rather than take a universal "one-size-fits-all" approach to development activities.

- Avoiding Failures.

People who are mentored often are more successful because they get useful advice in how to avoid failure! Becoming aware of the assumptions and work habits that are likely to create career problems is an important part of understanding the road to success. Such awareness is especially needed by people who have had few adult role models in the career field they have selected or in this country

- More Time in the Right Position.

Mentors can help people to plan the moves they want to make. Mentors help people to learn more about jobs that may be a poor fit in terms of skills required, challenges offered, or importance to an organization. Unsuitable moves for the student can be identified, so a more suitable path can be selected.

- Reassurance.

Sometimes the help for a mentee comes from a mentor acknowledging that certain challenges are scary and feel risky. Knowing that others, like the mentor, have been through such events and then risen to the challenge and succeeded is often a positive outcome of the mentoring relationship. Encouragement based on the real experiences of others can be most useful (as well as supportive).

- Increased Awareness of the Field.

Mentors are usually knowledgeable advisors on what is currently happening, and valued, in the person's career field and various organizations in that field. Understanding "how things work" can lead a person to better choices and a more comfortable experience.

Do you have what it takes to be a successful student participant?

Believe it or not, not every student can be a good participant in the Mentoring Program. If you are interested in knowing if you would succeed, try answering the following questions:

- Do you truly take on responsibility for own development (rather than rely on the school or the organization that employs you)?
- Are you inclined to take part in a program that will improve your long-term capabilities, but not necessarily promise you a better chance for a summer job?
- Are you able to truly hear and accept feedback and coaching from others, even when it suggests you would be better off to change some behaviors and habits?
- Are you the sort of person who is curious and always looking for more demanding assignments?
- Are you interested in assessing your own developmental needs and planning how to achieve your developmental goals?
- Will you be willing to create and write down a specific Individual Development Plan for yourself to follow during the Mentor Program?
- Do you organize and plan well, so you can make time for monthly meetings with a mentor, even when you have a lot of other demands on your time?
- Are you interested to expand your understanding of your career field and industry?

While not every student can say “yes” to all these questions, the more you agree to them, the more likely you are to be an effective and satisfied participant in the Mentoring Program.

## Application Form for Mentees

**To be a participant in the *Zicklin Honors MBA Leadership Mentoring Program* please fill out the following information. It will be used to help us to make appropriate matches.**

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Declared Major \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing address (street) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Daytime Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

**Which of the following best describes your profession or industry? (Circle those that apply)**

- |                   |                           |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Accounting     | 6. Entertainment/Sports   | 11. Management      |
| 2. Advertising    | 7. Information Technology | 12. Marketing       |
| 3. Banking        | 8. Finance                | 13. Market Research |
| 4. Communications | 9. Health Care            | 14. Other (Specify) |
| 5. Economics      | 10. Human Resources       |                     |

**How many years of experience do you have in this profession or industry? (Circle one)**

1. None                                      2. 1 to 3 years                                      3. 4 or more years

**How many years of work experience do you have in total?**

1. None                                      2. 1 to 3 years                                      3. 4 or more years

**Would you prefer to be matched with a mentor who is: (circle one)**

1. Male?                                      2. Female?                                      3. Either male or female would be fine

**Would you prefer to be matched with an: (circle one)**

1. American mentor?                                      3. Either American or International would be fine  
 2. International mentor? (*These may be rare*)

**Do you have any other preferences or interests that would help us to make a good match? (Please write in)**

**To help us make a good match, please attach a recent or current brief resume.**

**If you have any questions, call the Mentoring Program Coordinators:**

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## **So You are Going to be a Participant (Mentee)\***

### **An Active Responsible Role**

The student participant is expected to assume major responsibility for the quality of outcomes in a mentoring relationship. To maximize the benefits derived from the experience, the student participant should proactively pursue feedback from the mentor, and use the feedback to enhance his or her own development.

The role of student participants is to manage the outcomes of the mentoring relationship, and assume responsibility for a quality experience.

### **Getting the Most from the Student Participant Experience**

Participants who benefit most from mentoring relationships tend to seek feedback and ask for advice. More successful participants tend to:

- Listen carefully to feedback
- Avoid being overly defensive
- Remain open to the mentor's suggestions
- Concentrate on applying learning to improve performance

In summary, the goal of the student participant is not to have all the answers. Rather, it's to learn how to properly frame the question.

### **Avoiding Common Mentee Pitfalls**

Student participants may feel that they should be passive in the relationship, and leave "all the mentoring to the mentor." This is surely a blueprint for failure.

A student participant has to help "lead" the relationship by seeking information, experiences and feedback from the mentor. Most of all, student participants should not abuse the time or trust of mentors.

### **Student Participant Activities**

To help clarify the participant's role, listed below are some of the activities that students can do to help the mentoring process:

#### ***Ask Questions***

- Show an openness to learning
- Ask thoughtful questions aimed at career success and development
- Ask about your mentor's career and experiences
- Ask for "tips" on how to become a superior performer

#### ***Absorb***

- Listen critically to your mentor's advice
- Sort through what is said, so that it's relevant to you
- Adopt recommendations and ideas that are compelling and incorporate them in your thinking
- Experiment with new approaches to problem solving

***Inform***

- Share with your mentor how you have used his/her advice; share results and consequences
- Let your mentor know what projects you are working on and how you are progressing
- Share information on critical career issues and major work 'issues
- Communicate significant accomplishments and failures

***Emulate***

- When appropriate, look to your mentor as a possible role model
- Observe how your mentor approaches tasks, manages people, solves problems, and projects an image of competence
- Determine how comfortable you would feel adopting aspects of your mentor's style
- Begin to emulate these behaviors and incorporate aspects that seem effective into your general repertoire

***Perform***

- Give your mentor reason to believe continuing work with you is worthwhile
- Resolve to produce work of outstanding managerial quality
- Take opportunities to "celebrate" your high-level achievements

- **This section has been adapted from the Pepsi-Cola Mentoring Guide (no date).**

**The Individual Development Plan**

Prior to their first meeting with a mentor, participating students should decide on a brief set of goals for their own development during the mentoring relationship.

It is vital for you, the participant, to have a good idea of what would like to get out of the mentoring program. Your goals should be based on your own self-awareness of your strengths and improvement opportunities.

This knowledge can come from a good understanding of your past achievements and disappointments. It can also come from self-assessments you have taken since coming to the Zicklin Honors MBA Program. This might include exercises filled out as part of the "Career Leader" assessments, or the "Leadership Development Assessments."

Fill out the Individual Development Plan on the next page and bring it with you to the first meetings with your assigned mentor.

**INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
 (Bring this filled-out Individual Development Plan and your resume  
 with you to the first meetings with your assigned mentor.)

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Recall your Job History:**

Write a brief list of the major jobs you have had, and what aspect of the job you liked most. This will help you to identify your talents and the aspects of the work for which you have a passion.

Job History

What I Liked Most

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Current Strengths and Developmental needs**

(Summarize your current performance strengths and developmental needs.)

Strengths

Developmental Needs

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Your Goals and Objectives**

**(Write down what you hope to gain from taking part in this mentoring program.** This might include particular knowledge, skills, or abilities.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## The Matching Process

Mentor applicants will be matched with student participants as much as possible based on mutual interests and mutual choice. This will include an orientation breakfast meeting at which groups of potential mentors and mentees will meet. Afterwards, mentor and mentee preferences for whom they would like to be paired with will be used to assign the “best fit” matches.

Using the applicants’ information, primary consideration will be given to professional field or industry, work experience and background, and preferences for gender and international status. In some cases, a cross-functional match may prove to be beneficial as a way of broadening one’s outlook.

Naturally, the number and quality of the matches will depend on the number and type of applicants in this pilot program; the number of student and mentor participants can not be accurately predicted at this time. We may have too many or too few mentors for the number of students desiring a mentor, and vice-versa. Therefore, no guarantee can be made to applicants that they will get a match.

Nevertheless, it is realistic to expect that there will be a sufficient number of alumni and others with a strong connection to Baruch volunteering to take part in the Mentoring Program.

It is also important to note that as good as the match may be, in some cases the long-term relationship may not turn out to be mutually satisfying. The match may not meet the initial expectations of mentors or student participants. (That is why the negotiated agreement is important in terms of clarifying mutual expectations.)

Even where a match is excellent, people’s lives change. New assignments, changes in work hours or obligations, changes in family considerations and geographical locations can upset the best-laid plans and alter the mentoring relationship.

That is why this program has built in to it the expectation that either party can terminate the relationship, on a no-fault basis, whenever either mentor or student participant feels it is no longer working out satisfactorily. To do so, simply tell the other person, and the Program Coordinator, so other arrangements can be made where possible.

## **Getting Started in a Healthy Mentoring Relationship\***

The closer the mentoring pair is, in terms of demographics, background, personal style and values, the easier it will be to get started in the process. When mentor and protégé do not share many commonalities, however, they are more likely to experience one or more false starts before they really connect.

What follows are some structured methods for "bridging the interpersonal gap" and establishing a firm foundation for the emerging relationship.

### **Planning/ Conducting the First Meeting**

#### ***Step 1: Get Advance Information***

If you can, avoid surprises concerning your mentor or protegee's background, education, work experience, performance, special skills, etc.

#### ***Step 2: Mentor Sets First Meeting***

The mentor should assume primary responsibility for the first meeting, including setting the agenda.

#### ***Step 3: Probe Regarding Backgrounds***

Establish foundation by learning about each other. For example, questions both the mentor and student might address include...

- "Where did you grow up?"
- "What led you to where you are now in your career (and studies)?"
- "How would others describe you?"
- "What are three characteristics that best define you as a person?"
- "How would you describe your management philosophy and/ or style?"
- "What do you believe are the most important qualities or characteristics of the competent supervisor/subordinate?"
- "What are your most significant managerial/professional skills and experiences?"
- "How did you, or how will you, reach (senior/middle) management?"
- "What would you like to get out of this mentoring relationship?"
- "Name one assumption or expectation you have about the mentoring relationship and or the mentoring program?"
- And specifically asked of the student participant: "What aspects of your career development do you want to work on over the next year?"

***Step 4: Plan and Contract Future Meetings***

Participants should clarify expectations and assumptions early in the process to avoid misunderstandings. For example, questions both the mentor and protege might address include...

- "When and how often will we meet?"
- "What will our agenda be? What will we do during the meeting?"
- "What will we expect of each other?"
- "When /How will we assess the relationship in terms of quality and productivity?"

**Later Meetings**

Prior to each of the following meetings, the participants should agree on one or two topics that they would cover in the meeting. That will allow both people to prepare as needed to get the most out of their time together.

Suitable topics should come from topics of mutual interest, areas that the student wants to explore further, and issues like those mentioned above from the first meeting that have not been covered sufficiently.

In general, meetings should be scheduled in advance, for an hour or two each month, at mutually convenient times.

Other meetings and follow-up activities might include a tour or visit to the mentor's facilities or offices, meetings with one or two other professionals, managers or executives, sitting in or observing a group's meeting, and so on.

**\*This section has been adapted from the Pepsi-Cola Mentoring Guide (no date).**

### Acknowledgements

The design and development of the Zicklin Honors MBA Leadership Mentoring Program, and this Guide, has benefited enormously from the work already done by several companies that were generous enough to share their ideas and materials.

Several parts of this Guide were adapted, or directly influenced, by program materials from these leading firms:

JPMorgan Chase  
PepsiCo  
Sears

We also were helped by advice and counsel from key professionals and managers in two other firms with mentoring programs:

General Electric  
Sun Microsystems

While several books about this topic have been written, including one with the catchy title of “Coaching and Mentoring for Dummies,” (by Marty Brounstein, IDG Publications, Foster City, CA, 2000), two books have been particularly helpful.

This Guide to the Leadership Mentoring Program was heavily influenced and has adapted a few paragraphs from:

*Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring*, by Margo Murray, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1991.  
*Creating Successful Mentoring Programs: A Catalyst guide*. New York, Catalyst, 2002.

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