Mentors must be in at least their second year of graduate study. Students selected as mentors will be expected to participate in a combination of formal and informal activities, including:

- An orientation at the beginning of the program
- Weekly interactions of one to three hours with undergraduate participants
- One-on-one meetings with program staff to discuss progress
- Participation in a program evaluation at the end of the semester
- Providing shadowing opportunities for their undergraduate mentees

Mentors and faculty members are encouraged to review resources such as the Mentoring at VCU Handbook [PDF], a manual developed by the University Graduate Council to address mentoring issues relevant to graduate and postgraduate training at the university.

Learn More About Us

The Graduate School’s Mentorship Program matches undergraduate students with mentors who are graduate students as they make decisions about post-baccalaureate study and transition from undergraduate to graduate student status.

The program provides graduate students with the opportunity to develop mentoring skills as they share personal experiences with undergraduate participants in the program.

Program applications are available below:
- Graduate student mentor application [DOC]
- Undergraduate student mentee application [DOC]

Melissa Tyler is the new Program Director. She is the Director of Graduate Student Funding and Financial Operations for the Graduate School and a past participant in the Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute. She has been at VCU for 23 years. Please welcome her to the program.

Community Service

Are you considering donating some of your time to a worthy cause? Did you know that HandsOn Greater Richmond lists many different volunteer opportunities at various locations and time commitments on their website? GSMP mentors and mentees are participating in a community service event of their choosing from HandsOn Greater Richmond. Some of the activities the mentors and mentees have chosen include: preparing cold weather kits for homeless individuals, visiting older adults at Greenfield Residences at Monument Avenue, raking leaves at Maymont and volunteering at Art 180. To find an event that interests you, please be sure to visit https://www.handsonrva.org/!
Anisa Kannan is currently a doctoral student in the Biomedical Engineering program.

**What is the most important thing a mentor needs to know when beginning their relationship with his or her mentee?**

Mentors should be ready to listen to each mentee’s story and understand what is bringing them to graduate school. Everyone’s path is different and each person’s rationale for graduate school will change how they approach applications and affect their overall graduate experience. Being able to understand and listen objectively to a mentee’s needs and advise from there is hugely important.

**How do you define success, and how has this definition helped you in the mentoring process?**

I define success as moving towards your goals, gaining life experiences, and constantly learning about yourself. The journey to graduate school can be difficult but being able to take definable steps forward and move along in the process of understanding your own needs as a person. So a successful mentoring process means that the mentee has learned things about themselves and they can use those things to apply themselves towards their future goals.

**Do you have a mentor? If so, how has the relationship helped you to be a good mentor?**

I have never had an official mentor, but my faculty advisor has always been a mentor to me and given me lots of advice. I was able to draw from things that he has told me and used techniques that I now recognize he has used with me. Like giving a mentee lots of options and talking through each one with them or giving advice on how to look for resources that will be helpful without just handing out the information.

**What do you believe are the most important qualities in a mentor?**

An ability to objectively listen and to empathize with mentee situations, being able to communicate and help guide someone through things you have experienced, and being available for the mentee to reach out to you and ask you questions or just talk about life.

**What advice would you give someone who is considering being a mentor?**

Be ready to explore new territory with your mentee, even if you have not been through something personally... Be ready to explore new territory with your mentee, even if you haven’t been through something personally you have a different viewpoint on life and your advice can still be useful and insightful.

**What have you gained from mentoring?**

I have gained better communication skills overall. It has also given me more insight into different parts of applying to graduate school that I didn’t know about before or had to do research on to be able to discuss them with my mentee. It’s always nice to be able to help people go through something and give them more guidance than you had through the process so I have gained some personal satisfaction at being able to give advice on things I learned through experience.

"Be ready to explore new territory with your mentee, even if you have not been through something personally..."
Keiley Ventura is currently a sophomore in the Health Science program.

Tell us a little about your plans once you graduate...
My immediate goals include continuing my education in a program for a Master’s of Health Administration or Public Health. I plan to continue working with a nonprofit organization to create a better system for the elderly. I want to work endless hours in the geriatric field and I later plan to become a nursing home administrator and help create a better foundation in the nursing homes.

What goals did you set with your mentor? How have you progressed with your goals?
A goal I’ve set with my mentor is to explore more career options that I may be interested in pursuing after graduation. My mentor has helped me find different workshops that allow me to explore the health professions I am interested in pursuing after graduation. As I’ve worked on this goal with my mentor I have a better understanding of which health professional program I’d like to pursue after graduation.

What challenges have you faced in this program?
I am a first generation college student and have many adversities and odds against me when pursuing a higher education. With the help of my mentor I have a better understanding of how to apply for graduate and professional health programs.

What types of activities do you and your mentor do together?
My mentor and I have a meeting once a week. During our meetings we discuss career plans, how to explore different fields of interest and how to set goals. We have also volunteered together at an assisted living home where we joined the residents while they completed daily activities.

What is the most important thing every mentor and mentee should know?
It is important for the mentor and mentee to have open communication and to be consistent.

If you could tell your mentor one thing, what would it be?
As I have transitioned from the start of this program I have grown to be more knowledgeable and confident in preparing for graduate school.
GSMP Participants
2018-2019

GSMP Fall 2018 Deadlines

December 20, 2018
Final day to hand in Fall Community Service Volunteer Forms

December 20, 2018
Final day to complete fall semester survey