



VCU

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

Graduate School | Graduate School
Mentorship Program

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 \[DOC\]](#)

Mentors must be in at least their second year of graduate study and will receive a stipend upon completion of the program. 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 partners

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.

Additional resources include [On the Right Track: A Manual for Research Mentors](#) and [Virginia Mentoring Partnership](#).



Meeting your mentee or mentor at Orientation

Meet the Staff

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.

Madeline Goldman is the Program Coordinator for GSMP. She has been with the Graduate School since 2014. She is currently a Ph.D. student in Adult Learning in the School of Education.



Madeline Goldman

2014-2015 Mentor Spotlight: Laura Stoltzfus

Laura Stoltzfus is a graduate student at VCU. She is a Master's student in the School of Social Work. Read more about her experience with the Graduate School Mentorship Program.

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

In the beginning stages of the relationship it is important to take the time to get to know your mentee. I find it useful to find some kind of common ground. Overall, being genuine and really showing interest in your mentee's life will help the mentee feel comfortable and will allow for the relationship to progress forward.

How do you define success and how does this definition help you in the mentoring process?

Success means different things for different people. As a mentor you need to 'meet your mentee where they are', help them identify a few goals specific to themselves, which will guide them towards successful outcomes. Success is moving towards something which will positively impact your life, remembering that small steps are still success!

From your surveys and mid semester check-in, you seem to have really made a connection with your mentee. Have you had a mentor?

I have never had an 'official' mentor, but I have had wonderful role models who have helped build me into a strong woman. I also mentored foster children for three years, which built my knowledge and confidence in working with people.

What kind of mentor do you want to be?

I want to be a mentor who is reliable, genuine, empowering, confident, fun, and knowledgeable.

What goals have you set with your mentee?

Some of the goals my mentee is working on are: gaining confidence in making life decisions, developing a resume, and researching and narrowing down graduate schools of her interest and applying to them.

What are some of the challenges you have faced in this program?

I haven't come across any huge challenges through this program. I will say that it has been somewhat challenging to come up with weekly activities to accomplish with my mentee. I have found it useful to do a mixture of fun activities as well as activities which go alongside my mentee's goals. As a mentor it's important to continue doing fun activities throughout the relationship to continue to get to know one another and simply enjoy each other's company.



What is the most important thing every mentor and mentee should know?

The most important thing every mentee and mentor should know is that life is a journey in which we are constantly evolving. Don't hesitate to take on new opportunities/challenges, as this is a chance to learn new things and develop as a person. Lastly, be yourself, love yourself, and keep a positive outlook on life!

"The most important thing every mentee and mentor should know is that life is a journey and we are constantly evolving."

2014-2015 Mentee Spotlight: Fidelia Igwe

Fidelia Igwe is a senior VCU undergraduate student. She is an African American Studies Major. Read more about her experience with the Graduate School Mentorship Program.

What are your plans for after college?

As a senior, figuring out post-graduation opportunities has been a process that is ongoing. As of now, I have applied to 3 graduate school programs, I'm applying to AmeriCorps, and I have opportunities here in Richmond with the VCU African American Studies department if I so chose to stay.

What do you like about having a mentor?

Denver was exactly what I needed this year. Not only did she provide answers to my many questions, she went above and beyond in gaining information for me directly from schools I was interested in. Aside from applying to graduate school, I was lucky in that we are interested in a lot of the same social causes. We have a similar sense of social awareness.

What goals did you set with your mentor?

Due to me being a senior, my mentor and I made sure that we adhered to a strict schedule, seeing I had deadlines to make. Our biggest goal was to apply to no less than three graduate programs, all of which have some sort of funding opportunities.

What are some of the challenges you have faced in this program?

The biggest challenge was maintaining the momentum to actually apply for graduate school. Senior year is difficult, its nerve wrecking, it's stressful but the outcome is the best part, bittersweet. Denver definitely was the voice constantly in my ear when I even echoed that I wanted to halt my application process.

How has your mentor helped you?

My mentor has been an awesome source of graduate assistance. She not only helped me narrow down school choices she took the initiative to reach out to programs on my behalf to ask specific questions.

What is the most important thing every mentor and mentee should know?

Consistency, persistence, and accountability. A mentor mentee relationship works two ways. Both need to be consistent showing dedication, both have to be persistent because there will be times where things get extremely difficult, and accountable, if something is to be done, both the mentor and mentee have to get it done.

If you could tell your mentor one thing what would it be?

You've been a huge asset in my decision making over the past 5 months and that is a good thing.



"My mentor was exactly what I needed this year. Not only did she provide answers to my many questions, she went above and behind in the gaining information for me directly from schools I was interested in"

Graduate School Mentors and Mentees for 2015-2016 at Orientation



GSMP Schedule for 2015-2016



September 12, 2015 12:30-3:30pm GSMP Program Orientation for mentees and mentors Larrick Student Center

November 7, 2015 12:30-3:30pm GSMP Mentor-Mentee Workshop Academic Learning Commons Rm 1105

January 23, 2016 12:30-3:30pm GSMP Mid-Program Meeting Larrick Student Center

March 2016 Community Service Project Location and Date TBD