

STUDENT MENTORING



“The only social obligation of the firm is development – to see that people are more valuable at the end of the day than they were at the beginning, whether they end up working for the firm, or someone else, or for themselves.”

– John Sculley, Former CEO of Apple

IT'S ALL IN THE TIMING

During an average week, many students will spend 20 hours working as a part-time employee in your department – over six times the amount of time they spend in any one class. As their manager, you are in a highly leveraged position to help prepare students for their careers and life after they finish their education. At BYU,

student mentored learning is a significant part of a student's educational experience.

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR STUDENT EMPLOYEES

Student mentoring does not have to be a time intensive activity. Because students are generally venturing out

on their own for the first time, modest involvement on your part can have a tremendous impact on their personal and professional development. Below is a list of ideas to prompt you as you make student development a priority.

Relationship Building. Take the time to “check in” with each of your students on a regular basis; ask them about themselves and their schooling

and experience at BYU. Get to know them as a person.

Attendance at Meetings. Have students join in your staff and other department meetings. This will help them gain a good perspective on what goes on in your operation and will help them to learn basic meeting management skills. Involve students in planning the agenda where appropriate.

Preparing Reports. Involve students in the analysis and preparation of reports your department may be involved in. This will help sharpen their analytical and writing skills.

Exposure to the Budget. Although students may not control or manage the expenditures of the department, why not have them understand the practicalities of managing the ongoing budget of the department. This will inevitably be part of their professional life after they begin their career.

Department Activities. Involve students in any department social gatherings or activities. This can break down barriers to communication and help students feel more a part of the team.

Job Rotation. If there are several student positions within your department, consider giving students the opportunity to move through a variety of assignments. This will give them breadth and keep their learning curve fresh. Be aware of the student's interest and development needs in considering alternate work assignments.

Giving Feedback. Be liberal with your praise and with your constructive feedback on how the students are carrying out their

assignments. Give students about twice as much feedback as you would a normal employee. This will accelerate their learning from any assignment they take on in your department.

Event Planning. By getting involved in the planning for a department retreat or other event, students will have the opportunity to interact with people across the department and to feel more a vital part of the department.

Data Gathering. When you are doing any fact finding or analysis in your operation, students can help with the interviews, focus groups or number crunching. This will help them apply the quantitative skills they are learning in the classroom in a real world situation.

Giving Presentations. This is a critical career skill that you can help students get a feel for while working

in your group. Where they have been part of the data gathering or analysis on a project, let them give part of the presentation. Give them plenty of feedback before and after the presentation to help their learning.

Accountability Reporting. Help the students learn the process of returning and reporting on their work on a regular basis. Teach them the importance of being accountable for work progress and deadlines.

Project Ownership. If possible give the students projects that they can own start to finish. This will help them learn critical project planning and execution skills.

Participation in Seminars. Consider having students attend the conferences or seminars that the rest of your staff has exposure to. There are many opportunities that don't involve significant cost but that will be eye opening for the students.



Career Planning Discussions.

Take the time to discuss the students' career goals and direction and share what perspective and advice you have. This is on the mind of every student and you can be a valuable resource and reality check for them.

Mentoring Relationships.

Based on the students' career interests, broker an opportunity for them to meet with a BYU expert in that field or discipline so that they can get an opportunity to ask their questions of someone with experience in their desired field. That person may become a mentor of sorts to the student.

Career Search Assistance.

When it comes time for students to begin the job hunt, help where you can in polishing their resume or in preparing for job interviews. If you are not the best resource for this, connect the students up with someone who is.

**TO DO LIST**

- ✓ Work with your management team to identify opportunities for student development.
- ✓ Start with one or two activities from the above list. If you have several students working in your department, consider hosting a brown bag lunch to discuss topic A or topic B.
- ✓ Ask for your students' inputs on how their on-the-job learning can be maximized in your department.

THE BOTTOM LINE

You spend more time with your students than most of their professors do. Make the most of your opportunity. This will be a satisfying part of your job and an invaluable part of the students' BYU experience.