

# Advice for Site Supervisors and Mentors

*"Mentoring is a relational experience in which a mentor empowers a protégé for ministry by sharing God-given resources in an intentional manner so that personal and leadership development is facilitated."*

(Stanley & Clinton, *Connecting*, 1992)

☐☐The mentoring process is at the heart of NCU's Internship Program. It involves the development of a relationship between the site supervisor and the intern. The site supervisor serves as the primary ministry model and mentor for the student during the internship. The student will learn from the mentor by observation as well as in more structured settings.☐☐NCU's Internship Program relies on our partner churches and organizations to provide the real-life context, or an off-campus classroom, for our interns to learn. Interns do provide our partner organizations with youthful energy and assistance. However, internships are not primarily about churches and organizations getting "cheap help" for a few months. It is about an investment in the kingdom. Your site is important, but the building of the kingdom of Christ is more important. Please, consider this a partnership between NCU and your church or organization for training emerging leaders in our communities, organizations, and churches. Together we are training students to be prepared and competent leaders for the future of God's kingdom.☐☐The site supervisor is encouraged to read Stanley and Clinton's book, *Connecting*, to get a more complete understanding of the mentoring process. Here are a few key elements to the mentoring process.☐

## Being A Good Mentor☐

### Biblical Models

Mentoring was a way of life for the people of the Bible and the primary means of passing on skills and wisdom from one generation to the next. Some Old Testament models are: Jethro and Moses (Ex. 18), Moses and Joshua (Deut. 31), Jonathan and David (I Sam. 18-20), and Elijah and Elisha (I Kings 19). New Testament models include: Jesus and the Twelve, Barnabas and Saul (Acts), Paul

and Timothy (Acts 16; I & II Tim.), and Paul and Titus (II Cor. 7; Titus).<sup>2</sup>

## Five Crucial Dynamics

- **Attraction** - This is the beginning point of the mentoring process as the mentor and the intern connect and see the potential in the relationship. As the dynamic increases, trust and confidence will grow, increasing the value of the mentoring experience.
- **Relationship** - The mentor and protégé develop a relationship that extends beyond a mere communication of knowledge or development of skills.
- **Responsiveness** - The protégé/intern must have an attitude of receptivity to the modeling and teaching of the mentor.
- **Accountability** - Accountability is an important aspect of personal spiritual development for any Christian but has particular importance for the intern as he/she develops personally, professionally, and relationally. By the nature of the program, the site supervisor will take the lead in the accountability aspects of the relationship.
- **Empowerment** - Empowering another person means to help them to recognize their potential within and to encourage the development of that potential.

## Characteristics of an Effective Mentor

The site supervisor should be an individual who is growing in his/her personal relationship with Jesus Christ and ministry. As this growth occurs, the mentor should desire to grow in the area of mentoring. <sup>22</sup>Interns might drive you crazy as they are young and excited and might have a few quirks. Don't we all? It's possible they may have never had anyone lovingly be honest with them about why they act the way they do. Please do not run from that; use this opportunity to shape them. Be reflective; mirror back their weaknesses with love. What you say and do for them today, may help them avoid making severe relational and professional mistakes that could destroy a church, other organizations, or their own ministries.<sup>22</sup>

Stanley and Clinton (Connecting, 1992) suggest these characteristics of an effective mentor:

- Ability to readily see potential in a person

- Tolerance with mistakes, brashness, abrasiveness, and the like in order to see that potential develop
- Flexibility in responding to people and circumstances
- Patience, knowing that time and experience are needed for development
- Perspective, having vision and ability to see down the road and suggest the next steps that a mentee needs
- Gifts and abilities that build up and encourage others

Howard and William Hendricks (As Iron Sharpens Iron, 1995) suggest the following characteristics for a mentor:

- Seems to have what the mentee personally needs
- Cultivates relationships
- Is willing to take a chance on the mentee
- Is respected by others
- Has a network of resources
- Is consulted by others
- Both talks and listens
- Is consistent in his/her lifestyle
- Is able to diagnose the mentee's needs
- Is concerned with the mentee's interests

Sometimes students can be idealistic and tactless, and can make you feel threatened. The intern may question what you are doing and why. They may appear to want your job and may even be more skilled than you are at some things. The intern may simply be so eager to learn and well-liked by the people they work with that a mentor may feel threatened. [22] Are you okay with you? Are you secure with who you are in your position? Some might have really good insights and a lot of experience. The one thing they want more than anything is to be respected and treated like they are part of the team. The intern needs to have an experienced, mature mentor who is confident to help shape them as servant leaders. [2]

## Characteristics of a Successful Mentee

If the intern is going to grow during his/her experience on the field, then certain characteristics need to be present:<sup>2</sup>

- A desire to serve God and to be used by Him in ministry
- Confidence that the mentor can help with his/her growth
- A sense of God's leading in the entire internship placement process
- Willingness to make personal sacrifices in some areas in order to establish the mentoring relationship in the internship
- A servant-heart toward the mentor
- Respect for the mentor
- A teachable spirit
- Willingness to be held accountable by the mentor

## Principles for Establishing the Mentoring Relationship

Stanley and Clinton suggest "Ten Commandments of Mentoring" in Connecting (chapter 13):

1. Establish the relationship
2. Jointly agree on the purpose of the mentoring relationship
3. Determine the regularity of interaction
4. Determine the type of accountability
5. Set up communication mechanisms
6. Clarify the level of confidentiality
7. Set the life cycle of the relationship
8. Evaluate the relationship periodically
9. Modify expectations to fit the real life mentoring context
10. Bring closure to the mentoring experience

Some of these principles are determined by the nature of the internship, but others will need to be negotiated at the beginning of the internship experience and outlined in the Learning Agreement.<sup>2</sup>

## Get to Know Your Intern

Seek to discover and appreciate your interns' different learning styles, seeking to relate to them in the way that is most beneficial. We have interns who may be:

- Imaginative: Answer their questions and concerns and they will be on the same page with you. Allow them room to be creative and when things do not go as anticipated look for teachable moments.
- Analytical: They want to understand the details and the rational behind the practices. Often, they will approach tasks very methodical. Be patient with them and help them process.
- Common sense: They are doers. They may need more direction. They may not know what to do, but will work all night to get it done, because they just love it once they get it.
- Dynamic: They are energetic and anxious to get to work. They understand the theory and they know how to do it. They just need for someone open the gate, tell them the parameters in which they can run, and encourage them to go.

## Beginning the Internship and the Mentoring Relationship

Since this is a new experience for the intern and they will be away from the NCU community and their family, make them feel welcome and included in your "family" right away.☺

## General Suggestions and Guidelines

- Commit yourself to pray regularly for the intern.
- Look through the eyes of the intern to see what they need for each unique situation. Do not assume the intern will know what to do, where to go, or how to act right away.
- Provide the intern with the necessary equipment, supplies, information, and specific direction they will need to have a successful and valuable mentoring relationship and internship experience.
- Present the intern to the church (or introduce them to others in the organization) so that relationships can begin to be built. Include the intern's name on publications. Even though the student is an intern, treating them like other staff will help in the transition and learning

process.

- Within the first week, sit down with the intern and go over the entire internship plan and Learning Agreement--re-check or set up due dates, assignments, and observations, or just get calendars coordinated.
- Schedule weekly mentoring meetings with the intern (at least one hour per week).
- Share your personal philosophy of ministry and insights with the intern.
- Provide the intern with the necessary encouragement and assist with time management, if necessary, to complete both the academic assignments (contained in their course syllabus) and the ministry assignments that you have outlined in the Learning Agreement.
- Spend the time investing in the intern. You must regularly meet with your intern. If you do not have the time, then maybe you should not have an intern. You are an extension of NCU. You, in a way, become one of the NCU professors in practical ministries or work. Please take this seriously. This is an extension of what they have been learning. It is not just a job to do for a short time. The students are paying for college credit and are investing time and energy in this preparation process. Be sure they spend a minimum of 120 hours working on their internship.
- Have a "debriefing" session with the intern during the last week of the internship. After this debriefing, the Final Evaluation Form should be completed and mailed or emailed to NCU.

### Provide Clear and Empowering Communication.

- Invest in teaching and training with what you know and why you do what you do! Communicating the "why you do things" is sometimes more important than the "how you do things." They can see the "how" but they have to hear the motives for doing what you did or when you did it. Do not just tell an intern why. Direct them in discovering it. For example, ask the intern, "Why do you think I said what I said to that parent?"
- Provide honest and regular feedback. Do not assume that an intern automatically understand the situation. Do not assume that just because you did not tell them how badly something was carried out that the intern will figure it out. Speak up, but do so speaking the truth in love. Each intern needs quality mentoring so that discovery learning takes place affecting how an intern acts, teaches, leads, and serves.
- Clear communication involves investing the time necessary at the front end by

providing the parameters for what the intern is being asked. This way they will understand prior to carrying out what is being asked of them. One simple way to check that is to ask the intern to tell you what they think should be done. That way you can hear what the intern heard you say, interpreted what you said, and how the instruction is planning to be carried out. You then have the opportunity to affirm and release or clarify and ask for feedback again until you are satisfied the intern understands.

- Empowering leadership is when you paint the end result and communicate the parameters, but then allow the intern the freedom to get accomplished the task as they see fit. It may not be the way you would have accomplished the task. Be careful, it may even turn out better than what might have happened if the intern followed your direct path. Give each of your interns the opportunities to succeed and fail. Use the law of sowing and reaping and the law of responsibility. The law of sowing and reaping is obvious, but the law of responsibility is that the more a person is given sole responsibility in which they can succeed in, the more responsibility that person will be able to handle later. This will truly contribute to healthy, confident, team-playing, and independent future leaders and thinkers.

## Avoiding Conflict

Great leaders always hire according to their weaknesses. But with that comes the obvious and inevitable occasions of conflict. Be sure you know how to deal with conflict and work through it with love. The best way to avoid conflict is to:

- Keep the communication lines open with weekly (or more often) intentional meetings.
- Insist on an environment of grace and encouragement.
- Refer to the intern's Learning Agreement often.
- Value the intern as a team player. Consider calling them associates instead of interns. Titles are free. Everyone is part of the team, value their input and watch them to rise to the level of excellence. Value the interns as people. Do not make fun of them, belittle them, use them as scapegoats for your lack of planning (Believe it or not it happens!). Evaluate your relational communication styles. Be cautious using sarcasm and jokes. Even if they are not doing as well as you hoped, encourage and cheer them on. If there are serious concerns, please contact the Internship's Professor at NCU.

## Complete Your Reports

Be sure to complete the necessary forms and reports that help with grading, evaluation, and especially internship experience reflection (These forms are contained in the intern's syllabus and can be found online at [www.northcentral.edu](http://www.northcentral.edu)).

- **Week 1 of the Internship** - Meet with the Intern and complete the Learning Agreement, submit it to NCU.
- **Mid-point of semester** - Fill out Mid-semester Report. Go over it with the intern and have them submit it to NCU.
- **End of the semester / internship** - Fill out End-of-the-semester Report. Go over your observations and evaluations with the intern and have them submit it to NCU.

## The Weekly Mentoring Session

The intern and the site supervisor will meet weekly for approximately one hour in a formal mentoring session. The mentoring session should be utilized to assist the intern in personal and professional growth.<sup>[2]</sup> Each mentoring session should have a main focus (e.g. reporting a critical ministry incident or evaluating progress toward a particular goal), but it will also contain other aspects of an effective mentoring relationship. Some ingredients that may be utilized in the mentoring session are:

- Active listening
- Planning strategies and objectives for the ministry or organization
- Skill training
- Discussion of character issues
- Evaluating conflict situations
- Sharing of personal prayer requests
- Celebration of "victories" experienced by the intern
- Use of effective questions to draw out personal concerns/needs
- Mutual encouragement for spiritual growth
- Confronting in love in areas needing growth



- Explanation of the "why" of a particular ministry action

## Learning Tools

There are many tools that may be utilized in the mentoring/supervising relationship that can assist in the intern's growth such as personality inventories, spiritual gifts assessments, planning forms, etc. These may be used periodically to help structure a mentoring session and enable the intern to reflect upon a ministry experience in a more intentional manner.☐

## Case Studies

A "case study" is a written description of an actual event in ministry (e.g. pastoral call, grief support situation). The case study report should be typed by the intern and be no more than two pages in length. The intern shares it with the mentor to provide a learning experience for the intern through analysis by the mentor and/or a group of peers. The written case study might include:

**Background:**☐ Factual description of the event including forces influencing the event and persons involved, and how the intern was involved in the process of ministry.☐☐

**Description:**☐ Describe what happened and what you did.☐☐

**Analysis:**☐ Identify the issues and relationships involved, analyzing the dynamics and changes.☐☐

**Evaluation:**☐ Were goals met in the interaction? What issues were left unresolved? What could have been done differently?

## Significant Ministry Incident

The intern may provide a report of one event in ministry that had special significance for him/her. The report will include a brief description of the event, but the major focus is upon the intern's reaction to and reflection upon the incident.☐

## Journaling

A journal is a tool to be used by the intern for recording the various ministry activities of the intern and the intern's reflection upon those activities. Reflections should include theological issues, emotional responses, and relational dynamics. The journal entries will provide material for the mentor and intern to evaluate together. It will give an opportunity to evaluate patterns of relating to others and provide insights for developing new methods for ministry.

## Practical Mentoring Ideas

1. **Share your life.** Investment takes time and patience. Internships are most successful when the site supervisor and staff truly invest and open up their lives to the interns. Give them a "piece of your mind" so they can see HOW and WHY you do your ministry or job.
2. **Help the intern win and be successful.** Protect your intern from situations and other people that might bring more discouragement than what an intern can and should handle.
3. **Give the intern opportunities to grow.** Some responsibilities are easy to delegate. Others are more difficult because of training. Follow this plan to hand off responsibilities to your intern.
  1. I do-You watch.
  2. I do-You help.
  3. You do-I help.
  4. You do-I watch.
  5. You do-I train someone else.
4. **Challenge the intern to get out of their comfort zones.** Stretch the intern. Internships provide an intern with a more realistic view of the job or ministry they are planning to pursue. Internships help the interns to decide whether to continue preparing for the occupation choice or to prepare for another job or ministry.
5. **Provide the intern with honest feedback and constructive criticism.** Do so in love. Each intern will be different in how they receive the honesty. Get to know your intern. It will help you to determine the appropriate feedback

that your intern desires and needs.

**6. Listen to the intern's ideas.** Even though interns are often idealistic, they bring a fresh perspective to any church or organization. Your intern may provide you and your organization with many new and fresh ideas. Do not feel threatened by their energy and ideas. Feed off the intern's excitement and perspectives. Encourage it. Help the intern balance their excitement with realism without dismissing his/her unique ideas.

**7. Equip the intern with resources to ensure they begin well.** Budget for practical resources that will help the intern to become better prepared for the ministry or job they will enter. What helps you (and others on your staff) do your ministry or job well? (These are only suggestions or ideas on what might be provided.)

- Provide a planner or training in time management.
- Take your intern to a training seminar in your field of service.
- Give "must-have" books for the field of service he/she will be entering.
- Provide some extra cash every once in a while--just for fun.
- Give access to the files and information that has helped you to be successful.

Provide a year's subscription to a professional journal.