

The Merrick School of Business Real Estate & Economic Development

Mentor Program

What is Mentoring?

The Merrick Mentor Program partners Merrick School students with experienced alumni and business leaders. It is designed to help bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and the realities of the business world by providing students with the opportunity to experience today's business practices.

The Mentor Program pairs students with mentors who share a similar background or career field. Students are able to explore different areas in the real estate industry, review career paths, and refine personal goals. Mentors are able to share skills and experiences, thereby contributing to the professional development of our students.

Program Format:

The Merrick Mentor Program is designed to be adaptable to the needs and varying schedules of both the mentor and student. Mentors and students work together to define the scope of the relationship. The goal is to be mutually beneficial for both parties and not be too demanding for the mentor or too limiting for the student.

At a minimum, mentors and their mentees are asked to meet at least three times over the academic year. These discussions can be held over lunch, dinner, at the mentor's office, or at any location convenient for the mentor and the mentee. During the year, the mentor is asked to provide an opportunity for job shadowing, to invite the student to a networking or other professional event, and to introduce the student to different career paths in the field of real estate, such as lending, property management, asset management, investment, or economic development.

A kick-off (breakfast, lunch or dinner) is recommended to discuss frequency of future meetings, means of communication, appropriate/inappropriate boundaries (times not to call, etc.), and the student's goals for the relationship.

Role of Mentor:

Mentors can provide guidance on a variety of issues such as personal development (e.g. writing and communication skills, appropriate work attire, interviewing, etc.) and career planning (e.g. internship/job advice). The mentor also serves as a resource directing their mentees to new people, places, and opportunities.

There is no rule as to how many students one can mentor, as each industry professional must decide how much time to dedicate. Because of the time and energy needed to mentor effectively, we suggest that the mentor develop one connection before deciding to take on another

What are some questions students might ask?

When students make use of the mentoring program, they are interested in learning more about how real estate fits with their interests and skills. Some examples of questions they might ask include the following:

Questions about how you got started:

- What degrees do you have?
- How did you get started in real estate?
- What experience do you have?

Questions about work in your organization:

- What hours/work schedule does your job require?
- What are the benefits/drawbacks of your job?
- How would you describe the work culture of your organization

Questions about your job in general:

- What do you do on a typical day?
- What do you like most/least about your job?
- What skills are most used in your job, such as Argus or Co-Star?

Questions about the future:

- What changes do you see in this real estate field in the next several years?
- What is a typical career path for someone in this type of position?
- What is the range of salaries and rewards available at different stages in your profession?

Students and industry professionals can learn a lot from each other and develop a meaningful and long lasting relationship, if each party is engaged, committed, and willing to put in time and effort. The UB program is designed to help that process.

**Deborah Ford, Director,
B.S. in Real Estate & Economic Development
410-837-4997,dford@ubalt.edu**