

Discussion Guide for Mentors and Mentees



Participating in the Annual Meeting or On To the Future (OTF) mentorship can be valuable experience for both mentors and mentees. Mentees

report that through their participation they received good advice related to their career or academic pathway, assistance in navigating the meeting, and were introduced to other professionals in their area of interest. Mentors have reported altruistic gains in helping others as well as enjoyment in meeting young promising scientists. While the time in which mentors and mentees will engage with each other is short, here are some questions and discussion topics to foster the relationship.

Pre-Meeting Communication

- Discuss how you will communicate with one another before and during the meeting whether it is by email or text.
- Make a plan (preferably before you arrive at the meeting) as to when and where you will meet each day you are at the meeting. The OTF morning sessions (Monday-Wednesday, 7:30 a.m.) or the Mentoring Center (Sunday-Wednesday) are good options.

Based on GSA's Section Meeting mentoring programs that have run since 1996, some of the common questions that students ask are below:

Your Career Pathway

- What was your first job? How did you find it? What and why are you doing what you're doing now?
- What "hard career lessons" have you learned that if given the opportunity you would do differently?

- How does your geoscience education, training, and degree relate to the position that you now hold? How did you use it to get your job?
- What does a "day in the office" look like in your position?

Career Exploration

- For government employees: What is it like working for the government? How did you get into government work?
- For entrepreneurs: How and why did you start your own company? What are the benefits and disadvantages to owning a company?

Employment/Job Search

- What skills and experience does an employer look for in an applicant? How important are grades?
- How should a student present work that is unrelated to the geosciences on a resume?
- What is appropriate behavior/dress for interviews? How should one prepare for an interview?
- What is the job market like now for geoscientists, in two years, in five years?
- What type of health & safety training is needed, or that may make my application more competitive? How does one go about getting this training?
- What types of certifications are needed and where can I find additional information on this subject?
- What is a typical salary for a geoscientist? Do you have tips on how to negotiate a salary?
- What types of soft or non-technical skills do you think are important to the work you do?

Networking

- Talk about networking--how to get started & the value down the road.

