

LPC Mentor Student **Guidelines**

The Livestock Publications Council Mentor Program offers students and professionals the option to get involved in growing the future of the agricultural communications industry.

Should you choose, you can take your mentor experience to a more-formal level. Here are some hints to build a strong relationship with each other through a more-formal mentor experience.

Take initiative • Great things take planning, thought and commitment from the start.

Students, this one is in your hands. Go to www.livestockpublications.com and download the latest LPC Mentor Directory. Look through it, read the descriptions and pick three to five organizations that seem to be in line with your career interests.

Mentors, you are committing yourself to growth, personally and professionally, by agreeing to be an LPC Mentor if you are contacted by a student. A student could call you at any minute. While it is easy to say “yes” to any request, we understand things are constantly changing. Make sure your schedule allows you to commit to yearlong relationship when the phone rings. It’s OK if it doesn’t work out.

Ask questions • Questions help make sure that each of you are a good “fit” for the mentor program. Maybe after a few questions you will find out that it wasn’t meant to be. If that is the case, talk about other people that might benefit from a relationship with this student or mentor.

Students, it is important to think about what you want out of the relationship. What are your career interests? How can an industry professional add to your in-school experiences? How much of a time commitment do you see this being? How often will you communicate with each other? When can you meet each other in person?

Mentors, be thinking about your pre-professional experiences. How would you have benefited from a mentorship experience? What were the things you “wish someone would have told you” before you entered the real world? How much of a time commitment do you see this being? How often will you communicate with each other? When can you meet each other in person? Also, consider what your company can learn from the student. What are colleges doing today to prepare the next generation of agricultural communications professionals? How do your company’s interests align with higher education? Do you have a network with college professors and new agricultural communications graduates?

Set goals • Each person will have specific goals after asking the right questions. Put them in writing. Maybe you could include a few of these goals:

- Conduct a résumé and job interview critique.
- Meet a day early for the next Agricultural Media Summit.
- E-mail each other each month, and discuss topics critical to career planning from time to time.
- Help the student get acquainted with the right people to find a future job or internship.
- Build a stronger relationship with this company and our Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow chapter.

Plan out a calendar of events • Mentor programs work best if everyone works on developing a calendar of events and sticks to it. The ideas are endless:

- Think about routine communication (monthly e-mails, quarterly phone calls, etc.).
- Find some events that each of you will attend and make it a point to visit one-on-one with each other (Agricultural Media Summit, LPC regional events, Cattle Industry Convention and Trade Show, college football game weekends, etc.)
- Visit each other in your “natural environments.” Mentors could attend a communications or agricultural class with the student, speak at an ACT meeting or lead a discussion during a class. Students can spend a day in the mentor’s office, go on a story trip with the mentor or help them at an industry event.