

ISVMA Veterinary Mentorship Program

This program connects veterinary students with veterinarian mentors to provide advice and guidance related to subjects such as case management, professional growth, work/life balance, and transitioning into the profession. This partnership will help the student with the everyday grind of attending veterinary school and provide guidance in choosing the best position after graduation. The program allows the veterinarian to give back to students and the profession by sharing experiences and advice as their student partner goes through school and heads into the real world of veterinary medicine. The partnership does not need to end after graduation; we hope that the relationships developed will continue by sharing life skills and professional information as new veterinarians move forward in their careers.

Benefits of Being a Mentor

- Enjoy a sense of pride when you see your student partner grow and succeed.
- Gain a sense of personal growth as a result of your interaction with your student partner.
- Refine your interpersonal skills and gain a sense of cultural diversity.
- Feel a sense of accomplishment in helping guide tomorrow's leaders.
- Expand your network as you help new veterinarians enter the profession.

Mentor Responsibilities and Expectations

- Initiate first contact with the mentee.
- Actively listen to the mentee, their concerns, and fears to personalize realistic goals to fit their needs.
- Model high professional and moral character.
- Share experience in areas of interest to the mentee and real-life knowledge of recent trends and techniques.
- Attend events that allow you to meet your mentee in person (e.g., ISVMA convention, U of IL fall conference, etc.) when possible.
- Introduce and expose the mentee to new opportunities and contacts when able.
- Inspire the mentee to perform their best.
- Send a summary report to the ISVMA Student Engagement Committee (SEC) bi-annually (include recommendations and potential points of improvement).

Mutual Responsibilities of the Mentee and Mentor

from AAHA's Mentee and Mentor Guidelines

- Bring enthusiasm, optimism, sensitivity, unselfishness, and respect to the partnership.
- Make a commitment of time and energy. Establish a mutually effective means of communication - such as phone, text, or email - and set a clear plan or schedule of communication. *Communicating at least once monthly is highly recommended.*
- Stay true to your time commitments. Reschedule any meeting time that cannot be met.
- Strive to be open to new ideas and feedback.
- Maintain confidentiality when practice ideas, business numbers, or other private matters are discussed.
- Recognize that in the discussion of "goals", those goals may include those of the student and of the veterinarian.
- Periodically assess and celebrate progress.
- Periodically evaluate the partnership to see if it should continue, be modified, or terminated.
- Maintain a professional relationship.
- If for any reason the student or veterinarian elects to terminate the partnership, it may be done without the need to give reason and should be considered an amicable ending.
- Notify the ISVMA SEC if you are having trouble connecting with your mentee or mentor.
- Biannual reviews of the partnerships will be conducted by the ISVMA SEC. If for whatever reason the veterinarian or student partner are deemed not to be meeting expectations or the partnership is not working, said partnership may be dissolved by the ISVMA SEC.

Ways to enhance the student-veterinarian partnership:

- When possible, either in the Champaign-Urbana area or in the area the veterinarian resides, try to schedule a social activity like lunch or dinner, or visit the partner's clinic or place of employment.
- Invite your student partner to one of your professional organizations' education and/or networking events.