

AREMA Committee 24
Mentoring Policy Statement
20 Feb 2009

GENERAL:

Mentoring is the coaching of engineering students by railway industry professionals. These relationships help contribute to the professional development of both the person who does the coaching – the Mentor – and the person coached – the Mentee. Mentoring relationships enable both individuals to build new skills, build self-confidence, and grow professionally.

GOAL:

The goal of the AREMA Mentoring Program is to give students (“Mentees”) an introduction into the challenging and rewarding career opportunities in railway engineering. At the minimum the Mentee should gain a greater understanding in the following areas:

- Railway industry in general – what it is, what it does and how it is structured.
- Importance of rail transportation to a healthy, environmentally sustainable, and energy efficient economy.
- Applicability of specific engineering disciplines.
- Relative roles of private and public entities.
- Potential employment opportunities and the differences between railroad, government, consultant and supplier entities.
- Difference in opportunities between the freight and passenger sectors.
- Other sources of information about the railway industry.

For the Mentor, this program provides an opportunity to share the passion for a career in railroad engineering.

REQUIREMENTS:

Mentees must be Student Members of AREMA.

Mentors must be members of AREMA, but not necessarily members of Committee 24 and shall have the following qualifications:

- Experience with young engineer professional development.
- Technical expertise, preferably in more than one area of railway engineering.
- Access to industry subject matter experts.
- Willing to embrace the role of Mentor.

The official Mentor/Mentee relationship will terminate upon the Mentee’s graduation. However, informal mentoring relationships are fundamental to professional development and can be pursued at any point in a career.

ROLES:

The Mentor and Mentee need to:

- Develop their expectations of the mentoring relationship and discuss.
- Maintain an open line of communication in which both have equal responsibility.
- Actively work together to schedule meetings as needed.
- Develop a strategy of mentoring activities.

The Mentor is a consistent, comprehensive advisor and coach – as opposed to a more technical, project-specific teacher.

As an individual:

- Accept the Mentee for what he/she is.
- Be supportive and realistic.
- Be honest and encouraging.
- Build confidence in the Mentee.
- Be respectful of the Mentee's social and cultural environment.
- Offer useful information.
- Teach networking and make introductions.
- Be willing to give open and honest feedback about the mentoring program to both the Mentee and AREMA Committee 24.

As a Career Coach:

- Advise the Mentee on career paths and technical development opportunities within the industry.
- Help the Mentee design his/her career goals.
- Motivate the Mentee to initiate activities on his/her own behalf and to perform at his/her highest level.
- Guide the Mentee by providing him/her with frank, constructive information and feedback.

The Mentee is a seeker of railroad industry knowledge and is willing to receive the advice, counsel and guidance of the Mentor.

As an individual:

- Accept the Mentor for what he/she is.
- Do not expect the Mentor to work miracles.
- Be flexible in the mentoring relationship.
- Have confidence.
- Listen carefully to the Mentor.

- Be willing to give open and honest feedback about the mentoring program.
- Do not become intimidated.

As prospective railway professional:

- Assess his/her developmental needs and goals.
- Communicate needs and goals to the Mentor.
- Use the experience, knowledge, and wisdom of the Mentor.
- Be proactive about pursuing opportunities.

EXECUTION:

Committee 24 maintains a roster of Mentors by area of interest.

To initiate a mentoring relationship, the student member submits an application to the Committee 24 Mentoring Program Coordinator via the AREMA website.

The mentoring relationship begins when the Mentoring Coordinator pairs the Mentee with a Mentor and upon mutual consent to the agreement.

Factors to be considered in matching a Mentee to a Mentor shall include:

- Area of railroad engineering in which the Mentee is most interested,
- Geographical proximity of Mentee and Mentor (considering travel within either's regular assignment),
- Gender, if preference is stated,
- Institutional relationship (i.e. is the prospective Mentor an alumnus of the institution of the Mentee?).

The Mentor initiates contact with the Mentee.

The Mentor/Mentee relationship shall be governed by the following fundamental elements:

- Frequency of contact should be once per semester/term but may be more often if helpful to either party.
- Either party is free to ask the Committee to come up with a different pairing.
- Both parties agree to promptly respond to evaluation requests.