

UCF Urban and Regional Planning

Mentoring an Urban Knight Program



**School of Public
Administration**



American Planning Association
**Florida Chapter
Orlando Metro**

Creating Great Communities for All

Mentoring an Urban Knight Program

Mentoring an Urban Knight program is an annual initiative offered by the UCF Urban and Regional Planning program in collaboration with the Orlando Metro section of the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association. It is exclusively available to students enrolled in the UCF MSURP program and is designed to facilitate productive and mutually beneficial partnerships between mentors and students throughout the academic year from October to April. To guide you in the early stages of your journey, we have created a guidebook that will be of great help to you.

The mentoring program offers UCF MSURP students a valuable opportunity to enhance their personal and professional growth by connecting with experienced planners. This program is designed to foster knowledge sharing and career development by encouraging students to set goals, accept challenges, and receive guidance from their mentors. Through the program, students can expand their skills and professional network by pairing up with practicing planners.

Objectives:

- Enhance students' exposure to real-world work environments, tasks, and dynamics of professional planning positions.
- Facilitate mentorship connections between students and planners from the public or private sector in the region.
- Assist students in initiating the development of their professional career networks.
- Reinforce the relationship between university programs, APA Florida sections, and planning professionals, fostering greater collaboration and synergy among them.

What is mentoring:

Mentoring is

- The personal and professional development of a student through the experienced planner
- A knowledge sharing and career development opportunity
- About the desire for setting goals and accepting challenges

Mentoring is NOT

- Replacement for formal development, training, or teaching
- A guarantee of job/internship placement
- An assistance program for course-related issues

Eligibility:

To participate in the program, mentees must be enrolled in the UCF MSURP program, while mentors must be based in the Orlando Metro section areas and have AICP certification or a minimum of three years of experience as planners. Although membership in APA Florida is encouraged for all involved parties, it is not mandatory for mentors and mentees.

Requirement:

- The mentoring program runs from October to April.
- Mentors and mentees must meet at least three times, either virtually or in-person.
- In-office or out-of-office shadowing experiences are recommended.
- Mentors will review mentees' resumes and cover letters.
- Mentees are expected to attend the kick-off event.
- Both mentors and mentees must complete an evaluation survey on their mentoring experience.
- There are no formal activities after the first year, but participants are encouraged to maintain an informal relationship if mutually beneficial.

Timeline:

- October – Kick-off event
- November – Second meeting
- December – Third meeting
- January – Fourth meeting
- February – Resume or cover letter review
- March – Resume or cover letter review
- April – Completion of program evaluation survey

Responsibilities:

UCF MSURP is responsible for working with the section to facilitate the matching of mentors and mentees, organizing the kick-off event, recruiting mentees, and conducting an annual evaluation survey.

Orlando Metro Section FL APA is responsible for facilitating the matching process and recruiting mentors.

Mentor is responsible for staying in touch with the mentee from October to April, clarifying their communication preferences, holding at least three meetings, reviewing the mentee's resume and cover letter, respecting the mentee's time commitments, and sharing personal knowledge and experience.

The mentee should actively communicate with their mentor, plan meetings and stay focused. They should not ask or expect a job or internship from their mentor. The mentee should keep their mentor informed and ask for clarification when needed, take advantage of opportunities provided by their mentor, and respect their mentor's time by cancelling or rescheduling appointments in advance if needed. If any issues arise, the mentee should reach out to UCF MSURP for assistance.