

# OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

## CENTENNIAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

### INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

In the AIA Code of Ethics, members are encouraged to “nurture their fellow professionals as they progress through stages of their career, beginning with professional education in the academy, progressing through internship, and continuing throughout their career.” The National Society Professional Engineers echoes this statement with their encouragement to members to provide career guidance for youth. The Oklahoma State University School of Architecture, with its professional oriented degrees, is well positioned to offer the Centennial Mentorship Program. This program is specifically designed to facilitate mentorship opportunities between graduates and students in professional school.

### Benefits

The benefits to the student mentee are obvious – having access to a voice outside academia is of invaluable advantage. The mentor is able to provide input regarding elements of the profession not readily visible to the student still in the throes of completing their education. For the mentor, there are also benefits to participation – the satisfaction of lending a hand to those on the path just behind oneself, and to be able to share lessons learned along the way. In addition, the mentor will gain exposure to the thoughts and ideas of the next generation of architects and architectural engineers.

### Expectations of the Student Mentee

As the one seeking out mentorship, the mentee is expected to:

- Be proactive. It is your responsibility to contact your mentor, with a discussion topic ready.
- Be willing to ask questions, listen attentively, and accept suggestions and critique.
- Respect the boundaries of the relationship – keep contact professional.
- Be sensitive to the mentor’s available time.

As a graduate of the OSU School of Architecture, your mentor could assist you with information related to any of the following topic/areas:

- Development of career goals, and setting realistic timetables for their achievement;
- Information related to the job search process;
- Insight into firm culture and operations;
- Current information related to the licensure process;
- The trials and exhilarations of transitioning from Academia to the Profession!

The expectations of the mentoring relationship include contact at least twice a month – email, Facebook messaging, or via other unobtrusive methods, and an in-person exchange once per semester such as a visit/ tour of the mentor’s firm, or a visit to the School of Architecture (tailgate, homecoming, project jury, etc). If an in-person meeting is not possible, Skype or Google chat could substitute. Finally, under no circumstances shall this Centennial Mentorship Program be viewed as a platform to recruit potential employees for a firm, or for a

student to develop expectations regarding future employment. The relationship is expected to remain in force until the mentee's graduation.

By signing below, you affirm that you have read and understood these program guidelines.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

We want to ensure a successful program for all involved! If any problems arise, please contact the School of Architecture (405-744-6043) or Professor Bilbeisi via email (suzanne.bilbeisi@okstate.edu).

### Contacting Your Mentor

You only get one chance to make a first impression. Your mentor will have access to the resume you provided as part of your application process. He/she will already know a little bit about the items of information on that document. Your first few points of contact with your new mentor should be further introduction to you as a person:

- What interests you about Architecture or AE;
- Your interests outside of Architecture;
- Your general background and values;
- Your career aspirations, and even some of your concerns about the profession.

Start slowly by introducing yourself, one topic at a time. At the conclusion of each communication, ask your mentor a question related to the information you provided as a backdrop to who you are as a person. For example:

- "Family is really important to me. What are some of the strategies you have utilized to better achieve a work/life balance while in the profession?"
- "Moving to the West Coast to work is a priority for me. How did you manage to start your career so far from your home state?"
- "I can use the computer, but I find I am not passionate about it. How much of your workday do you do things besides work with Revit?"
- "My goal is to someday have my own firm. What knowledge/coursework could I pursue at OSU to help me with the realization of that goal?"
- "I really like thinking about the relationship between architecture and the landscape. Are there particular project types that you would suggest I gear my career towards to be involved with this design aspect?"
- "I want to pursue licensure as soon as possible. What strategies would you suggest to help me reach that goal? And what is a reasonable timetable for achieving licensure?"
- Etc! In the space below, write in two or three of your personal concerns:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Remember that your mentor has particular insights, and wants to help you! The best way to obtain that information is to be prepared with specific questions, at least some of the time. Other times you may just want to get to know your mentor better to understand their frame of reference... so you might ask questions about his/her journey into the profession. It is a fluid relationship!

Your mentor: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_