

Tips for Professional Engagement with Protégés

As a mentor, you play an important part in our students' professional development journey.

Below, we have provided a few best practices to help assist in being a positive role model for your protégé.

- Always schedule an appointment to meet with your Protégé; handle as you would meetings and appointments at work.
- Meet in a public setting or in a campus meeting room, if possible. Do not meet with your Protégé at a bar or at their residence hall/apartment.
- Offering car rides is generally unnecessary given the walkable nature of campus and the surrounding community.
- Focus on professional activities and skill-building discussions when you meet. For example, do not go out for drinks or go on hikes together. Similarly, avoid stories related to heavy partying in your college years.
- Dress professionally or in business casual attire when meeting in person or during video chat sessions.
- Greet your Protégé with a handshake, not a hug.
- Use your Protégé's proper name unless directed otherwise by your Protégé.
- All discussions related to issues and challenges you've faced at work should focus on lessons learned and positive messages of advice. Do not speak with a negative tone about your work experiences, bosses, peers, etc.
- During the initial meetings with your Protégé, clearly define your role, outline the areas you both would like to work on together (interview preparation, careers, professional development, etc.).
- It may also be helpful to clarify what your mentor role does not include, particularly if your Protégé broaches these with you – this generally includes personal issues, such as dating, family issues, money issues, etc.
- Handle social media engagement with your Protégé as you would handle connections with other professional associates. Be respectful of your Protégés preferences for communicating via social media.
- Questions on the above points or other areas of professional engagement should be directed to Jennifer Crispell in the Smeal Office of Alumni Relations.