

The Barbara Smith Women's Mentoring Program Carnegie Mellon Women's Association

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

1) Please tell me about your program.

The Women's Mentoring Program is designed to facilitate supportive relationships by matching individual women staff who are willing to act as mentors with those who wish to be mentored. Mentor relationships are expected to center on professional interests and aspirations, including but not limited to career advancement, educational opportunities and job related issues.

2) How will the program benefit me?

As the saying goes, "you get out of it what you put into it." We find that matches have the potential to be wonderful, given that participants really do meet and exchange their ideas, information and experience. If you join, you have a chance to network. You are likely to learn new things about Carnegie Mellon and how it functions. You may find a colleague who will help you to update a resume. You may get advice on career development or tackling a tough work situation. You may be pointed to the right campus problem-solver. Or you may find your mentor meeting to be a welcome opportunity for some downtime to share stories of life experiences. Many of our mentors and mentees end up with new friends and professional contacts as a result of the mentorship.

3) Who serves as mentors?

Participation is open to CMWA members who are staff members at Carnegie Mellon University (must be employed in regular or temporary, part-time and full-time, appointments of four months or longer). You decide whether or not you are qualified. All life experiences count!

4) Who serves as mentees?

Participation is open to CMWA staff members at Carnegie Mellon University who are employed in regular or temporary, part-time and full-time, appointments of four months or longer. Some of our mentees are brand new to campus while others have been here for many years.

5) What is the role of the mentor?

As a mentor your primary role is to provide guidance and support. It is important to:

- Ask open-ended questions
- Demonstrate active listening
- Clarify understanding
- Role model behavior
- Provide objective feedback and guidance
- Facilitate self-reflection
- Be engaged
- Honor commitments

6) What is the role of the mentee?

As a mentee your primary role is to identify the skills, knowledge, or goals you want to achieve and share with your mentor. It is important to:

- Set goals
- Ask for specific advice on your skill set, ideas, plans and goals
- Create an action plan for accomplishing goals
- Effectively receive and respond to positive and constructive feedback
- Take initiative and remember that you own your own development
- Use active listening skills in discussions with your mentor
- Be engaged
- Honor commitments

7) Who leads?

You both do! Mentees often believe that they should wait for their mentor to contact them. Not true! Either party can be the impetus for building a solid partnership. Mentees might find that they are mentoring their partners at times. The truest sign of success in your mentoring relationships is when you find that you are sharing in both directions.

8) What is the process for becoming a mentor or mentee?

The program operates on a calendar basis. Applications for both mentors and mentees will open December 14, 2018. Applications must be submitted by January 18, 2019. Matches are determined by early February and a reception to announce and celebrate those matches takes place in early to mid-February.

9) How do you match us up?

Members of the CMWA Mentorship Committee will review the information provided on your application form and your resume to identify appropriate mentor-mentee matches. In general, women are matched by evaluating the career and life experience of the mentors with the needs of those being mentored. We look at the department you work in, because we do our best to avoid matching people who already know each other and we strive to protect your privacy. We look at your career specialization and personal background to find common interests. Matches are rarely perfect, but are always seriously considered and have the potential to be wonderful, given your involvement.

10) Does everyone get matched each year?

Every effort is made to accommodate all interested individuals; however, this is a volunteer activity and sometimes the pool of mentors and those who wish to be mentored does not match, either by number or by area of expertise.

11) What are the stages of a mentoring relationship?

There are three phases to mentoring relationships—a beginning, middle, and end.

The beginning—this is the most critical stage of the relationship. The focus is on gaining rapport and building trust. Mentoring pairs work on getting to know one another, set goals for the relationship, and agree on commitments and expectations. It's helpful to set at least one achievable goal together for the relationship. What do the two of you want to get out of this relationship?

The middle—during this stage, the mentor and mentee begin to work toward the goal(s) they set during stage one. The focus is on creating action plans, taking action, and reflecting on outcomes. Throughout the mentorship it is important for both the mentor and mentee to reflect upon the direction the mentorship is taking, its impact on the mentor and mentee, and identify when goals are met.

The end—the mentoring cycle ends in December and the majority of mentoring relationships end; however, this is not always the case. During this stage, the relationship and achievements are evaluated and achievements are celebrated.

12) When should I start to meet with my mentor or mentee? How often should we meet?

Right away! We find that your mentor relationship starts out best if you plan to meet very soon after the matches are announced. We also find that you can lose momentum in getting to know one another if you do not also plan some routine into your meetings. However, the location, time, and frequency of meetings is totally up to the two of you. Please schedule meetings on a mutually agreeable basis.

13) What should our meetings be like?

Your 'get togethers' can be formal or informal. Any format that you both are comfortable with will do...breakfast, lunch, dinner, coffee break, events, office meetings, on- or off-campus, etc.

14) Is participation required?

Serving as a mentor or a mentee is intended to be completely voluntary.

15) Can I be paid for my participation in the program?

The program is intended to be completely voluntary, with no compensation tied to participation.

16) Do you have any history on the program?

Since 1994 the project has matched over 350 women with mentors. It is named for Barbara Smith, a former chief human resources officer at Carnegie Mellon University, who recognized the importance of women supporting women on campus from both a professional and personal standpoint.

17) How is the program administered?

The Barbara Smith Women's Mentoring program is supported and administered by the Carnegie Mellon Women's Association. For 2018, mentorship co-chairs are:
Colleen Libertz, 412-268-3042, clibertz@andrew.cmu.edu
Samantha Nielsen, 412-268-8463, samanthn@andrew.cmu.edu

The committee recruits mentors and mentees, matches mentors and mentees in pairs, hosts an informal kick-off reception, checks in periodically with mentoring pairs to see how things are going, and collects a program evaluation from all participants to evaluate what is working well and what could be improved for the future, and then begins planning for next year's program.

18) To whom do I address any problems I might have during the mentorship?

The mentorship co-chairs listed above would be the first point of contact. If unable to assist, any executive board member of the Carnegie Mellon Women's Association (CMWA) will be available.

19) Does the Women's Mentoring Program have a website?

<https://www.cmu.edu/cmwa/programs/mentorship/barbarasmith.html>

20) Do you have any resources or suggested reading that will enhance my mentoring experience?

Yes, we do! We maintain a BOX folder with links to articles and guides that you may find helpful. A link to this folder can be found on the CMWA website and will also be emailed out to mentors and mentees.