



# Society of Georgia Archivists

*Preserving the past and the present for the future...*

## **SGA MENTORING PROGRAM GUIDEBOOK**

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## MENTORING PROGRAM

The SGA Mentoring Program is designed to contribute to the success of SGA members by encouraging individual growth, creating a sense of community within the profession, promoting thoughtful and meaningful engagement with issues, and helping participants develop competencies that strengthen the position of individuals, organizations, and programs.

The SGA Mentoring Program goals are to:

- solicit mentors and mentees for the program
- facilitate the mentor/mentee relationship
- create and maintain guidelines that will help the mentor/mentee relationship grow and flourish
- assess the program to ensure that it continues to be a viable form of professional development
- provide support for program participants if issues and questions arise

Mentoring can be defined as a developmental relationship in which a more experienced person provides support and guidance to a less experienced person. Mentoring goes beyond the traditional teacher-student relationship – effective mentors serve as advisers, coaches, teachers, sounding boards, and critics all rolled into one. Working with a mentor gives a mentee the opportunity to improve his or her understanding of practices, discuss problems, and analyze and learn from mistakes in an atmosphere that is collaborative, constructive, and confidential. The SGA Mentoring Program facilitates mentoring relationships that last twelve months.

If you are interested in participating in the mentoring program as a mentee, the registration form for mentees, along with the profiles of current SGA mentors, are available on the SGA website at <http://www.soga.org/involvement/mentoring>. Registration forms are accepted at any time on a rolling basis.

If you are interested in participating in the mentoring program as a mentor, applications for the Mentor Pool are available on the SGA website at <http://www.soga.org/involvement/mentoring>. Application forms are accepted at any time on a rolling basis.

If you have any questions about the program, please contact the Mentoring Program Coordinator.

## WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is defined as a Mentor, an experienced and trusted advisor, providing guidance and support to a developing professional and less experienced person, a Mentee, both of whom are working together in a mutually agreed-upon relationship.

Mentoring is all about learning, for both the Mentee and the Mentor.

A Mentor can:

- TEACH about a specific issue
- COACH on a particular skill
- FACILITATE growth by sharing resources and networks
- CHALLENGE a Mentee to move beyond their comfort zone
- CREATE a safe learning environment for taking risks
- FOCUS on a Mentee's total development

## BENEFITS OF MENTORING

**Mentor:**

- Contribute to the profession by helping to develop future leaders
- Receive satisfaction from contributing to someone's professional growth through the process of engaging in one-to-one learning
- Be exposed to new ideas from the perspective of someone doing everything for the first time
- Gain or strengthen skills and abilities applicable to your own work
- Gain leadership and communication skills
- Career rejuvenation; rekindle creativity, energy and satisfaction
- Organizational rewards and recognition

**Mentee:**

- Gain knowledge, skills and abilities from a more experienced person
- Receive support, guidance and constructive feedback
- Develop and increase confidence
- Meet and network with other professionals
- Have a sounding board for new ideas
- Enjoy a safe learning environment
- Diminishment of fear that comes from having to go it alone

## 12-MONTH MENTORING RELATIONSHIP TIMELINE

- Mentee registers for/requests a Mentor from the SGA Mentor Pool.
- Mentor and Mentee receive the other's resume and expectations and are given the opportunity to waive the pairing.
- The Mentoring Guidebook is distributed to participants.
- Once both parties accept a pairing, the Mentoring Agreement is signed and returned to the Mentoring Program Coordinator, after which the Coordinator provides full contact information to the Mentee and Mentor and they are encouraged to contact each other and initiate the relationship.
- Mentee and Mentor make first contact, within two weeks of receiving full contact information, and establish schedule for their interactions, at least two hours of interaction each month is suggested.
- Mentoring Program Coordinator will check in on pairings quarterly (via email or phone) to gauge progress of relationship and address any issues.
- At conclusion of twelve-month relationship, Mentor and Mentee will be asked to complete a survey that will be used to evaluate the success of the Mentoring Program.
- Update your Mentoring Program liaison (and Mentee or Mentor) with any contact information changes.
- Contact your Mentoring Program Coordinator at any point during the relationship if you have concerns, issues or questions.

## **MENTOR TIPS & ADVICE:**

- Begin relationship by: sharing expectations; establishing type, frequency and length of meetings/interactions; build interactions into your schedule
- Be a good listener; share openly; give and receive feedback
- Mentoring is a collaborative and reciprocal relationship, defined by back and forth communication, and a give and take of information; both the Mentor and Mentee must actively communicate for a successful relationship
- Respect privacy and confidentiality; a mentoring relationship is built on mutual trust
- Discuss, listen and respond to issues about the relationship
- Do not neglect your relationship – contact your SGA Mentoring Program liaison with any problems, issues or questions during the relationship
- We teach best by sharing our own experiences, successes and failures; share specific stories that relate to the Mentee's situations
- Ask questions rather than give directions or solutions; exchange observations; provide constructive criticism; troubleshoot problems together
- If you can't help your Mentee on a specific issue, point them to other resources or connections
- Keep in mind that this program is a learning experience for all participants
- Mentoring is what you make of it!

## **MENTEE TIPS & ADVICE:**

- Begin relationship by: sharing expectations; establishing type, frequency and length of meetings/interactions; build interactions into your schedule
- Be a good listener; share openly; give and receive feedback
- Mentoring is a collaborative and reciprocal relationship, defined by back and forth communication, and a give and take of information; both the Mentor and Mentee must actively communicate for a successful relationship
- Respect privacy and confidentiality; a mentoring relationship is built on mutual trust
- Discuss, listen and respond to issues about the relationship
- Do not neglect your relationship – contact your SGA Mentoring Program liaison with any problems, issues or questions during the relationship
- Be proactive and assume responsibility for establishing and maintaining the relationship, and of your own learning
- Have an agenda for interactions with one or two items you want to discuss; be efficient in encounters with Mentor and respect their time
- Assess your needs and strengths and set goals to work on; assessment and goal-setting are on-going activities
- Verbalize and clarify your goals
- Reach out to your Mentor; be curious, interested and willing

## **SGA MENTORING PROGRAM**

- Seek advice and guidance; don't be afraid to ask questions
- Deal with specific issues; practice skills discussed; share successes and failures
- Provide positive feedback and thanks when the Mentor has helped you; at the end of the relationship write a note expressing appreciation for the Mentor's time and influence on your career
- Keep in mind that this program is a learning experience for all participants
- Mentoring is what you make of it!

## SUGGESTED MENTORING ACTIVITIES

- Discuss a recent article published in a professional journal (e.g., *Provenance*, *American Archivist*, *Journal of Archival Organization*, or some other relevant professional journal)
- Discuss a recent posting to the SGA or SAA listserv (or some other relevant professional listserv)
- Discuss a current project you are working on or a recent accession/discovery in your collection
- Follow an archives-related blog and discuss postings (e.g., [hangingtogether.org](http://hangingtogether.org), [archivesblogs.com](http://archivesblogs.com), etc.)
- Work on a project together with a tangible outcome (e.g., poster session, SGA newsletter article, etc.)
- Conduct a resume review - provide professional guidance about skill areas needing enhancement or other tips
- Inform about local professional development opportunities and attend a workshop together if possible
- If your primary method of communication is email, have at least one face-to-face meeting (either in person or online)

## SUGGESTED READING

Kochan, Frances K. and Susan B. Trimble, "From Mentoring to Co-Mentoring: Establishing Collaborative Relationships," *Theory into Practice*, Vol. 39, No. 1, New Visions of Mentoring (Winter, 2000), pp. 20-28.