

APB MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

FOREWORD

As your new director with the APB and chairman of the mentorship program I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the APB Mentorship Program! Education is important to our profession, but it is a life-long pursuit to become experts in the work we do. Once we leave the classroom we are left with very little training or insight into the practical or technical aspects to our chosen profession. This is where the APB Mentorship Program can help.

My professional training began as a teaching assistant while an undergraduate, completing my BSc in Wildlife Biology and a MSc in Zoology. I worked in various research labs with research assistantships. My greatest opportunity was working with Dr. Paul Anderson, a professor Emeritus in ecology. He sadly passed away last year, but Paul had been my mentor. Not only did he motivate me to become the herpetologist I wanted to be, I looked up to him and gained confidence through his words of encouragement.

The APB Mentorship Program is as much about having the opportunity to teach and pass on a wealth of practical and technical skill sets as it is an opportunity for leadership development. By becoming a mentor you are stepping into a leadership role. Leadership was never brought up in my science degrees nor had I received any training in this area. However, I had the fortunate experience of completing a second master's degree through an educational program in "Multi-disciplinary Leadership". I picked up from my biological background and transformed the focus of my thesis onto conservation leadership.

My MEd program taught me about large scale organizational reform through leadership. Leaders were traditionally and popularly viewed as people in position of power who use command and authority to organize others into action. However, leadership does not need to be hierarchical to be effective, because we all share a human ability to use our social intelligence and motivate others. Emotional intelligence is a prime motivator, which is why Paul had such a large impact on my life. Remember to use your emotional intelligence when mentoring others. A simple boost in confidence may be all that is needed as you share your wisdom gained through experience. Leaders bring about reform by motivating and learning from others, which is what mentoring is all about.

The APB mentorship program can be used for the better to reform our profession, the way it is viewed, understood, and valued by our members and by society more generally. We need leaders to deal with the pressing biological issues of our time. There is a global extinction of biodiversity and warming climates while on our watch. This threatens to ruin the ecosystems that we work in. So remember that our role as biologists provides a vital service to society, because the natural systems we work with provides all the goods and services needed to sustain the well-being of the communities we live in and the economics behind this. Use this mentoring opportunity to work with and learn from your fellow members to mutually develop our skills to become leaders in the practice of biological science. Carry the knowledge that your role in the APB Mentorship Program as either a mentor or protégé is invaluable to the future of our organization and society at large.

Sincerely,



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APB Chairman of the Mentorship Program

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INTRODUCTION

Mentoring plays a critical part in the development of a professional career. It provides an opportunity for someone with experience to pass on their direct knowledge to someone who has only received guidance through books or lecture based academia. For Plato it was Socrates and for Aristotle it was Plato. The term mentor was adopted from ancient Greece where the goddess Athena guides young Telemachus in Homer's Odyssey. A wise teacher or person of great experience guides the apprentice. The person who is being mentored may be referred to as a protégé, an apprentice, or a mentee. The mentoring relationship is an age-old and universal human practice.

Mentoring not only provides benefits to the mentee, but it can also enrich and improve leadership skills in the mentor. John Dewey, the great philosopher of education wrote on the essentials of experience for learning, communication enlarging our experience, and how the mentor is also affected through the relationship. Self-awareness, contemplation, and communication are among the most important competencies for effective leadership. Mentoring sharpens and develops these skills. The mentorship process is another step in the pursuit of knowledge that moves beyond schooling as it bridges the gap from the classroom into the professional workforce. Mentoring can build confidence in our young members and it can build strength in our profession as a whole.

This guidebook provides information on the APB Mentorship Program, but it also includes information resources and tools to assist mentors and mentees as they enter into the program. Members who complete the program shall receive an APB certificate of completion that is recognized with distinction by government, industry, and other potential employers. The APB is fully committed to this program and works at getting partners, sponsors and contributors to the APB Mentorship Grant Fund (APB MGF).

The program is divided into three semesters. Members are welcome to work at their own pace, but encouraged to work diligently. While the APB Mentoring Program has become more structured in terms of setting benchmarks for completion, we encourage independent thinking and have left the mentoring topics unstructured so that professionals can develop and tailor their own approach through consultation and feedback with their paired mentee. Suggestions, techniques, and general guidance are provided for both mentor and mentee. Improvements to this program could not have been achieved without the thoughtful feedback received from previous mentor/protégé progress reports.

VISION

The APB vision for the mentorship program is to become a provincial leader in providing a forum and resources that will ensure training and sharing of knowledge for up-and-coming professionals so that they can effectively address the important issues of our time with bearing on our natural resource heritage. Critical issues of our time that heavily bear on natural resources include climate change, new economic pressures, biodiversity loss and how these intersect with First Nations, industry, governmental policies, and the public at large. Professional skills, expertise, and leadership in resource management is critical for mitigation and adaptation to these complex issues.

The vision we have for our participants is to provide a forum that will instill confidence in protégés so that they can step into the professional workforce to meet these challenges while upholding the principles and standards of professional practice including the Code of Ethics, principles of stewardship, and professional conduct. A goal for this program is to learn through the process by adopting a Professional Learning

Community (PLC) approach. The PLC approach has been adopted widely in schools emphasizing an organized and collaborative approach for learning amongst peers (Mullen and Schunk, 2010).

The APB Mentoring Program is committed to the PLC approach. Adopting the PLC approach means that our professionals will work together and collaborate to learn and improve on the mentoring process. In support of the commitment to adopt the PLC approach, the APB Mentoring Program will host quarterly conference call meetings with mentors to share experiences, collaborate, and learn from other mentors. This guidebook and other elements to the mentoring program will be updated as we gather the data, learn through the process, and adapt our strategy to become one of the best mentoring programs that we can achieve.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Registration

Registration forms must be completed 4 weeks in advance of a semester to qualify. Registration forms are available online through the APB website (www.professionalbiology.com). All persons registered into the program will be shown on the APB Mentorship Program website. The website will be accessible for public viewing and will include a link to the program directory showing the status of registered members (e.g., mentor, protégé, active, semester enrolled, dates of entry/completion, on leave, or truant).

Pairing Mentor with Mentee

There are two options available.

- **Option 1 – Independent:** A mentor may know someone in their office with whom they work with. They may submit to be paired with this individual as a pairing.
- **Option 2 - Facilitated:** A member may contact the APB with an expressed interest to join the program. We will have you complete a small survey form to give us an idea of your respective areas of expertise or interest so that we can find a match that suits.

Scheduling

The BC APB Mentorship Program is divided into three semesters that must be completed to receive certification of completion. Semesters may be completed consecutively or with extended breaks in between. Semesters generally run from Sept-Dec, Jan-Apr, and May-Aug, but more flexible scheduling arrangements may be made by the mentor-mentee pair so long as the required hours (16 hrs / semester) are achieved. Approximately four hours are to be spent each month in the program; at least two must be spent in shared discussion with the mentor-protégé pair. A total of 48 hrs is required to complete the program in total. A final report must be submitted before a certificate is received. The protégé is welcome to request to be paired with a new mentor for each semester completed, but be aware that there may be a limited number of mentors available.

Document Sharing

The APB will assist the mentor-protégé pair in establishing an electronic sharing folder that will include a scheduler and file space for sharing documents, logs, and other applicable materials. The APB Mentorship Director shall have full access to this information and may review the logs and reach out to mentor-protégé pairs if the process appears stalled. The shared folder will include copies of the APB Mentorship Program Handbook, Logbook, contact information, and other resources that may be of value to the program. A

journal template is provided (Appendix 1) that will be used by mentors and protégés to maintain records and notes on meetings.

Confidentiality

Any documents shared between mentor and protégé shall not be shared externally unless given express permission to do so by the mentor and in agreement with the protégé. As a professional, the mentor will have an understanding of their ethics and rules concerning the disclosure of confidential information. It is paramount that the protégé maintains the lines of confidentiality and does not share any documents produced by the mentor without expressed consent.

The type of information that may be considered confidential will vary greatly between people and workplaces. It is highly recommended that the mentor seek permission from their respective authority to share the document. If the mentor wishes to share documents for training purposes that may be of a sensitive nature, then it is recommended that all references to clients be deleted.

The APB Mentorship Director shall act as an impartial third party. The mentorship director shall maintain strict confidentiality on all meetings and discussions unless there has been authorization (i.e. informed consent) by the mentor or protégé to disclose confidential issues to others.

Assessment and Evaluation for Final Certification

The APB Mentorship Program includes two avenues for assessment: 1) self-assessment, and 2) directed assessment. A self-assessment form will be provided at the last month of each semester. The APB Mentorship Director will review the self-assessment forms and logbooks. The assessment will evaluate the relative performance of both the mentor and protégé based on the level of reported satisfaction of the participants, the mentors input on the performance of the protégé, and for completeness of the logbooks. The protégé and mentor shall be contacted directly and separately by the APB mentorship director who will give a debriefing on your evaluation. Final certification shall be awarded to those who satisfactorily complete all semesters.

Alumni

The APB will host a Mentorship Program alumni directory. This directory will be available for public viewing on the APB website and will showcase all participants that are enrolled in the program and their status. The APB is committed to continuous development and improvement of the alumni program in association with the Mentorship Program as more members enroll and successfully complete the program, including honorable mentions for stellar performance. Mentors and protégés who complete the program will receive recognition and benefits according to their accomplishments that will be showcased across all APB social networks (e.g., LinkedIn, Twitter, and the annual conference).

EXPECTATIONS

A mentoring program is not about gaining job experience. The APB does not expect mentors to take protégés to the job site or to provide training. Mentoring programs are about sharing of experience. There are different pairing options in our program (see above) and we will do our best to match participants who have similar interests. However, you may not be matched with someone who has expertise in the area that a protégé wants to learn about or develop in. This should not matter in context of what this program is about.

The pathway to becoming a professional is not just about being an expert in a certain area, but it is about the way a person conducts their daily affairs, how they interact with people, how they think, and what techniques they employ to achieve success. Mentoring is about sharing these experiences and expressing how they might assist the protégé in their career. There are enough cross-disciplinary elements to maintain a mentor-protégé relationship without need for beings strictly matched according to expertise in a particular area. Furthermore, there is much to be gained through multi-disciplinary cross-over, which will likely be experienced or required in your career anyway.

Obligation of the Mentor

We cannot stress how important the mentor's role is in this program. If you (the Mentor) enter into this program, then you must remain 100% committed to completing at least one semester in this program. The APB expects all professionals to take this responsibility seriously as professional commitment to this program will ultimately determine its success or failure. The APB and protégé's are relying on your professionalism and commitment to see this through. In signing up to the Mentorship Program you are agreeing to complete the program.

Obligation of the Protégé

Mentors are in short supply. If you (the Protégé) enter into this program, then the APB expects that you will complete at least one semester before you decide to remain with the program to completion. Your commitment to the program will be recognized upon completion through certification and entry into our mentor alumnus directory.

Obligation of the APB

The APB is fully committed to managing the Mentorship Program and shall address all questions, comments, and concerns raised by enlisted members in a timely manner. The APB is also obligated to ensure that activity and progress is consistently updated through the program directory that will indicate if a member is remiss in their duties and commitments. The APB is also obliged to highlight the status of members who are achieving and completing the Mentorship Program.

MENTORING TECHNIQUES

The key to sustaining this program will be the sense of altruism from our mentors. Furthermore, mentors require a diverse set of leadership skills that they may have already picked up through their experience and training. However, leadership is not always part of our professional training and learning to be a leader is a lifelong process. There are many online resources that are readily available in leadership and it is strongly recommended that you invest in some time to learn about leadership or brush up on your skills.

Much of what has been historically learned about leadership was adopted from business practice and managers (Senge, 2010), but modern leadership theory has matured, adopted strategy, and is expanding its importance in a number of fields, including education (Mullen and Schunk, 2010), psychology (van Vugt and Ronay, 2013), and conservation biology (Manolis et al., 2009). The cited papers and guides from these different fields are resources suggested for you to review and improve on your technique. Five common mentoring techniques used in business (Aubrey and Cohen, 1995) are:

1. *Accompanying*: Committing to the learning process in a caring way with the learner.
2. *Sowing*: The utility of information shared by a mentor may not be understood or even acceptable to the mentee at first but will make sense and be valued when the situation requires it.

3. *Catalyzing*: A mentor can have a profound influence on the learner and may even provoke different ways of thinking or result in a fundamental re-ordering of their values.
4. *Showing*: The mentor can use examples from experience to demonstrate a skill or activity so that it can be understood.
5. *Harvesting*: The Latin root for *education* is to *educere*, or draw forth; as in *deduce*, *reduce*, or *induce*. The mentor can help to create awareness of what is being learned by having the mentee draw out (i.e., harvest) their own conclusions by asking the right questions: "What have you learned?", "How is it useful?". The following quote gives an apt description of the harvesting method:

Plato tells a famous story about Socrates leading an untutored slave to discover his own knowledge on the construction of a square. Socrates questions the slave at each step until the slave solves the puzzle. Socrates turns to Meno, "note that I am teaching him nothing, only asking." (Ford & Parsons, 2000, p. 3)

The first “accompanying” and final “harvesting” are likely the most important techniques in this list. The “accompanying” technique highlights the importance of the emotional dimension. Modern leadership emphasizes this in terms of having a good grasp and understanding of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2006; Manolis et al., 2009). Emotional intelligence is a valuable tool for building confidence in others and helps to draw out (i.e., “harvest”) leadership skills that are within the protégé. Emotional intelligence is needed to build empathy and to demonstrate trust, which will enable the learner to establish trust in return.

The “harvesting” technique is perfected through effective communication. Adopting language that encourages intelligent questioning will greatly assist the mentor-protégé relationship. Being well prepared, disciplined, having self-awareness, clarity, and listening abilities need to be mastered for effective communication. The mentor needs to master the art of giving positive and constructive criticism that will be well received by the protégé. Some of these skills and traits may seem self-evident and readily apparent, but leadership schools regularly make use coaching as a means to improve on these qualities (Clutterbuck and Hirst, 2002).

“In mentoring, when things go wrong, they really can go very wrong” (Ford and Parsons, 2000, p. 9)

Mentoring may not always lead to positive outcomes, so it is important to be aware of the drawbacks. Some leaders are in a position of power for reasons that can lead to poor outcomes for those who follow them. For example, having confidence can lead success. While overconfidence can similarly lead to success, it also leads to faulty assessments, unrealistic expectations, hazardous decisions, expression of overly dominating behaviours, and egocentrism (Johnson and Fowler, 2011; van Vugt and Ronay, 2013). An egocentric mentor may seek to boost their confidence by seeking praise from their protégé, which can lead to a break-down in the mentor-protégé relationship. Mentoring can also lead to over reliance on the part of the protégé, which can lead away from independent critical thinking (Ford and Parsons, 2000). This is not the type of positive mentoring atmosphere we want within our program.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PROTÉGÉ

It is important that the protégé properly understand the dynamic in the relationship that is being fostered through this program. Each mentor is volunteering their time. They have joined this program with a desire to give back. They have gained experiences and learned the ropes. Upon reflection, the things that an

experienced hand has learned would have saved a lot of time and effort had they known this information when they started out. Understanding this as the basis of what motivates the mentor may help you in your relationship and protégé experience. As a professional your mentor is likely to have a very busy schedule, so a strong commitment from the protégé and mentor to complete their training is critical.

In leadership training one of the key messages in the key to success is that it is 90% about having a positive attitude. People who succeed are not necessarily the best at what they do, but they work with others in a way that creates a good working dynamic. Research into leadership identifies the ability for making a personal connection with others as one of the key enablers of success. The protégé should strive to get to know their mentor on a personal level rather than as a step in a career ladder. Other guidelines we suggest include the following:

- Be willing to explore new ideas for growth and development.
- Accept constructive criticism in a positive way.
- Maintain virtues of integrity, kindness, and equity.
- Reflect on the process if you were the mentor, how would you do things differently or the same?
- Communicate openly.
- Exercise self-discipline, attendance, and preparation for each meeting.
- Reach out to the APB Mentorship Director if you have any question, concerns, or would just like to talk about the process.

RULES AND OBLIGATIONS

The following rules and obligations come into effect after the liability release form is signed and you have agreed with your mentor/protégé matching:

- The mentor and protégé must complete one semester together.
- Respectful dialogue is a must.
- Documentation within the log book must be maintained and kept up-to-date by both the mentor and protégé. The Chairman of the Mentorship Program may request at any time to review the log books in audit of the progress. The log books are to be submitted at the end of the program as a record of completion.
- The Chairman of the Mentorship Program must be informed of issues that cannot be resolved. The APB Chairman of the Mentorship Program may work to mediate any disputes if necessary. Conflict is a natural part of professional work; resolution can be seen as a productive learning outcome in the process. However, abusive behaviour or an argumentative style of communication will not be tolerated. A process of review and investigation may be launched in worst cases and termination from the program may result.
- Learn, lead, and uphold the core principles of the APB.

A liability release form will be sent to all members entering into the program that must be completed by the mentor and protégé before the pairing is officially enrolled into the program.

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