



MSU CVM Mentorship Program

September 2026 – May 2027



MSU CVM Alumni Council was founded with the intention to engage CVM Alumni with the college. An important priority for the council is establishing mentoring relationships with the next generation of veterinarians. Mentorship provides numerous benefits that contribute to personal and professional development. Within the veterinary profession, it is considered crucial to have multiple and varied voices provide insight during transitional stages of one's career. Mentors will act as sounding boards for ideas, trustees for career decisions, and examples of what to do and not to do through careers successes and failures.

The Alumni Council mentorship program aims to connect current veterinary students with MSU CVM alumni to begin fostering professional relationships and provide support as students begin to navigate the veterinary profession. Each mentor-mentee interaction will differ based on intentions, questions, and aspirations of each student. These relationships will evolve over time, and hopefully, these relationships will continue as the students continue into their careers.

Program Eligibility

Mentors

All program mentors are MSU CVM alumni and, as alumni, are inherently members of the MSU CVM Alumni Council. Mentors should have a desire to contribute to the future of the veterinary profession and be willing to share their experiences and build relationships. Mentors should provide honest and timely feedback to their mentees.

Mentees

All program mentees are MSU CVM veterinary students. Mentees should take a proactive role within their mentoring relationship by communicating their goals and aspirations to their mentor. Mentees should be open and honest with their mentors about challenges or weaknesses they may have so that their mentor can provide them with support.



Program Details

This program will run for 1 year from approximately the beginning of the student's fall semester (approximately mid-September) until the end of the spring semester (early May). You will be contacted via email by the Alumni Council with the contact information of your mentor/mentee(s).

Students are normally very busy during the fall, so please allow 2 weeks from your initial contact before reaching out to the alumni council. If your student does not respond, please email the alumni council at msucvmalumnicouncil@gmail.com for further instructions.

Each meeting can be conducted via virtual call, in person, or over the phone. It's up to you as mentor/mentee to discuss which modality works best for you. Be sure to discuss this during your initial interactions via email.

- Keep in mind time limits associated with free web applications such as Zoom and Google Meet – most are an hour long.

At the end of the program, please complete the emailed MSU CVM Alumni Council Mentorship Program survey. Feedback is important to continue improving the program.

Program Expectations

- Genuine interest and commitment to the mentorship program
- Commit to connecting at least 3 times per semester (a total of six times for the year)
- Establish open and honest communication
- Respect and maintain confidentiality
- Maintain professionalism in all interactions



Meeting Topics: These are meeting topic ideas. Please feel free to be flexible to each mentee's interests.

Meeting 1: Introductions

Getting to know someone “cold-turkey” can be challenging even for experienced mentors. Use these icebreaker questions to get to know your mentee, share about yourself, and develop goals for your mentoring relationship.

- A brief introduction about each other
- Ice Breaker Questions:
 - Where did you grow up?
 - What're your favorite hobbies?
 - Who in your life has had the greatest impact on your career?
 - Why did you choose Mississippi State's vet school?
 - What clubs/organizations/activities were you involved with during vet school?
 - What resources do you use to grow and develop professionally?
 - What are your current career goals?
- What is the mentee expecting from this program?
- What are you as a mentor expecting from the mentee?
- How many sessions would you like to conduct as well as the duration of each session?

Meeting 2: Sharing your career journey

Telling a mentor's personal story about their career gives mentees insight into what the industry was like when they started, how they overcame obstacles, and their little secrets behind success.

Mentors can share their career journey – topics may include:

- What made you choose the field you are in?
- How did you reach the position you currently hold?
- Describe a time when you felt like quitting and how you bounced back from that situation



- What things do you wish you had known before taking up a leadership role (if applicable)?
- The most important lesson you've learned from your mistakes
- How you handled a difficult boss or a difficult situation
- How you developed your communication skills
- Why did you decide to stay in/leave Mississippi?
- Do you own your own practice? Why or why not?

Meeting 3: Discuss mentee career goals and short/long term goals

It's crucial to discuss and understand why your mentee is involved in this mentoring relationship and what they expect to achieve from it.

Here are a few questions related to goals that a mentor can ask their mentee:

- What do you want to achieve within the next six months?
- How do you wish to achieve your goals?
- How do you measure your success?
- Where do you see yourself in the next five years?
- How are/did you manage your student debt?

Meeting 4: Early Career Discussion

Use this opportunity to discuss the first 5 years of practice with your student and the steps that need to be taken prior to graduating into the real world.

- Review the mentee's resume with them. How can they go from an "applying for vet school" resume to "applying to be a veterinarian" resume?
- What tips can you give the student when interviewing to be an associate veterinarian?
- Go through the highlights of your contract – are you working on salary, production, ProSal, etc.? Why?
- What do students need to know about being placed in a "managerial position" straight out of school?
- What other options are out there for new veterinarians beyond general practice? Has your student considered PhD programs, industry, academia, research, shelter medicine, etc.?



Meeting 5: Work-life balance and well-being

This discussion topic addresses the challenges related to achieving a healthy balance between professional responsibilities and personal well-being.

- How do you currently manage the balance between your work and personal life?
- Are there any areas in your work-life balance you would like to improve?
- What self-care practices or routines have you found effective in maintaining your well-being?
- How can you effectively manage stress and avoid burnout in a demanding work environment?
- What strategies did you adopt to establish boundaries and manage time effectively?

Meeting 6 (final meeting): Select a topic that is of interest to both the mentor/mentee

Example topics could include:

- Have you ever faced any conflicts when working with people who are older or younger than you? How did you handle them?
- How do you generally feel about change? Does it excite you or make you nervous?
- Looking ahead to the next 2-5 years, do you think you'll need to pick up any new skills? If so, what do you have in mind?
- How do you approach learning at work? Do you see it as a priority, or more of a nice-to-have?
- Do you have a career plan or set goals? Do you think they might change over time?
- Which resources do you use to keep up with new technology?
- When it comes to digital communication, what are some of your best go-to practices?