ILO Mentor Program 2019 ILO Summit

This document outlines the ILO Mentor Program, created at the 2019 ILO Summit at SDSU.

Background

To ensure newly hired ILOs are trained in core job functions, the ILO Mentor Program codifies key interactions between new ILO hires (Mentees), experienced ILOs (Mentors) and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to maximize ILO training and sharing of best-practices. This program results in effectively and efficiently trained ILOs.

ILO Mentor Program Elements

The key elements of this program include SMEs covering each of the core competencies (refer to core competency document), veteran ILOs serving as Mentors who have received and reviewed the Mentor Guidelines, new hire ILOs who will go through this program as Mentees, and a Mentor Series and a Documentation Process to certify completion of ILO training.

Mentor Program Process

The following process outlines the steps taken to create and manage the Mentor Program.

Background steps for program creation: Veteran ILOs volunteer to be SMEs based on the list of core competencies (education topics) provided from the ILO Summit. SMEs will present on the Mentor Calls as part of the new ILO training. At least one SME per topic is necessary. Veteran ILOs also volunteer to be Mentors, after which they review the Mentor Guidelines (included below) and update the ILO BioBook to reflect that they are Mentors.

New Hire Training Process: Once a new ILO is hired and onboarded, they will participate in the ILO Mentor Program by following the steps below.

Process:

1. The Cognizant ERC Program Manager (currently Deborah Jackson) will identify a mentor for new Center ILOs and notify the Mentor; if they agree / are available then will notify the new ILO; This is “Mentor Pairing”.

2. The ERC Program Manager initiates a meeting between the new ILO and the ILO Consultancy Contractor.
3. The Mentor connects with Mentee and determines the schedule for conference calls/meetings, including the Mentor calls. The Mentee should plan on attending and completing all ILO Mentor Calls within six (6) months.
4. At the determined cadence, the Mentor, Mentee, and SME will connect (phone call, webex, in-person, etc.) to have a Mentor Call, during which one educational topic related to the core competencies will be discussed. After the Mentor Call, the Mentor will document the date, format/venue, and topic covered. They may also have one-off calls with their Mentee (without the SME present) as desired. If multiple Mentees are going through the program together, every effort should be made to schedule the calls such that all Mentees can be on with the SME simultaneously. If recorded videos are available, the Mentee can substitute attending the Mentor Calls with viewing the video followed by a Q&A discussion with their Mentor or an SME as appropriate.
5. If an ILO Summit occurs within the six-month training window, the Mentee may be asked to give an update on their training progress and any feedback on the program during the Summit.
6. Upon completion of all the Mentor Calls, the Mentor will certify that the Mentee has completed their ILO training via correspondence to the NSF ERC Program Manager and the Mentee's Center Director. After certification, the Mentee completes the attached Biobook template, which upon addition to the Biobook qualifies them as an SME resource person.
7. As the Mentees' Centers move through the ERC lifecycle, ILOs may ask for additional SME instruction around Center maturity. For example, a Center moving from the "recruit" to "retain" phase may want to discuss with ILOs who have gone through this transition period. Individual calls may be set up, or an ILO Working Group call may be worthwhile as multiple ILOs may interested in that topic.

ILO Mentor Program Best Practices

- Matching the Mentee and Mentor based on background, center type, etc. helps facilitate the Mentoring relationship
- The cadence and meeting format (phone call, in person meetings, etc.) should be left up to the Mentor and Mentee
- Clustering multiple Mentees on the Mentor Calls with SMEs maximizes the SME's time and fosters discussion amongst ILOs and enhances learning.
- Other ILOs are welcome to join the Mentor Calls

- The Mentor Calls should cover the span of Core Competencies yet be completed in a timely fashion (target 6 months from start)
- Mentor/Mentee discussions should remain confidential to ensure trust is developed and encourage the Mentee to ask questions openly and without reservation
- Upcoming Mentor Calls (w/ the SME for that specific topic) should be announced to the group so other ILOs may join to listen and/or participate if they desire. But it should be clear the purpose of the Mentor Calls is for the SME to share the topic material with the Mentee.
- The Mentor Calls do not have to be a set time. Some may be 20minutes, some may be 2 hours; the SME and Mentor will set the duration and how material is presented (slides, discussion, etc.).

Topics Covered in the Mentor Calls

The topics to be covered during the Mentor Calls are based on the Core Competencies identified. A sample is shown here:

- Annual Site Visit and Report 101
    - Site visit questions
    - Land mines
    - Member recruiting
- IAB Management
    - Industry member coaching (SWOT, etc.)
    - Meeting planning, structure, protocols
- IP/Tech Transfer
- Entrepreneurship
- Administrative Mgmt
- Leveraging Campus Partners
- Stakeholder Management
- Sustainability Planning
- Student Engagement
    - Student/industry interaction
- Membership Benefits & Value; Membership Targeting and Plan
- Innovation Ecosystem
    - Defining it
    - Strategic management
- NSF Nomenclature

Mentor Guidelines

The following are guidelines for ILO Mentors:

- In the initial Mentor/Mentee meeting, plan to set the cadence for the upcoming Mentor calls with SMEs, and the communication format (Zoom meetings, phone calls, in person, etc.). Also establish how you can reach your mentees by email, texting, phone, or face to face meetings. Experience proves that emailing or phoning your mentees is usually the best way to make contact. Establish a contact schedule that you will be able commit to. This will build your mentees trust in you, especially by showing them that you're trustworthy and dependable.

- Confidentiality is important in order for new ILOs to feel they can open up and share their limitations and where they need help. Though you'll report to NSF the completion of all the required Mentor Calls, the conversations you have will be just between you and the Mentee. Present information clearly and give all points of view a fair hearing. Listen carefully and offer possible solutions without passing judgment. Do not criticize or preach. Instead, think of ways to problem solve together without telling them what to do. Never say "should have" or "I told you so" to your mentees.

- Always respect the uniqueness and honor the integrity of your mentees and influence them through constructive feedback. The mentor empowers the mentees to make the right decisions without actually deciding for the mentee. Identify your mentees' interests and take them seriously. Be alert for opportunities and mentoring moments. Always help your mentees explore both positive and negative consequences.

- Help your mentees set realistic expectations and goals and make achievement fun for them. Remember there is a difference between encouraging and demanding. Your main goal is to encourage and help your mentees through their training / onboarding program. Encourage them to believe in themselves and to know that it's possible for them to achieve their goals. After all, you're a perfect example that it is possible, which is inspirational to your mentee.