

IOP/IOGS Mentorship Program



About us:

The IOP/IOGS Mentorship Program is an initiative by the IOP Caucus. This mentorship program will have upper year graduate students in IOP/IOGS act as mentors for students that are in earlier years of the program.

Our goal:

The overarching goals of the IOP/IOGS Mentorship Program are to promote connections among students in IOP and IOGS, and to provide support for students during the earlier years of their graduate degree.

Objectives:

- To connect IOP/IOGS graduate students with others in their program
- To increase support for new students and provide a sense of community
- To direct students to mental-health and well-being resources
- To allow more senior students to take on leadership roles during their degree and help the next generation of graduate students
- To make information regarding the structure and requirements of the IOP/IOGS programs easily accessible
- To promote exchange of knowledge

Program structure:

1. The IOP/IOGS mentorship program will match mentors to mentees every year in the month of September. Only students that have completed at least two years in their degree program will be eligible to serve as mentors. Students from any year of the program can be a mentee.
2. Students that are interested in participating in this program will fill out a form. This form will consist of questions that assess the interests of mentors and mentees, both research related and non-research related. This information will serve as the basis for matching.
3. The IOP Caucus will primarily match mentees to mentors based on following criteria:
 - i. Research area
 - ii. Nature of research (*in-vitro*, animal models, bioinformatics, etc.)
 - iii. Interests outside of work

- iv. International/Domestic Student Status
 - v. Career aspirations (optional)
4. Each mentor may be paired with up to 4 mentees. Mentors that have concerns with the number of mentees that they are assigned may discuss their concerns with the program coordinators.
 5. Mentors and mentees will have the option of either a one-on-one meeting or a group meeting, depending on their preferred structure. Mentors should also ensure they check-in with their mentee(s) regularly. Recommendations for such meetings are as follows:
 - i. **One-on-One Meeting.** Mentors should meet with each mentee **once at minimum**, every **4-8 weeks** to check on how the mentees are doing and discuss any concerns that the mentees might have. The meeting structure can be in any format agreed upon by the mentor(s) and mentee.
 - OR**
 - ii. **Group Meeting.** If a mentor (or mentors) has/have multiple mentees, and mentees are comfortable, we encourage them to meet as a group **once at minimum**, every **4-8 weeks**. The meeting structure can be in any format agreed upon by the mentors and mentees.
 - iii. **Check-ins.** Mentors should check-in with their mentee(s) **once per month**, through the agreed messaging platform.
 - iv. One-on-one and group meetings should be logged by the mentors in an excel file provided by the coordinators. Information logged may include: **i)** when the meeting took place, **ii)** how long the meeting was, **iii)** with whom the meeting was with, **iv)** the type of meeting (formal or social), and **v)** and notes, if any. In the event that there wasn't a meeting, the mentor(s) should log why it did not occur.
 6. We encourage mentors to bring relevant events or activities (eg. conferences, or building-wide events, volunteer opportunities) to the attention of their mentees based on their interests.
 7. If mentees/mentors have any concerns regarding their match, they may contact the IOP/IOGS Mentorship Program coordinators for a re-match.
 8. Mentees can switch to the mentor role after the completion of 2 years in their graduate degree.

Mentor expectations:

Following are the expected time commitments from mentors:

1. Approximately 1 hour per month at minimum.
2. We expect that the mentors commit for a full academic year. In the event that a mentor is unable to do so, we recommend that they notify the coordinators through email at least **two months** in advance, so we can accommodate their mentee(s).

Following are the roles and responsibilities of the mentors:

1. Help mentees to navigate through their graduate degree; therefore, mentors should be knowledgeable on program-related resources and wellness resources available for graduate students.
2. Organize monthly meetings with each mentee and discuss preferred structure of meetings with mentees.
3. Log meetings regularly in an excel sheet provided by the IOP/iOGS Mentorship Program.
4. Discuss preferred communication mode for mentees to approach you outside of scheduled meetings in case they have any quick questions or concerns.
5. Direct their mentees to relevant resources. Mentors **are not** expected to resolve all concerns or issues that are expressed by the mentees.
 - a. Mentors can refer mentees to the following resource:
<https://www.iop.ca/well-being>
 - b. The IOP caucus will be available for further support in the event that mentors/mentees require further assistance and will assist with directing concerns to the appropriate people, if needed. Contact information will be below.

Recognition for Commitment to the Program:

At the end of the academic year, the IOP Caucus will host a social event for all of the mentors and mentees along with some fun activities. At this event, the mentors will be presented with a certificate of recognition to honor their time commitment in the program, given they have met the required time commitment outlined above.

Mentee Expectations:

1. Mentees are expected to attend the scheduled meetings with their mentor. In case of any unexpected changes in their schedule, mentees should aim to notify the mentor at least one day prior to the scheduled meeting.

2. Mentees may approach mentors outside of scheduled meetings. Preferred communication mode and frequency will be discussed with the mentor at the beginning of the academic year.
3. Mentees are expected to understand the following:
 - a. The role of mentor is to provide advice and *guide* the mentee through their graduate degree.
 - b. It is not in the capacity of the mentors to resolve their mentee's problems.
 - c. For wellness-related issues, mentors will guide mentees with the help of the wellness resources that are available on the IOP website (<https://www.iop.ca/well-being>). Mentors are not licensed counsellors and are not able to give professional advice and resolve issues pertaining to mental health and wellness. Mentees should seek outside help from a professional, if necessary.
4. In the event that a mentee no longer requires mentorship, they are expected to notify the coordinators.

Contact Information:

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns! We will address all questions and concerns anonymously and confidentially.

Coordinators:

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IOP Caucus:

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