

Form Name: Student NAMA Chapter Career Development  
Submission Time: February 20, 2020 7:27 pm  
Browser: Chrome 80.0.3987.100 / Windows  
IP Address: 129.186.252.45  
Unique ID: 583593814  
Location: 42.035999298096, -93.465202331543

**College/University (DO NOT abbreviate. Spell it out so credit is given to the correct chapter.)** Iowa State University

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**Explain the changes your chapter wanted to make to enhance career development opportunities. (25 points)**

As a team, we decided to make changes to our mentorship program to enhance career development opportunities. In the 2017-2018 school year, the mentorship program began between the Iowa State University NAMA student chapter and the Iowa NAMA professional chapter. The following year, participation in the program increased, but the feedback received wasn't as positive as we would have liked it to be. In the 2019-2020 academic year, our primary goal was to strengthen the mentorship program by increasing involvement and relationships for the mentors and mentees. The state correspondent and Iowa Chapter liaison were striving to hold both groups more accountable in the partnership. This included more reminder emails, monthly accountability checks, and prompts for discussion topics. The mentorship kick-off social was also a new plan to strengthen relationships in the program. This event would allow mentees to meet their mentors before the year started and network with others in the program.

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**Outline the plan you developed to improve opportunities and how it would be measured against previous years. (25 points)**

The plan to strengthen our mentorship program began with the state correspondent and advisor reviewing the mentorship program and student evaluations from the previous year. In September of 2019, the officer team met with the Iowa NAMA chapter liaison to discuss the program feedback and develop a new and improved mentorship program plan for 2019-2020. To do this, we created a new social event for the mentors and mentees. We also agreed to send out regular reminder emails to the pair and perform accountability checks every month during student chapter meetings. To measure the increase of involvement, the officer team reviewed event attendance, connections made during the program, and feedback from current mentorship pairs against the previous year's feedback.

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**Outline the execution of the plan, including any challenges that arose during implementation and how they were solved. (25 points)**

The execution of the plan began with an application process for both mentors and mentees. We enhanced the application to gauge the mentees' interests and anticipated career areas within marketing, as well as the agriculture sector. This helped find the best match between a mentor and mentee. After the application process was complete, students were assigned mentors and provided a guide and resources for the mentorship program. In October 2019, the kick-off social took place at the Cabaret, a restaurant located equally between Ames and Des Moines. Students and mentors were able to meet in person as well as network with other mentees and mentors. Throughout the first semester, we have continued to hold each pairing accountable to accomplish their goals set for the program. This year's program will end in April with surveys and evaluations being conducted for both parties. There will also be a social event in April to conclude the program.

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**Provide measurable results. (25 points)**

During the 2019 - 2020 academic year, the Iowa State NAMA chapter mentorship program had eight mentorship pairs between ISU students and Iowa NAMA Professional Chapter members. The number of pairs was down fifty percent from the 2018-2019 academic year. However, with the reduced size, the Iowa State Chapter state correspondent and Iowa NAMA Professional Chapter student chapter liaison wanted to improve the quality of relationships built through the mentorship program. At the 2019 mentorship program kick-off social, there were five students and four professionals in attendance. This event allowed mentors and mentees to connect for the first time and meet others participating in the program. This is the same number of participants for the end of year social activity held last spring. The 2019 -2020 end of year social will be after the Agri-Marketing Conference in April; however, we anticipate a higher attendance rate due to these stronger connections.

Since October, when the program began for the 2019-2020 academic year, our mentorships pairs have reported almost 70 connections and average three connections per month. All pairs have met in-person at least once while continuing conversations via email, phone calls, virtual chats, and text. Three of the eight students have also been able to spend a day shadowing their mentor at work. Pairs have helped students navigate the following topics: career goals, resume review, career possibilities/options, the difference between agency and company marketing careers, college advice, and more.

One student's favorite part of the program has been "Gaining knowledge from my mentor about her college and career experience, while also gaining a "go-to person" for questions about the industry and career options."

A first-year Iowa NAMA student chapter member and mentee stated that her most significant takeaway from the program has been "Learning there are many different career opportunities and different areas "marketing" can cover."

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