

How to approach your mentor: Setting up an initial meeting

Please keep in mind, the mentor does not necessarily have to work with you. They are serving as mentors on a voluntary basis—and all of them have incredibly busy schedules. The mentors will want to meet you before committing their time and energy to the Senior Sequence journey. Please make sure that all your interaction with mentors is professional, on task, and coordinated through your team leader. You are representing our USP program when you interact with a mentor. These relationships are important. We want our mentors to be willing to serve again next year and beyond. Your opening contact with your mentor is crucial to win over their willingness to serve. This note spells out how to go about establishing initial contact.

Steps to follow in establishing contact with your mentor(s)

1. Once you have a team organized, and you have collectively elected a “team leader,” begin by sending your mentor an e-mail (you can get this using the class website, enter “mentor” into the search panel on the Grand Challenges Database). The email should be sent by the team leader in the name of all the students on your team. This streamlines communication with the mentor—very important from a logistical standpoint.
2. In your introductory email, refresh the mentor's memory about their prospective role. Let them know that you and your team would like to connect with them. Make your first email short and to the point. Say you will follow it up with a phone call –and ask for a good time to reach them by phone.
3. On the follow up phone call:
 - Inform the mentor that you’d like to set up the first student-mentor team meeting with them. Let the mentor know that you all are seeking their mentorship –the gift of which you do not take for granted. You have to earn their commitment by proving yourselves willing and able to be a good researcher.
 - Suggest a meeting time. You’ll have to work this out amongst yourselves together with the mentor. We know scheduling a group meeting can be really difficult; so, if need be, you can use section time, or class time when all of you should have the time already blocked out on your calendars. Approach the mentor with a list of meeting time options you all agree upon in advance.
4. Follow up your first student-mentor team meeting with an email expressing your appreciation for the mentor’s time and guidance. Include as an attachment a short report (1 page) that highlights what you discussed during the meeting and what you established as the next steps. Include this info in your post-meeting report to the mentor:
 - Name of your research team, and list of all student members
 - Name of student leader
 - Meeting minutes (including highlights and forward-looking next steps)
 - Links to web site for their review:
 - Mentor Guide: <http://www.seniorsequence.net/index.php/projects/mentors/>
 - Your Research Team web page
 - Each team members individual protfolio page