



THE
William Averette
Anderson **FUND**

Expanding inclusive hazard disaster planning for communities of color

Mentee Guide

Table of Contents

BAF Background.....	2
BAF Mentoring Program.....	2
Defining Mentoring.....	3
Being an Effective Mentee.....	4
Key Considerations for Prospective Mentees.....	5
Next Steps.....	8
<i>The Matching Process</i>	8
<i>Pre-Initial Meeting Checklist</i>	9
<i>Post-Initial Meeting Checklist</i>	9
<i>The Mentoring Relationship after Formal Match</i>	9

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BAF Background

William Averette Anderson, better known as Bill, was an accomplished disaster researcher and scholar. Bill served as a mentor and role model to countless new researchers and practitioners in the field. Over the course of his career, he grew increasingly concerned about both the need to involve individuals from underrepresented groups, particularly African Americans, in hazards, disaster, and emergency management research and practice as well as the future of disaster scholarship. The William Averette Anderson Fund, fondly known as the Bill Anderson Fund (BAF), was established to address his dual concerns.

The mission of the BAF is to support members of its Student Council, who are individuals from under-represented groups pursuing a graduate degree related to hazards, disasters, emergency management or related fields, to graduation and beyond to placement in an academic or other professional position. Two programs are offered by BAF to meet this mission: 1) workshops to support students' academic and professional development and 2) a mentoring program. These programs provide support to Student Council members related to:

- Progressing through coursework and meeting graduate program benchmarks (e.g., comprehensive exams, thesis/dissertation);
- Navigating the world of manuscript development, peer review, and publishing;
- Securing funding for research projects and to attend academic/professional conferences
- Negotiating academic and professional relationships (e.g., dealing with conflict, creating and sustaining partnerships, fostering collaboration, etc.);
- Exploring the variety of settings in which one can work in this field using a hazards, disasters, or emergency management-focused degree;
- Maximizing opportunities in graduate school to prepare for post-graduation life (e.g., identifying training and internship opportunities, planning for a job search);
- Leveraging personal and/or professional networks to introduce and teach the mentee about working in the field, finding work upon completion of their program, and more; and,
- Assisting the mentee in developing an academic and professional network to provide support throughout their career.

BAF Mentoring Program

The mentoring program formally matches BAF Student Council members one-to-one with an academic or other professional mentor working in field of hazards, disasters, and/or emergency management. The pairing is based on the students' self-identified needs. These needs are related to academic progress, scholarly development, professional development, and/or job placement, the capacity and interest of a mentor to support the student in addressing those needs, and both parties indication that they would like to be formally matched with one another.

Initial matches are made on a monthly basis by a small committee of Student Council members and academics and practitioners working in the field. The committee assesses the self-identified needs of students (evidenced by student responses to prompts in a mentee application to the mentoring program) against the capacity and interest of individuals in a pool of potential mentors (capacity and interest are also evidenced by prospective mentor responses to prompts in an application).

A student and prospective mentor are initially matched by the committee, asked to meet with one another to explore whether there exists a goodness-of-fit, and, each party is asked to subsequently indicate whether they would like to be formally matched. The process of matching is repeated for those pairs where either party indicates no goodness-of-fit. When formal matches are made, mentoring relationships fostered through the BAF mentoring program are expected to last a minimum of one year and involve at least one hour of contact each month.

It is assumed that a single mentor may not be able to fully meet all of a student's self-identified needs at the time of the match or as the student's needs evolve as they pursue their degrees and placement post-graduation. Therefore, the mentoring program provides a secondary form of support to the students associated with it by providing mentors access to a virtual Network of practitioners and scholars. Mentors may turn to the virtual Network to seek specialized support for the student with whom they are working as they discover a need they cannot meet alone (e.g., advice, connections for their mentee, resources for their mentee).

The practitioner and scholar Network members each (1) have significant academic or professional experience in hazards, disasters, and/or emergency management; (2) are committed to supporting the involvement of individuals from underrepresented groups, especially racial and ethnic minorities, in hazards, disasters, and emergency management research and practice; and (3) are willing to use their knowledge, skills, abilities, and connections to support the mission of the BAF. The Network is strong because many individuals within it desire to and are ready to mentor a student when matched. The Network is also strong because the collective of individuals represent an incredible source of support to students. Interested individuals can get involved with the mentoring program as network members or potential mentors at any time.

Student Council members interested in being matched with a mentor after they have reviewed this guide and short videos (Found at: <http://billandersonfund.org/programs/>) about what is involved in being a mentee must complete a mentee application (found at: <http://goo.gl/forms/XW64U6AmFi>). Students who are interested in being matched to a mentor after completion of these tasks will be contacted once a prospective match has been identified.

This guide is intended to be reviewed by BAF Student Council members who are considering involvement in the mentoring program as mentees. It is organized into four sections. The first section defines mentoring; the second section discusses the characteristics of effective mentees; the third section suggests key issues that ought to be considered by mentees in advance of, and throughout, a mentoring relationship; and, the fourth section discusses what comes next in the process if you are interested in becoming a mentee in the BAF's mentoring program.

Defining Mentoring

A mentor is someone who takes an interest in and engages in a relationship with another (or others) with the purpose of leveraging their personal skills, knowledge, and experience to support the academic, professional, and/or personal success of the other(s). The relationship between a mentor and mentee is not one way. While mentors may provide knowledge and guidance to their mentees, the relationship is best when it is both interpersonal and professional. It is best when the mentor-mentee relationship is based on mutual respect and understanding. Benefits are also gained when mentors are open to and learn from the skills, knowledge, and experiences of those they mentor.

Mentee relationships with mentors are qualitatively different from the relationships they might enjoy with others who provide support such as academic advisors in their degree programs or supervisors at their place of work. While the roles of academic advisors and supervisors vary from person-to-person and organizational setting-to-organizational setting. Advisors can generally be understood to be those who provide students advice related to completing a degree program. Issues such as curriculum requirements, course schedules, timing and other requirements related to program benchmarks, registering for courses, navigating the academic organization where the student is seeking the degree, and directing thesis and dissertation work are commonly addressed by advisors. According to BusinessDictionary.com, supervisors can be generally understood to be, “Person[s] in the first-line management who monitors and regulates employees in their performance of assigned or delegated tasks. Supervisors are usually authorized to recommend and/or affect hiring, disciplining, promoting, punishing, rewarding, and other associated activities regarding the employees in their departments.”

Being an Effective Mentee

The opportunity to be part of a meaningful mentor-mentee relationship is a unique one. Certain assumed and classic benefits include: coaching, idea growth, perspective and connections gained. Beyond these, however, much of the success and impact of the mentor-mentee relationship depends on the mentee.

Effective mentees are communicative.

Mentees should be forthcoming and honest with their mentors. It is important to communicate your goals with your mentor so that she/he can work with you to reach them. Open communication will be particularly important in cases where the mentor and mentee differ in their racial, ethnic, cultural, etc. background. Mentorship comes in many forms, and backgrounds do not need to be similar to be successful. In fact, research suggests that mentoring relationships where the mentor represents the majority and the mentee represents the minority often result in as much, if not more, professional benefits than minority to minority mentoring relationships. The most effective mentees will understand that they stand to gain, regardless of their mentor’s background, and should be prepared to share their perspectives and vantage points with their mentor so that their mentor might tailor their mentoring style and content the mentee. This communication will be critical to success of the relationship.

Effective mentees are eager to learn and self-motivated.

Mentees who experience highly successful relationships in mentor programs enter those relationships with a certain eagerness to learn and a curiosity about experiences. Effective mentees are also open to learning what a mentor believes is critical for their success not just what the mentee may have initially wanted to focus on learning. Mentees should be self-motivated. Yes, your mentor may be busy, but she/he has volunteered to work with you. Don’t be shy, keep in touch and engaged with your mentor!

Effective mentees are open to growth.

Mentees should be open to establishing and maintaining new professional relationships and networks. Mentors can help you meet potential collaborators, funders, or employers, an effective mentee will nurture these relationships and remember that their actions will reflect on their mentor.

Effective mentees are discrete.

Mentees should honor confidentiality. You might share information with your mentor that you do not want others to know. Similarly, mentors may share information with you that they expect will be kept confidential.

Effective mentees rely on clear goals and expectations.

The most effective mentees have a direct conversation with their mentors about their respective goals and expectations related to the relationship from the outset of their relationship. When this is not done, frustration, confusion, and a negative experience can result for the mentee and/or mentor. Effective mentees identify their own goals related to graduation and placement post-graduation and develop a professional development plan. Mentees can use such a plan to conduct a realistic self-assessment of their performance and skills *vis-a-vis* their goals, identify specific steps to improve their performance and skills, and what is needed otherwise to achieve their goals. The plan developed by the mentee ought to have personal value outside of the mentoring relationship, but, within the relationship, it can be useful for framing goals and expectations for the mentoring relationship, mentoring meeting agendas, and as a means for evaluating the mentoring relationship.

Effective mentees are aware of the limits of a mentor relationship.

It is important that prospective mentees keep in mind that mentors are not, and cannot be, all things. Mentors may fulfill the role of teacher, role model, cheerleader, leader, advisor, agent, networker, sponsor, friend, counselor, confidant, and/or mentee, to name a few. Yet, mentors will likely not be capable of fulfilling all of these roles. Additionally, some mentors will be better able to support a mentees psychological needs (e.g., develop sense of identity, be a good listener, and build confidence), while others will be better able to support a mentees professional needs (e.g., link you into a network, advise you on publishing, suggest where you might find grant support for your research). It is normal for mentors not to be all things, but it is also important that your final, formal mentor be able to fulfill the role(s) you most need.

Key Considerations for Prospective Mentees

Actualizing potential through the mentoring relationship.

Prospective mentees bring any number of strengths with them to mentoring relationships by virtue of their knowledge, skills, abilities, and life, as well as, academic, and/or professional experience. And, just like any other person, there are likely to be areas in the academic and/or professional realm where they could use support to develop further. Faculty from the department in which they are seeking their degree, their academic advisor, their thesis/dissertation chair, or others may provide some forms of support, but, still, there may be gaps that a prospective mentee believes are not filled by these individuals.

Some of the potential areas in which mentees may desire support from a BAF mentor are suggested in Table 1 on page 6. There may be some similarities in the areas in which BAF mentees seek support by virtue of their mutual desire to graduate from their programs and find employment afterward. Yet, it is likely that prospective mentees will also have unique areas in which they seek support. It is important for prospective mentees to reflect on their existing strengths as well as areas where they would like to develop strength with the support of a mentor prior to applying to participate in the BAF mentor program so that the responses to the prompts in the application can be used to initially match the mentee to a mentor.

Questions to Consider:

- What are my areas of greatest strength?
- In which areas might I want to build strength with the support of a mentor?

Table 1. Areas where a mentee may desire support.

Potential Academic Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing manuscripts • Feedback on evolving ideas and/or written work related to hazards, disasters, and/or emergency management topics • Choosing where to publish research • Negotiating the peer review process • Finding literature related to interests in hazards, disasters, and/or emergency management • Finding financial support for research including grant writing • Finding financial support for conference attendance • Negotiating academic relationships (e.g., dealing with conflict, creating and sustaining partnerships, fostering collaboration, etc.) • Learning about academic career options related to hazards, disasters, and/or emergency management • Developing a curriculum vitae
Potential Professional Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about career options related to hazards, disasters, and/or emergency management • Developing a professional identity • Developing a professional network • Negotiating professional relationships (e.g., dealing with conflict, creating and sustaining partnerships, fostering collaboration, etc.) • Conducting job searches • Developing resumes • Preparing for interviews • Learning about professional certifications related to career goals • Learning about professional associations related to career goals • Learning about training needs and opportunities related to career goals
Potential Other Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiating work-life balance • Managing time effectively

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- Managing projects effectively
 - Building confidence in personal abilities and skills
 - Accepting and using criticism
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Nature of the relationship.

Our personal, academic, and professional lives are intrinsically linked. As a consequence of this linkage, sometimes our personal life might get in the way of our academic work or vice-versa. Your mentor may be able to help you navigate these situations, however, it's important for you think about your boundaries and share them with your mentor. Your mentor may have a variety of resources and expertise, and can probably mentor you in multiple aspects of your academic and professional career. Yet, there may be some things that you would prefer not to address with your mentor. You should spend some time to identify these sensitive areas and be prepared to communicate your feelings with your mentor to establish appropriate boundaries. We expect that participants will have different comfort levels and willingness to share information about themselves.

Questions to Consider:

- What might I be comfortable discussing with my mentor?
- What things might I be uncomfortable discussing with a mentor?
- Are there aspects of my professional/academic life I would like to keep private?
- Are there aspects of my personal life I would be comfortable sharing?

Duration of the mentoring relationship.

BAF mentees commit to a mentoring relationship for a minimum of one year. We recognize that ideal mentoring relationships would last from the time of match until the mentee attains either an academic or professional position in the field of hazards, disasters, or emergency management (e.g., 2-5 years). The strongest mentoring relationships—like those that Bill fostered—often continue for long periods of time and are mutually beneficial. All relationships are different, however, and the strength and duration of each mentoring match will likely vary somewhat. We encourage both mentees and mentors weigh their current and future responsibilities to determine if they can fully commit to the program.

Questions to Consider:

- Given my professional/academic commitments, am I in a position to commit to a mentoring relationship for at least one year?
- What future commitments might prevent me from continuing in a mentoring relationship?

Frequency of contact.

The BAF seeks prospective mentees who will commit to contact with their mentor a minimum of one time per month and for a minimum one hour total of contact, but mentors and mentees may choose to meet more frequently depending on the availability of both parties and the needs of the mentee.

Questions to Consider:

- Can I commit to contact with a mentor a minimum of one time per month?
- Can I commit to contact with a mentor for a minimum of one hour per month?

Methods and priority of contact.

Although there may be some exceptions, it is anticipated that mentors and mentees will not live close to one another and that the relationship will be conducted long-distance. Thus, most mentors and mentees will stay in contact through email exchange, phone calls, Skype/FaceTime appointments, and meetings at conferences over the course of the mentoring relationship. The BAF seeks prospective mentors who will prioritize their mentoring relationship, ensure that sufficient and regular time is dedicated to the relationship overall (i.e., one hour per month minimum), and demonstrate responsiveness to each individual contact, but mentees need to behave similarly for mentoring relationships to be successful.

Questions to Consider:

- What are my preferred methods of communication (e.g. text, email, phone, Skype/FaceTime/Google Hangout)?
- Am I willing to share my personal home or cellphone number? And, if so, under what conditions would I be comfortable with my mentor using those numbers?
- What are the times of day and days of the week that would work best for direct contact with my mentor?
- Am I able to commit to prioritizing response to my mentor all of the time? Are there certain periods where I will be unable to do so? Am I comfortable communicating this reality to my mentor?

Next Steps

After reviewing this guidebook, those interested in being a mentor in the BAF Mentoring Program should go on to view the BAF Mentoring Program Training for Mentees Series, and, once ready to commit to being a BAF mentor complete the **Mentee Application**.

The Matching Process

The BAF intends to make initial matches carefully based on the information collected through the application process and to make formal matches based on mentor and mentee assessments of goodness-of-fit.

An initial match may be made for you within the month after you submit your application. In that case, you will receive an email from a BAF mentoring program committee member with the name and contact information for a prospective match and the request that you reach out to one another to set up an initial meeting. The email from the committee member will also request that you hold your initial meeting within a month of receipt of the email and that both parties respond to the committee member indicating whether or not each believes that there is a goodness-of-fit between them.

Pre-Initial Meeting Checklist

After receiving the email suggesting your initial match,

- ✓ Reflect on key considerations identified in the previous pages. Write down your thoughts and review your notes before you initiate contact.
- ✓ Introduce yourself by phone or email. Provide your contact information and state your preferred communication mechanisms.
- ✓ Update your resume or curriculum vitae (CV) and send to your prospective mentor (plan to provide continued updates).
- ✓ Ask your mentor for his or her resume or CV. Identify key steps in his/her career path that seem valuable. Look for transitions that seem interesting from his/her career path to discuss.
- ✓ Suggest potential topics for the first meeting based on your notes from review of your potential mentor's CV and your thoughts related to the key considerations provided in this guide (e.g., expectations of one another, frequency of meetings, personal and professional goals, goals for the relationship, topics for future meetings).
- ✓ Use email to set up an agenda for your first meeting and to agree on confidentiality. Ensure that you reserve at least one hour for this initial meeting.

Post-Initial Meeting Checklist

- ✓ After meeting with your prospective mentor, be sure to email the BAF committee member who first informed you of your initial match and inform him/her as to whether you would like to be formally matched with the person with whom you met.
- ✓ Establish a written agreement with your mentor as to how frequently you will meet, set dates and times for the first three months, and establish via which communication mechanism(s) you will meet. Also within the agreement, identify both your goals and that of your mentor in the mentoring relationship and a series of goals for the mentoring relationship. This agreement will be a useful in structuring agendas for meetings and as a reference point for evaluating the progress and effectiveness of the mentoring relationship.

The Mentoring Relationship after Formal Match

Should there be a goodness-of-fit for both parties, the mentor and mentee will be left to build their own relationship with the expectation that they meet for at least one hour per month and with the expectation that mentors will reach out to the BAF mentor network as needed to seek additional support for their mentee. Three months into the relationship a BAF mentoring program committee member will contact each party with an email requesting that they respond to a series of prompts designed to assess the extent to which the mentoring relationship is meeting their satisfaction. Based on the feedback provided, the mentoring relationship will either continue unabated or cease. Should the relationship cease, the BAF will seek to make new matches for those interested. Should the relationship go on unabated, the BAF mentoring program committee will again check in asking for responses to the same prompts at the nine-month point and again every six months after the nine month point.