ACVP MENTORING PROGRAM

BACKGROUND: Positive mentoring is recognized as a key component of personal and professional development in the health care professions, including in the veterinary field. Finding an effective mentor thus represents an important step in the veterinary pathologist’s career. However, establishing and maintaining a productive mentoring relationship is challenging for veterinary pathologists for several reasons, including the fact that many work in relatively small divisions comprising only a few to no pathology colleagues.

A mentor provides support, a sounding board, knowledge, encouragement, guidance, and constructive feedback to the mentee by developing a relationship that encourages growth.

A mentee seeks guidance in career and professional development from an individual more experienced. Mentees are responsible for their career and professional development.

PROGRAM GOALS: The ACVP mentorship program aims: (1) to provide veterinary pathologist mentees with mentors from outside of their organizations; (2) to provide a basic framework of mentorship training to mentee and mentor participants; (3) to help ACVP members develop professionally.

This 12-month program will focus on developmental mentoring (ie, not training of any specific kind) to support veterinary pathologist mentees in their career development and professional pursuits.

Mentor Program

Participant Eligibility

All program participants must be ACVP members. This program intends to enroll 30 mentor/mentee pairs.

Mentors

Mentors will ideally have at least 5 years of experience in the specific area(s) of need. Mentors should have a desire to contribute to the future of the profession, and a willingness to share experiences and build relationships.
**Mentees**

Mentees may be recently boarded pathologists or boarded pathologists at any career stage that are looking for mentorship. Mentees can also be residents that are eligible for Phase 2 of the board exam. We know COVID delayed some individuals from taking boards last year. The career of a pathologist can involve many twists and turns, including changes in focus area. Accomplished individuals may look for mentorship to grow in additional areas.

**Program Requirements:**

- Meet at least seven times in the 12-month period (duration and schedule will be decided by mentor/mentee pairs);
- Have a genuine interest and commitment in the Mentoring Program;
- Be objective, honest and supportive;
- Act ethically and with respect towards all participants;
- Respect and maintain strict confidentiality;
- Contribute to discussion and attainment of goals raised in meetings; and
- Complete the Mentoring Program post-evaluation.

**Mentor/Mentee Pairing**

The program will attempt to link mentors and mentees with suitable interests and areas of expertise based on the enrollment questionnaire.

If either the mentor or mentee is uncomfortable with the pairing at any stage during the Mentoring Program, or decides the mentorship is not successful, the Early Mentorship Closure process explains the way to end the mentoring relationship.
Suggested Meeting Framework

Mentoring resources are provided on the ACVP website. We recommend mentor/mentee pairs watch this introductory video that provides a foundation for successful mentor/mentee relationships.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSpyKjyr7Gw&list=PL4ripzZbfisxIwvqaUf7RgO4pMNnqaKXs&index=4

Mentoring resources (those posted on ACVP and numerous other sources) provide continued development and are useful in navigating all aspects of the mentoring relationship.

Stage 1: Establish the Relationship

- Get to know each other
- Career/work history
- Identify goals

Stage 2: Develop/Support/Attain Goals

- Refine and clarify mentorship goals
- Develop trust and rapport over time
- Provide feedback

Stage 3: Summary and Conclusion of this Partnership

- Some mentor pairs may choose to stay in touch following completion of the program
- Completion of the post-program evaluation

Meeting Suggestions

Meeting 1: The first meeting sets the foundation for the development of the mentoring relationship. Although meeting a new person virtually for the first time can be intimidating, it is important that both parties share the same expectations of the program.

- The mentee is responsible for contacting the mentor to organize a time and preferred style of meeting.
- Possible meeting options include phone, Webex, Zoom, Facetime

At each meeting:

- Discuss mentee’s current objectives/needs
• Establish overall goals and a tentative framework of an approach to achieve these goals
• Discuss mentee’s progress/accomplishments since last meeting
• Outline what the mentor and mentee will do prior to the next meeting
• Set a date and time for the next meeting

**Early Mentorship Closure**

There may be situations when the mentor/mentee relationship ends prematurely. It should be noted that not all mentee and mentor relationships work out, whether it be interests, schedule or personalities and it is to be expected that some relationships will need early closure. The relationship can be ended with a “no fault” closure after informing the program coordinators. In all cases, participants will be encouraged to participate in future programs.

Early mentorship closure can be initiated by either party, and explaining the reasons for closure is not required. This “no fault” closure attributes no blame on either party. Either party can initiate closure directly, or can contact the program coordinators to facilitate this process. All conversations should be professional and respectful.