



2021-2022 FIFSW Alumni Mentoring Program Report

The Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work Alumni Mentoring Program (AMP) is an alumni-initiated service that connects graduating MSW students with alumni social work professionals for support, guidance, and networking as students prepare to transition into the social work field.

Program Highlights

The Alumni Mentoring Program began in March 2022 and lasted until May 2022 in a condensed format. The Alumni Mentoring Program matched 59 MSW students with a pool of 77 alumni mentors. Student participation fees were waived again this year to alleviate the financial hardship experienced by students throughout the pandemic. This year, BIPOC-identifying students and 2SLGBTQIA+/gender-diverse students had the option to be matched with a mentor of the same ethnoracial background and gender identity. The AMP coordinator, Mikayla Kendrick, completed monthly check-ins with students and mentors throughout the program and shared job posts with students. Several program features, such as the *Lunch with a Recent Grad*, *Networking Event*, and *workshops (resume preparation and interviewing skills)*, were not hosted due to several factors, including staffing transitions and time constraints.

Evaluation

Student mentees and alumni mentors participated in a program evaluation - 16 mentor respondents (20% response rate) and five student respondents (8% response rate) submitted 21 evaluations. Though responses were low this year, program feedback was positive overall. Student mentees and alumni mentors rated the Alumni Mentorship Program 4.68/5 on a scale of 1-5 (one = poor to five = excellent), while implementation of the Alumni Mentorship Program was rated 4.63/5 on a scale of 1-5 (one = poor to five = excellent).

Both alumni mentors and student mentees felt they were appropriately matched, although two alumni mentors and one student mentee reported that the match was "okay." The most frequent communication between alumni mentors and student mentees was email and video conferencing. The top four identified areas in which mentees felt that their mentors were helpful included:

1. *Support and encouragement*
2. *Transitioning from student to professional*
3. *Networking with professionals*
4. *Job searching or leads*

Of the majority of alumni mentors, 57.1% rated themselves as helpful to their mentees, and 35.7% of alumni mentors rated themselves as very helpful. Student mentees 80% rated their mentor as very helpful, while one student, who cited a lack of *connection*, rated their mentor as unhelpful.

The AMP evaluation explored the mentor/mentee relationship, and respondents were asked to share their thoughts. As a result, two alumni mentors provided the following comments about their mentees:

"She is an amazing MSW candidate and will be great in the field,"

"She was lovely and asked incredibly thoughtful questions. It was a pleasure to provide feedback, support, and guidance. She was very respectful and engaging."

One alumni mentor and student mentee match highlighted that they appreciated the opportunity to connect with someone who shared similar [ethnoracial and] cultural experiences, adding "richness" to their conversations about navigating the social work field as a Black woman.

Recommendations for improvement of the Alumni Mentorship Program included:

- Adding more structure to the program.
- Ensuring an appropriate match between mentor and mentee.
- Having the program begin earlier in the school year.
- Creating an online forum for new graduates to connect to mentors and each other after the program ends.

This year, there were no nominations for the Outstanding Alumni Mentorship award.

The Factor Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, Alumni Association, and student graduates commend this year's participating alumni mentors, especially our long-term alumni mentors, for their ongoing commitment and contribution to the development and support of student graduates transitioning into the Social Work profession.