



## **Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) San Antonio Post Mentoring Guide**

The San Antonio Post developed the Leadership Laboratory (LLab) in 2010 to provide members an opportunity to learn more about themselves, study leadership theory, and develop their personal and professional leadership skills. A key element in the LLab experience was the assignment of a mentor to each LLab student. The pairing of a mentor to a student was a big hit and the San Antonio Post quickly saw the potential of expanding this mentoring program beyond the LLab. As San Antonio Post mentors and protégés have benefited from mentorship, this guide is meant to serve as a resource for establishing mentor and protégé relationships and a tool for “paying mentorship forward.” It is not “prescriptive” but “descriptive.” We recognize that every mentor-protégé relationship is unique and can change over time so this guide is intended to be just that, a guide for our members to use when establishing a mentoring relationship.

**What is a mentoring relationship?** A mentoring relationship is a learning and development partnership driven by the protégé to improve an area of their professional or personal life. The mentor is someone who has experience in certain areas and the protégé is someone who wants to learn. The relationship is based upon communication and progression toward the protégé’s goals.

### **The Expected Outcomes of a Mentoring Relationship:**

- Mentors support the development of world class leaders for their community, their profession, the Nation, and SAME by developing protégés with world class leadership skills
- Mentors schedule regular meetups in a semi-structured environment with an agenda and an outcome
- Protégés better understand their individual strengths and how to develop and apply these strengths to achieve the success they desire.
- Protégés learn leadership concepts including character, values, roles, responsibilities, accountability, and team building while developing and practicing their leadership skills.

**The benefit to you, the Mentor:** Mentoring can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your personal and professional life. The benefit to you may be the professional and personal success of your protégé; passing on your wisdom, networks, and experiences to the next generation of leaders; and/or the development of a lifetime friendship with your protégé. You didn’t start out with all the answers and you still don’t have all of the answers—but, you’ve gained and developed judgment, contacts, experiences, technical and leadership skills, and personal abilities that have worked (or not) for you on your professional and personal journey. Perhaps your best and most useful tool as a mentor is your ability to listen to the protégé and ask questions. Your job as the Mentor is to serve as a resource for, and guide your protégé’s development “by giving your time, attention, insights, and advice.” (*Institute for Broadening Participation*)

**What is expected of you, the mentor:** Every protégé is different, just as every mentor is different. Your job as the mentor is to help your protégé develop their personal and professional tools through your interaction with them. You use your leadership skill, personal and

professional experiences, and wisdom to “coach” the protégé...but you also use your life experiences to discuss other personal development topics besides leadership...such as work-life balance, and questions about the workplace and group/workplace/family dynamics. Regularly engaging with your protégé to listen to concerns and providing confidential feedback helping them reach their professional and personal goals.

**The benefit to you, the protégé?** The protégé benefits from the wisdom, experiences, perspective, and life and technical knowledge of someone with professional or personal interests that are similar to your own. A mentor can contribute to your growth and development as a person and as a technical professional and leader. The mentoring relationship should be a flexible one and you should get exactly what you want from the mentoring relationship; the mentoring relationship must be beneficial for you! The mentor may not have “all the answers” but probably can provide insight and different perspectives into the questions that you ask or knows someone who can provide that insight. The mentor provides the insights and perspectives you may need to decide what personal/professional path(s) you want to take.

**Your job as the protégé is to:**

- Meet/talk/zoom as often as the two of you want (it does help to establish a regular meeting schedule to “keep up the momentum”),
- Discuss the topics that are important to you, the protégé,
- Don’t worry about what the mentor thinks; ask the questions that are “on your mind”
- Think BIG! Think about your greatest career and life ambitions and goals...what is holding you back from achieving those dreams and goals?
- Absorb what you need from the mentor
- Question what doesn’t make sense or resonate with you
- Do something with your newfound wisdom and, practice
- If the mentoring relationship is not working, for whatever reason, let the SAME San Antonio Post Director of Leadership & Mentorship know. (This is perfectly acceptable).

**Here are some examples of typical mentoring discussion topics:**

- Should I start my own business? How do I prepare for business ownership?
- How do I balance work/life?
- How do you handle difficult (work) personnel situations such as counseling, providing feedback, etc?
- How do I ask for a raise?
- How do I become a better networker?
- I’m swamped; how do I ask for help?
- What is a typical career path for my discipline?
- I’m most afraid of \_\_\_\_\_.
- I’d like to do \_\_\_\_\_; how do I achieve my goal?
- I don’t understand a (technical, administrative, etc.) topic; where can I turn for help?
- How do I get out of the professional rut I’m in?
- How do I become a better leader?
- How can I become “successful?”
- How important are professional registration and certifications?
- What do you think about this idea?

## How to get started:

The basic objectives of the mentor/protégé relationship are the following:

- Get acquainted: the more you know about each other the more beneficial the mentoring relationship
- Regularly “meet” (i.e. face-to-face, telephone, or connect electronically) to discuss the issues that are important to the protégé. Adding structure and accountability to the mentoring relationship increases stability and reliability in the mentoring relationship.
- Listen and communicate with honesty: provide clear and honest feedback and ask questions
- Discuss the issues that are really important: The person who exudes self-confidence, knowledge, wisdom, etc...didn't start out that way. The deeper the mentoring relationship explores issues that are important to the protégé, the more the mentor and protégé will benefit from the relationship.

## Resources to assist Mentor and Protégés:

1. Leader Development Community of Interest: <https://www.same.org/leader-development-community>. Good source of Mentoring lifelines; SAME members who can help mentor the mentor.
2. Mentoring Advisory Group: <https://www.same.org/mentoring>.
3. Good source of worksheets to generate discussion and help check on mentoring progress and effectiveness as well as to plan longer range goals. Useful Links:
  - [Mentoring Across SAME](#)
  - [Final SAME Leader Development Toolkit](#)
4. *SAME Programs “Mentoring” Mentor Relationship Guide (October 2020)*: The appendices provide templates that can help guide discussions, especially starting out. The templates typically require written answers which help focus thoughts on goals and make those goals more “concrete.” The planning tables help develop specific goals and connect supporting actions and milestones to those goals. Click [here](#) to access.
5. COL Ray Kimball’s YouTube SAME Mentoring presentation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOCwrL1UjDA&feature=youtu.be>

## San Antonio Post Resources:

- Col Eric Wilbur, PE, REM, USAF (ret): member of the National LDP COI, 210.573.1947
- Lt Col Elisa Hammer, Director of Leadership and Mentoring 210.395.9810
- Glen Turney, PE, FSAME, Director of Fellows 830.980.4702 ext 100

Any questions about Guide or suggestions for improvements, please contact Homer Guy, PE, RA, LEED AP, PMP, CFM, CEM, FSAME; 210.899.1098 ext 4001