

American Planning Association (APA) Virginia Chapter
In partnership with VCU Urban and Regional Studies & Planning
“Mentor A Planning Student” (MAPS) Program Pilot



Thank you for your interest in the MAPS Program. This handout contains information about the program and guidance for participants.

Program Background

APA Virginia and VCU URSP will work together during the 2022-2023 VCU academic year to implement the Mentor A Planning Student (MAPS) program as a pilot project. Depending on its success, APA Virginia will consider expanding it beyond VCU URSP in future years.

Program Goals

- Expose VCU URSP students to the actual work environments, responsibilities and interactions of professional planning positions in Virginia;
- To bring VCU URSP students into a mentor relationship with a practicing public or private sector planner in their region;
- To help planning students begin to develop their professional career networks;
- Further facilitate the relationship between university planning programs, APA Virginia, sections and planning professionals.

Program Participation (Mentors and Mentees)

1) *How long is this program?*

The formal mentor and student mentee match will only last from November to April. However, if the relationship has proven to be successful for both participating parties, the mentorship could continue for a longer period, as determined by the participants.

2) *How big will this pilot program be?*

In this first year, the program is designed to support up to fifteen (15) students and 15 mentors.

3) *Who can participate?*

Membership in APA Virginia is not a requirement for either mentors or students, although it is encouraged. Mentors must either be based in the Richmond region or have work that periodically brings them to the area. Students must be enrolled in a VCU URSP program.

4) *What will I be doing?*

We recommend that mentors and students try to meet during the year if it works in their schedules. How much you communicate via email and phone is up to you; you will decide that together, based on what your schedules allow. However, it is advised that communication occur on a frequency of at least once a month for a successful program.

Mentors will also be required to provide at least two “shadowing” experiences of their day-to-day job duties. This can take the form of a day at the office, a field day working on a project with a client/constituency, etc.

5) *What will we be discussing?*

What you discuss is up to you. When students apply to participate, they complete the mentee form which will include a list of things they want to work on to aid in finding a suitable match. Mentors will include a resume as part of their participation form to summarize their expertise and experience. This will allow

mentors and mentees to have a shared understanding of what topics are of greatest importance to their mentee and this will foster the matching of mentor and mentee. After being matched, mentors and mentees will work together to create a list of up to three goals for the year. At the end of the year, the mentor and mentee will work to identify goals the mentee can pursue as he or she moves forward.

6) *How will mentors and mentees be matched?*

VCU URSP will solicit and identify no more than 15 students to participate in the MAPS pilot program. VCU and APA Virginia coordinators will then match participants, trying to honor preferences as much as possible. When matching, the goal will be to match people who are in the same sector, similar topic area, and same geographical region.

7) *Are there additional opportunities for networking with mentors?*

VCU URSP and APA Virginia will organize an on-campus event for mentors and students after participants have had their first shadowing experience. It is also anticipated to have a networking opportunity for mentors and mentees at the annual state conference. Additional details will be determined closer to the date of the conference.

Program Survey

At the end of the academic year, we will ask all participants to participate in a survey to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Program Schedule

1) Mentorship Program Start	Fall 2022
2) Call for Mentors	September 15-October 15, 2022
3) Program Matching and Notification	October 30, 2022
4) Program Participation	November 15, 2022– April 15, 2023
5) Completion of Shadowing Experience	January 30, 2023
6) APA VA participant networking event	February, 2023
7) Completion of minimum mentoring requirements	April 15, 2023
8) Program Evaluation	April 15-April 30, 2023

Program Communication

For all formal inquiries regarding the program, please contact the APA Virginia Young Planner’s Group Chair at ypp@apavirginia.com.