

ALDF Mentorship Program Welcome Packet

We are pleased to announce the launch of the ALDF's Mentorship Program to support law students' and new graduates' professional development. Mentors should offer guidance and encouragement to their mentee, facilitate networking in the animal law field, and share their specialized knowledge. The goal is to enhance mentees' understanding of the legal profession and help prepare them for their career in animal law.

Disclaimer: The guidance of the mentor is for the mentee's professional development; it is not legal advice.

Guidelines

- Review the Mentorship Program Code of Conduct before your first check-in meeting.
- Set goals for the mentorship. Draft a plan and outline what you would like to accomplish during the mentorship, such as skills mentees would like to build, networking within the field, or exploring specific areas of animal law.
- Communication expectations:
 - Commit to check in with your mentee/mentor at least two times a semester and one time over summer break. If you would like to meet more often, you can meet monthly.
 - Decide in advance how you will communicate (e.g. video chat, phone call, text, or email) and meeting days and times.
 - Mentors and mentees should respond to communications in a timely manner.
 - Trust and respect are the foundation of every successful mentoring relationship. You can build these through open and honest sharing of troubles, successes, and life experiences.

Suggested Schedule & Discussion Topics

- **Fall check-in #1: initial introductory meeting** (September)
 - Focus: building trust, developing a relationship, and setting goals and expectations for your time together.
 - What are the mentee's academic and career goals?
 - What are the mentee's goals for the mentorship?
 - How did the mentor arrive on their career path? What were the mentor's law school experience and extra-curricular activities?
 - How did the mentor/mentee become interested in animal law?
 - What areas of animal law are the mentor and mentee interested in?
 - For current students, does the mentor have any tips and advice for a successful fall semester?

- For recent graduates, does the mentor have any tips or advice on how to gain experience in the field that will help them develop skills that will be useful for animal advocacy?
- **Fall check-in #2** (October or November)
 - Focus: navigating this law school semester or the mentee's first job.
 - For current students, catch up on how the fall semester has been so far and share your schedule for next semester. Has the mentee faced any difficulties?
 - For new graduates, discuss how things are going at work, including any issues.
 - If the mentee is applying for summer clerkships, externships, or new job positions, talk about job search strategies and ask for feedback on your resume or cover letter.
 - Does the mentor have any time-management, outlining, or other study or exam advice?
- **Spring check-in #1** (January or February)
 - Focus: best practices for applying for jobs and maintaining a healthy work/life/school balance.
 - What are the mentee's goals for the spring semester or career goals for the new year?
 - Ask for feedback on your resume, cover letter, or writing sample for summer clerkships or new job positions.
 - How can the mentee maintain a healthy work/life/school balance?
 - Does the mentor have any advice for dealing with academic competition or imposter syndrome?
 - How can the mentee build a sustainable long-term career without burning out? How can the mentee set boundaries?
- **Spring check-in #2** (March or April)
 - Focus: looking ahead to summer and succeeding in upcoming clerkships or new job positions.
 - What are the mentee's academic or career goals for summer?
 - If the mentee has obtained summer employment, are there any questions about ethics and professionalism in the workplace?
 - What classes or employment did the mentor have over law school summers?
 - Does the mentor have any advice on turning a summer position or new graduate fellowship into a permanent position?
 - If the mentee is taking summer classes, share the schedule.

- For new graduates, are you having any issues at work?
 - For those graduating, does the mentor have any bar exam advice?
 - Establish communication boundaries during intensive bar study.
- **Summer check-in** (June, July or August)
 - Focus: reflection and pivoting into a more informal relationship.
 - How are the mentee's summer classes or current employment?
 - What are the mentee's academic or career goals for the next year?
 - Can the mentor suggest some ways to stay involved in animal law after graduation?
 - How will the mentee and mentor stay in contact?
- Remember, this does not have to be the end of the relationship. Ideally, this relationship will continue as the mentee launches their career.

Other Discussion Topics

- How did the mentor get their first job after law school?
- What does a typical workday look like for the mentor?
- What cases or projects are you currently working on?
- Discussions may also focus on general issues related to the practice of law, such as effective attorney/client communications, professionalism and legal ethics, or working in different environments (for example, a small firm, large firm, non-profit organization, government, etc.)
- You may also discuss issues relating to animal law, such as:
 - What is the tension and collaboration between animal welfare (welfare standards) and animal rights (abolition of property status)?
 - How do animal protection organizations utilize impact litigation?
 - What is the role of legislative work, lobbying and ballot initiatives in creating systemic change for animals?
 - How do legal departments work with communications, development, and grassroots organizing teams?
 - How can we overcome the biggest legal hurdle in animal law, standing?
 - How can creative litigation (consumer protection suits, legal personhood claims, etc.) be used to help animals?
 - How can the mentee get involved in the animal law bar (e.g., ABA Animal Law Committee, local state bar sections)?
 - How can the mentee handle internal movement disagreements and maintain strong professional relationships?
 - How can the mentee manage vicarious trauma & compassion fatigue?