



## How to find a mentor – what do the students say?

### **Makye Summers, Junior, Physics Major, Mentor: Tonya Coffey, Department of Physics and Astronomy**

My mentor was actively advertising a project, and I approached her with my interest.

Advice: Put yourself out there. Most professors are involved in some research, and many are interested in mentoring students.

### **Hannah Parkhurst, Senior, Health Promotion Major, Mentor: Adam Hege, Department of Health and Exercise Science**

I mainly was successful in finding a mentor because my mentor is openly helpful to students and willing to help them with whatever they need. Since I knew he would take time to sit down with me and talk about my goals, I made the effort to connect with him beyond just being a student in his classes.

Advice: If you have a professor in your field who you seem to connect with, make sure to introduce yourself and make the extra effort to know you are an interested and proactive student.

### **Carla Toolan, Senior, Nutrition and Dietetics Major, Mentor: Lanae Ball, Department of Nutrition and Health Care Management**

My mentor was one of the first teachers I had within my major upon transferring to App, and we shared common interests within the field. She was also new to the program that semester, so we were both networking quite a bit.

Advice: Talk to teachers after class. If they mention/cover something in common with your personal interests within the field, most certainly pick their brain on the subject! If you show that you are inquisitive and enthusiastic, and let them know that you'd like to help out if any relevant projects that come their way, it is likely they will remember you! My interests in food politics and public health nutrition are also rare within the nutrition major, and I believe that helped me stand out a bit more. Following your natural curiosities will get you a lot further than chasing resume builders, and it'll be much more enjoyable! Good luck!

**Ella Perrin, Sophomore, Exercise Science Major, Mentor: Kevin Zwetsloot,  
Department of Health and Exercise Science**

I found my mentor because I joined Phi Chi (the pre-med honors society) and met a student who was already doing research with him and introduced me to him. This was a huge help because I had been emailing professors for months trying to get research experience with no luck.

Advice: I'd say the best advice to finding a mentor is that you have to do more than just email professors; do some research on what different professors research, find something that interests you, and go talk to that professor about it in person. It also really helps if the professor already knows you, or if someone in their lab knows you and can vouch for your character.

**Mattan Ervin, Freshman, Religious Studies and Philosophy Major, Mentor:  
Randall Reed, Department of Philosophy and Religion**

Advice: I'd tell future students to get involved as early as possible in their department. They'll quickly find professors toward whom they gravitate. They should take the time to learn which ones are involved in research that needs student assistance and be active in pursuing those opportunities.

**Brandon Paul, Senior, Political Science Major, Mentor: Kevin Mullinix,  
Department of Government and Justice Studies**

I found my mentors through classes I was thoroughly engaged in.

Advice: Surprisingly, professors love when their students honestly care about the material and can engage in thoughtful discussion about the literature in the field as well as discuss potential pitfalls therein. Professors are constantly doing research and being outgoing and reaching out in the first place to suggest helping them is a great place to start to be an Undergraduate Research Assistant.