

# R.E.A.C.H. Mentorship Policies and Procedures



UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTH DAKOTA  
SANFORD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



# SECTION 1: ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

## Program History

South Dakota HOSA-Future Health Professionals was established as a Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) in 2012 as a response to the high student interest in the health sciences and the high demand for health care workforce in South Dakota. Currently, South Dakota has over 40 local HOSA chapters with a membership of over 1000. The HOSA program is under the auspices of South Dakota Area Health Education Center (AHEC) and the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine, and the University of South Dakota School of Health Sciences.

Chapters are established in local schools state-wide with a mission of nurturing and encouraging students who are interested in a health career field.

Brock Rops, the South Dakota HOSA State Advisor, and his staff continue to carry out the South Dakota HOSA mission, vision, and expansion of the program state-wide. The aim is to provide resources for its membership and raise awareness of all the Health Science programs at the University of South Dakota.

As SD HOSA evolves, it continues to meet the needs of its membership. The R.E.A.C.H. mentorship program is a collaboration of four entities involving the A.O.A. Honor Medical Society, The University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine, The University of South Dakota School of Health Sciences, and South Dakota HOSA. The program aims to provide health career awareness and academic guidance to high school HOSA members by utilizing medical students at the University of South Dakota to help HOSA students develop their full potential; capable of making informed, responsible decisions involving their academic and career future.

The following are aims of the REACH Mentoring Program:

**Relationships-** REACH aims to establish and build peer **relationships** among students with similar interests.

**Engagement-** REACH aims to plan and develop a purposeful mentorship by getting the participants **engaged**.

**Awareness-** REACH aims to provide for each mentee with an **awareness** of medical careers and academic pathways.

**Collaboration-** REACH aims to provide opportunities for **collaboration** so that each mentor and mentee will benefit.

**Help-** REACH aims to offer **help** to high school students regardless of race, religion, gender, or creed.

## **Memorandum of Understanding**

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes that South Dakota HOSA-Future Health Professionals State Office, South Dakota HOSA-Future Health Professionals Local Chapters, the A.O.A. Honor Medical Society, the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine and the University of South Dakota School of Health Sciences agree to the following terms and conditions as partners in the Mentoring Program.

### **South Dakota HOSA State Office will:**

- Provide coordination of the mentorship program.
- Provide orientation for mentors and mentees.
- Collaborate to create programmatic activities including but not limited to development of policies and procedures, templates outlining program of work, and other logistics.
- Provide recognition and closing procedures.
- Create registration/application for the program.
- Collaborate in providing program evaluation.

### **The University of South Dakota School of Medicine, the A.O.A. Honor Medical Society, and the University of South Dakota School of Health Sciences will:**

- Identify appropriate graduate students who would make great mentors.
- Market the program to these students
- Collaborate to create programmatic activities including but not limited to development of policies and procedures, templates outlining program of work, and other logistics.
- Cooperate with the coordinator of the program.

### **Local HOSA chapters will:**

- Identify appropriate HOSA students for referral.
- Market the program to local HOSA members.
- Provide a contact person in their local chapter.
- Assist in providing program evaluation data for participating students.
- Collaborate to create programmatic activities including but not limited to development of policies and procedures, templates outlining program of work, and other logistics.
- Cooperate with the coordinator of the program.

## SECTION 2: PROGRAM POLICIES

### Recruitment Policy

Recruitment for the REACH Mentoring Program is two-fold; South Dakota HOSA local chapters will recruit current members to be part of the of the REACH Mentoring Program as mentees while the University of South Dakota will recruit the mentors to the REACH Mentoring Program. Recruitment strategy, goals, timelines and budgetary implications

### Application Process

All students must apply to the program by a set deadline. Applications will be reviewed by a committee for acceptance or denial. The decision to accept an applicant into the program will be based on referral and completion of the screening process. No reason will be given to the mentor or mentee applicants rejected from participation in the program.

Documentation of the application should be kept on file.

### Inquiry Policy

It is the policy of the REACH Mentoring Program that all inquiries regarding participation in the program are responded to within two business days. Public relations and customer service must always be provided to all potential participants. All program staff handling inquiries should be patient, courteous, and respectful in all interactions.

### Eligibility Policy

It is the policy of the REACH Mentoring Program that each participant (mentor/mentee) must meet the defined eligibility criteria. All parties involved should be knowledgeable of and understand all eligibility criteria required for participation in the program.

#### ***Mentor Eligibility Requirements:***

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Enrolled at the University of South Dakota in an undergrad or postgraduate health science program
- Adhere to the REACH Mentoring Program policies and procedures
- Agree to a nine-month commitment to the program
- Be willing to communicate with the mentee monthly
- Agree to view/attend a mentor orientation on campus/zoom
- Have never been accused, arrested, charged, or convicted of child abuse or molestation
- Not be a user of illicit drugs
- Not use alcohol or controlled substances in excessive or inappropriate manner
- Be competent in using virtual meeting platforms

- Attend an end of year banquet/recognition ceremony
- Be willing to complete a pre and post survey regarding the effectiveness of the program

***Mentee Eligibility Requirements:***

- Be 16-18 years of age
- Demonstrate a desire to participate in the program and be willing to abide by all REACH Mentoring Program policies and procedures
- Aim to pursue a career in the health sciences
- Be able to obtain parental/guardian permission and ongoing support for participation in the program
- Agree to a nine-month commitment to the program
- Be willing to communicate with the mentor monthly
- Agree to view/attend a mentee orientation
- Be willing to complete a pre and post survey regarding the effectiveness of the program
- Compete at the SD HOSA State Leadership Conference

**Screening Policy**

It is the policy that all REACH Mentoring Program applicants be reviewed. A committee involved in the REACH Mentoring Program will screen the applications.

The following screening procedures are required for mentor and mentee applicants:

***Mentor Screening Procedures:***

- Ensure applicants understand the purpose of the program
- Ensure applicants understand their role in the program
- Complete the application correctly

***Mentee Screening Procedures:***

- Ensure applicants aim to pursue an M.D. degree
- Ensure applicants have the required GPA or higher
- Complete the application correctly

**Training Policy**

It is the policy of the REACH Mentoring Program that all mentors and mentees view/attend an orientation/training session prior to being matched. The agendas will cover basic program guidelines, safety issues (including mandatory reporting), communication, and relationship building skills.

The program coordinator will plan, develop, and deliver all orientation/training sessions with assistance from other staff and volunteers. Evaluation forms may be collected from each orientation/training session for the purposes of evaluating/improving the program.

The mentor/mentee will provide the coordination team with a program of work for the academic year.

### **Matching Policy**

It is the policy of the REACH Mentoring Program that the program coordinator will follow the match procedure guidelines and work with the A.O.A in creating a mentor/mentee match. The suitability of the match will be based on the following criteria such as, but not limited to:

- Similar personalities
- Common interests
- Similar education/career goals
- Gender

### **Supervision Policy**

It is the policy of the REACH Mentoring Program that staff will make quarterly contact with all parties. Staff will gather information each month including the dates and times spent participating in mentoring activities and description of those activities and assess the success of the match from all party's perspectives. In the case of match difficulties, discord, or concerns, appropriate discussion and intervention must be undertaken to improve or rectify problem areas.

### **Recognition Policy**

The REACH Mentoring Program will recognize participants and highlight successes of the program. Recognition will take place at a reception/awards banquet. The program coordinator may:

- Host an annual recognition event including outstanding mentor/mentee awards
- Feature a mentor or mentee success story in a newsletter
- Establish a mentor recognition award system for length of service
- Utilize outstanding mentors to help deliver orientation and training sessions for the recruitment and matching of new mentors

### **Record Keeping Policy**

The REACH Mentoring Program will have documentation of each step of the mentoring application and match process via a case file for each mentor/mentee "team".

The program coordinator will keep stringent records of all program activities, utilizing approved forms. All files should be regularly maintained and updated within an electronic database and/or hard filing system.

### **Confidentiality Policy**

The REACH Mentoring Program will protect participants through a confidentiality agreement. Except for the limitations listed below, program staff will only share information about mentors and mentees with professional staff. Further, all prospective mentors and mentees should be informed of the scope and limitations of the confidentiality agreement.

For the REACH Mentoring Program to provide a responsible and professional service to participants, it IS necessary to ask mentors, mentees and other outside sources to divulge some personal information about prospective participants and their families, including:

- Information gained from mentors and mentees about themselves, in application to and during program participation
- Participants' names and images gained from participants themselves, program meetings, training sessions, and other events
- Information gained about participants from outside sources including confidential references, school staff, and employers

Information from mentor and mentee records may be shared with individuals or organizations as specified below under the following conditions:

- Information may be gathered about program participants and shared with other participants, individuals, or organizations only upon receipt of signed "release" forms from mentors and mentees
- Identifying information (including names, photographs, videos, etc.) of program participants may be used in publications or promotional materials only upon written consent of the mentor or mentee
- Information may be provided to law enforcement officials or the courts pursuant to a valid and enforceable subpoena. Information is considered privileged information, and its confidentiality is protected by law.
- If the program receives information at any point in the match process that a volunteer is participating in illegal activity, the information will be shared with the legal guardian and they will have the option to reject the prospective mentor or close the existing match.
- At the time a mentor or mentee is considered as a match candidate, information is shared between the prospective match parties. Each party will have the right to refuse the proposed match based on the anonymous information provided to them. The information to be shared may include:

- Mentors: age, gender, race, religion, interests, sexual preference, reasons for applying to the program, and a summary of why the individual was chosen for the match.
- Mentees: age, gender, race, religion, interests, sexual preference, and a summary of why the individual was chosen for the match.

The director of the program is considered the custodian of the confidential records. It is his/her responsibility to supervise the management of confidential information in order to ensure safekeeping, accuracy, accountability, and compliance with the policies.

To participants' right to privacy shall be respected by the agency. Requests for confidential information from other organizations or persons shall be accompanied by a signed release from the mentor, mentee, and/or legal guardian.

A known violation of the policy on confidentiality by a program participant may result in a written warning or disciplinary action such as suspensions or termination from the program.

### **Transportation Policy**

No student mentee will be allowed to travel in a vehicle with a mentor. If mentors aim to provide a tour, the mentee must be accompanied by their legal guardian.

### **Overnight Visits and Out of Town Travel Policy**

The REACH Mentoring Program will not allow any overnight visits. Mentors traveling to possible events out of town are strongly encouraged to obey all traffic laws.

### **Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy**

It is the policy of the REACH Mentoring Program that all staff, mentors and other representatives of the program must report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect of agency clients or program participants immediately. All such suspected reports must be made to appropriate state and/or local authorities. Program staff must follow the mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect procedure.

Any staff, volunteers, mentors, or other representatives of the program accused of child abuse or neglect will be reviewed by the proper authorities. Contact with the mentee or other youth in the program will be restricted or constrained and/or the person in questions suspended from employment or program participation until the investigation is concluded.

### **Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and Firearms Policy**

It is the policy of the REACH Mentoring Program to prohibit and discourage the use of drugs, alcohol, and firearms. Mentees and mentors are prohibited from using drugs or alcohol or possessing firearms while engaged in the mentoring relationship. Any suspected violations should be reported to the program coordinator.



## **Unacceptable Behavior Policy**

Unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated on the part of mentors or mentees while participating in the program. This policy is in addition to behavioral requirements stipulated in other policies or procedures in this manual. This policy in no way is intended to replace or take precedence over other policies and procedures including, but not limited to, the following:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Transportation Policy
- Overnight Visits and Out-of-Town Policy
- Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy
- Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and Firearms Policy

Several behaviors are regarded as incompatible with the goals, values, and program standards including, but not limited to, the following:

- Unwelcome physical contact
- Unwelcome physical, verbal, visual, or behavior mannerisms or conduct that denigrates, shows hostility, or aversion toward any individual.
- Demeaning or exploitive behavior of either a sexual or nonsexual nature, including threats of such behavior
- Display of demeaning, suggestive, or pornographic material
- Denigration, public or private, of any mentee parent/guardian or family member
- Denigration, public or private, of political or religious institutions or their leaders
- Intentional violation of any local, state, or federal law
- Drinking or texting while driving
- Possession of illegal substances

Any unacceptable behavior, as specified but not limited to the above, will result in a warning and/or disciplinary action including suspension or termination from participation in the mentoring program.

## **Closure Policy**

It is the policy of the REACH Mentoring Program that all mentors and mentees must participate in closure procedures when their match ends. Closure is defined as the ending of a formal match relationship regardless of the circumstances of the match ending or whether they intend to have future contact informally beyond the match duration. While no party is expected to continue the relationship beyond the formal end of a match, matches may continue in the program beyond the contract period.

Closure can occur for any number of reasons including: the contracted match duration has ended, one or both participants do not want to continue the match, there are changes in life circumstances of either the mentor or mentee, or an individual meets the requirements for

program participation. Hence, the match may end at the discretion of the mentor, mentee, legal guardian, and/or program coordinator. It is left to the discretion of the program coordinator whether an individual will be reassigned to another match in the future based upon past participation performance and current goals and needs of the program.

The coordinator will verbally and in writing inform all parties- the mentor, mentee, and legal guardian- that the formal match has ended and the REACH Mentoring Program will not be liable for any incidents that occur after the match has closed.

### **Evaluation Policy**

It is the policy of the REACH Mentoring Program that evaluation will be a key component in measuring the success of its mentoring program and for making continuous improvements in the effectiveness and deliver of mentoring services.

Evaluation data will be collected every year for mentors and mentees in the program. The REACH Mentoring Program will be responsible for evaluation efforts.