Health fair provides free services and screenings

The Graduate School Mentorship Program will participate in the eighth annual VCU MCV Campus Student Government Association community health fair on March 19th, 2016 at Martin Luther King Middle School.

Available health screenings include glucose, cholesterol, blood pressure, lung capacity and mental and sexual health. Dental and vision services are available to both adults and children.

The fair is student organized and student run event with 150 volunteers from VCU’s under graduate and graduate programs.

Last year more than 60 tables from various health organizations were full of information educational materials, and goody bags. Representatives provided information related to family resources, health insurance, clinics, mental health, housing, nutrition, legal aid and education.

The event is very child friendly and has had activities in the past such as crafts, Zumba, lacrosse and live music.

Volunteers from GSMP will be helping at the Fair in a non medical capacity. Our help is greatly appreciated and it a great way to give back to the community. We are working together to change lives which can impact our learning and scholarship in addition to improving human conditions and supporting public good.

Applications are now open for GSMP!

Share your experience about GSMP and this newsletter with your friends. Help us recruit next year’s class. Applications are available on the website at: http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/development/mentorship.html. Mentors must be in their second year of study and mentors receive a stipend upon completion of the program. Mentees must be rising sophomores, juniors or seniors. All students must have a 3.0 GPA.

Learn about graduate school from an experienced graduate student in your field of study.
Mentor Spotlight: Noel VanArtrijik

Noel VanArtrijik is a second year Master’s graduate student in the VCU Brand Center. Read more about her experience with GSMP.

What aspects of the Graduate School Mentorship Program intrigued you the most?
I recognize how many informal mentorships I have been a part of, and I thought it was awesome that VCU has made an effort to formalize the process. I think the accountability of a third party (GSMP) facilitates a more meaningful mentorship opportunity, and one that will hopefully be of lasting impact on the mentees as they pursue their next step after graduation.

What goals have you accomplished thus far? What goals are you still looking to accomplish?
I think my mentee and I have made great strides in prepping him for professional opportunities like portfolio reviews and national conferences he has had the chance to attend. We still need to hone in on the tougher pieces of his graduate school application – personal statement and resume.

What kind of mentor do you want to be?
There are so many mentoring styles, and they are all effective for different reasons. In trying to emulate the best mentors I have had – I am trying to be as candid, open, and responsive as possible.

What challenges have you dealt with in the program?
We’re both incredibly busy. However, we have found workarounds to that – emailing pretty regularly and quicker but more frequent meet-ups if for some reason we can’t make the hour happen.

How has this program been beneficial for you?
I’ve had a lot of great conversations about an industry I’m interested in. It’s nice to help someone out who is in the same boat I was just a few years ago. And, although I hadn’t thought much about that until now, I do think it has forced me to evaluate my own academic and career trajectory, and think more critically about my own next steps.

What would you want a prospective mentor to know about the program?
Mentoring skills are not exclusive to academia. Honing in and bettering these skills will benefit you long after you graduate from VCU. Empowering another individual to be their best self translates into professional life, family life, athletics, etc.

Have you had a mentor?
I have a whole fleet of mentors! Yes, in college I had many, and I made a concentrated effort to stay in contact with them. I also have a few from my national women’s Greek organization who I check-in with regularly.

How much of an impact did your mentor have on you?
It’s hard to gauge impact because I still check-in with them regularly, but as individuals I really respect the choices they have made in their careers, and they continuously impress me with their ability to make time for me amidst their busy schedules.

What are you hoping to impart to your mentee?
I have a “do a little every day” philosophy – whatever your North Star goal is – do a little every day to get there. Whether it’s revising a paragraph of your personal statement, reading an article from a trade magazine in your field, or sending one email to set up one informational interview – these smaller steps will set you more than allowing it all to pile up.

Noel with her mentee Robert Arthur at GSMP Orientation
Mentee Spotlight: Danarubini Ramanan

Dana is a junior chemistry major at VCU. She is interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in Biochemistry. Read more about her experience as a mentee below.

Is there a tangible value to having a mentor?
I appreciate having Emil as my mentor. As an idealist, I sometimes have trouble allowing my ideas to take root and grow. My mentor has helped me understand how to ground my future aspirations into measurable goals. He has also helped me understand how I should prepare myself for a life in higher education.

What goals have you accomplished thus far?
As I want to be a biochemistry researcher, I would like to obtain research experience and eventually go to graduate school. My mentor guided me on how to reach out to chemistry professors to discover research opportunities. With his help, I have a volunteer research position at a lab at MCV. Through this opportunity, I would like to develop my understanding of biochemistry concepts and techniques. I would also like to continue meeting more people who are passionate about research to exchange perspectives on the research process.

What challenges have you dealt with in the program?
This program has challenged me to have better time management skills. With support, understanding and patience from my mentor and the program staff, I learned how to better balance class work, my pursuit of research opportunities and faith in a sustainable healthy way.

What would you want a prospective mentee to know about the program?
Students who are interested in exploring what higher education is should apply to this program. It connects you with someone in a field with similar aspirations. Through this program, I am happy to have met my mentor who was interested in seeing me succeed. If you feel lost or unsure about what your options are after graduation, I think it is good to talk to someone who walked in your shoes. In my experience with the program staff, they are enthusiastic and committed to provide students with personal development resources.

What are you most excited about in the GSMP?
I am excited about spending more time with the GSMP Program and learning more about how to prepare for research and graduate school.

If you could tell your mentor, one thing, what would you want them to know?
To my mentor, I would like to say thank you! Thank you for supporting me and guiding me in obtaining a research position. You have helped me become more determined to be a biochemistry researcher. Thank you for connecting me with people who have helped me grow. Looking forward to meeting with you again this Spring.
UPCOMING MEETINGS

January 23, 2016
12:30-3:30pm
GSMP Mid-program Meeting,
Larrick Student Center

March 19, 2016
1-4pm
MCV Health Fair
MLK Middle School