

American Association of Professional Landmen Advisory Landman Connection

Being an Advisor

As an advisor you can enjoy many benefits, including gaining insight from your participant's background and history that enhances your professional and personal development as well as the satisfaction of sharing your expertise and life experience with others. Steven Spielberg once said, "The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves."

The following are some tips that will perhaps make your experience as an advisor a success for both you and your participant.

1. **Set expectations: Support, yet challenge, your participant.** Advisors and participants come to the program with their respective sets of expectations about each other and about the process. Advisors have the responsibility to manage the participants expectations and to communicate their own expectations about how they will interact with the participant. Advisors should evaluate their participant's level of knowledge, skill and ability and find ways to educate, stimulate, and challenge the participant through the program.
2. **Be a positive role model.** Good advisors are respected by their participants. A participant can learn a lot from their advisor simply by watching how their advisor behaves in any particular situation. Good advisors will also look out for experiences, or even create situations in which their participant can become involved to learn new things.
3. **Be genuinely interested in your participant as an individual—facilitate rather than clone.** As an advisor, get to know your participant's academic, professional, and personal goals so that you can help them in a way that meets their personal best interest. If a participant seems disengaged or appears to have other things on his/her mind, the advisor may inquire whether things are going OK. Some participants will respond to the invitation to talk, others will not. If the advisor is concerned, he/she should contact the AAPL Advisory Landman Connection Committee Chair.
4. **Share your experiences and insights.** Sometimes your role as an advisor can make you seem intimidating to a participant, thus discouraging them from speaking frankly about their problems or asking questions that they fear will seem silly. Advisors can humanize themselves through sharing stories about their own academic and professional journey. Advisors should choose stories that they feel are appropriate and helpful, but do so in a neutral way, without attachment to how your participant will use this learning. Be open to sharing your mistakes and failures too, as these are often where our biggest lessons are learned. It will help your participant to be aware that challenges will arise, and the way you dealt with the situation might also help them gain insight about how to build resilience.
5. **Ask questions.** Asking your participant open-ended question will help you as an advisor to identify their real needs, values, and passions. It is also a great way to encourage your participant to identify their real needs, values and passions. It is also a great way to encourage your participant to think through situations themselves and draw out the consequences of the various choices or courses of action they can take.
6. **Act as a sounding board: Empower rather than solve.** Participants benefit greatly from the opportunity of having a good advisor to listen to them. Allow them to explore their thoughts, ideas, and curiosities openly with you. This will often help them unravel their thinking, gain insights about a situation as they share their concerns with you, and develop problem-solving skills.

7. **Provide helpful and honest feedback—faking it is not making it.** Not all feedback is helpful. A good advisor knows this and will deliver feedback in a way that will help their participant gain insight to further develop specific qualities or skills.
8. **Acknowledge achievements.** Highlight for your participant any achievements they might have forgotten to help build their confidence in their capabilities as a landman. Remember to celebrate their successes.
9. **Be accessible.** Many participants will hesitate to contact their advisor until they have something big to report or a serious issue arises. Making regular contact, whether it be through monthly meetings, an unsolicited email, or a Skype session, provides your participant reassurance that you are present if they have questions, concerns, or simply want to share an idea they came up with in their job.ⁱ
10. **Maintain confidentiality and trust.** Advisors and participants have a responsibility to treat each other with dignity and respect and to behave in an ethical manner. Advisors should not intrude areas the participant wishes to keep confidential until invited to do so. However, they should help the participant to recognize how other issues may relate to these areas. All advisors are expected and required to maintain high levels of confidentiality. Although opinions and issues such as skills building and self-confidence concerns that can be resolved over time should always be kept confidential, employee theft, divulging trade secrets to an outside third party or unlawful behavior are examples of situations where confidentiality doesn't and shouldn't apply regardless of whether it involves the advisor or participant.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ Caltech – Student Faculty Programs, Mentoring Tips and Resources/Mentoring Events

ⁱⁱ Jackie Lohrey, The Importance of Confidentiality in Mentoring