

NCPH Conference Mentoring

NCPH's mentoring program pairs students, new professionals, and other new conference attendees with experienced public historians. If you are interested, let us know by checking the box on the annual meeting registration form or sending an email to ncph@iupui.edu. We will send you a short survey form and do our best to place you (by mid- to late February), but cannot guarantee that all those who want a mentor will receive one. We are looking both for mentors and mentees. Please send questions to ncph@iupui.edu.

The conference mentor program was fantastic! As a first-time conference-goer, it was great to be matched up with a young professional a little further along in her career. We had a lot of common interests and enjoyed attending sessions and the Thursday evening reception and plenary address together!

(From 2009 conference evaluations)

Here is what is expected of mentors and mentees.

1. Mentors and mentees contact each other by email prior to the conference and tell the other a little about themselves. It is appropriate either for the mentor or the mentee to initiate the email exchange.
2. Please agree on a place and time to meet in person early in the conference. This year we are asking mentors and mentees, if at all possible, to arrange to meet each other at the Networking and Mentoring Reception (4:45 pm-5:15 pm) on Thursday, 3/11. It is a free event, but please sign up in advance. (If you have already registered for the conference, you can sign up for specific events or purchase tickets by filling out a second registration form, filling in only your name, email, and event, etc.)

Other good places to meet include the Opening/30th Anniversary Reception (7:30 pm-9:00 pm) on Wednesday, 3/10, or the NCPH New Members and First-Time Attendees Breakfast (7:30 am-8:30 am), on Thursday, 3/11. There will be a message board near the conference registration, and mentors and mentees may want to use this as a meeting spot or waiting area.

I was very, very lucky to be paired with an incredible mentor who did as much for me as she could. She gave me a real sense of the field, introduced me to tons of people, and was clearly very honestly interested in helping me with my professional development.

(From 2009 conference evaluations)

It also is advisable to arrange at least a second meeting place and time during the conference. We will have a message board to help attendees stay in touch, but making specific plans to meet over coffee or in the break between sessions is a good idea. Sometimes it is difficult to find people in the rush and flux of the conference.

3. Mentors share lessons about their own career path and try to introduce their mentee to other public history practitioners. The point is to build networks and share information.
4. Mentors might also give advice about how best to absorb the full benefits of a conference. What sessions on the program look particularly good this year? Is there a strategy to visiting the exhibit hall, making the rounds in a reception or the Poster Session, or picking tours or workshops that complement sessions? How do you use this or any conference as a source of professional development, new projects, new ideas?
5. Some mentors and mentees stay in contact after the conference, but this is not an expectation. The mentoring program each year is focused on the annual meeting with which it is associated.