Progress Report to the College of Fellows
"Mentoring"
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Background:

Prior to the formal formation of the COF a survey revealed the second most important task recommended by the Fellows that responded was mentoring (see Don Rich for details).

Minutes of the Dallas meeting of the COF read, in part, as follows:

"108.10 Kelter reported that we will receive input from Student Activities by the Salt Lake City meeting. Kelter and Goldschmidt will follow up. Sestak will send his outline for the goals of the mentoring program along with all the comments he has received pertaining to that document…."

This report presents information to the COF and requests specific feedback and input from the COF.

Purpose:

Our Mission Statement, and the Articles of Consolidation, call us to "Advance the arts and the sciences of HVAC&R…". As a College of Fellows we are committed to embrace that call. One method of assisting that advancement is in the development of future and starting ASHRAE members into a professional commitment to ASHRAE's mission. One tool is that of mentoring. A mentor is defined as a "wise and loyal counselor". ASHRAE Members honored as Fellows have acknowledged the responsibility of that honor and are now striving to humbly serve in the role of "Mentors".

Observations and recommendations:

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- Mentoring is not training, it is not teaching, it is a quiet and open sharing of wisdom and experience. It can be considered as a "learning partnership". (There are other tutoring/lecturing activities, as well as high school presentations Fellows could be involved in, but these are beyond the "mentoring" concept.)
- Due to its nature, effective mentoring is a one to one process. It is not by committees, nor by training materials, nor by complicated programs. It is simply a personal relationship between a mentor and an individual wanting to have a mentor. While electronic communication might be one method, it must be preceded by face to face exchanges in order to develop a relationship for open communication; or limited to sharing career opportunities which would not be actual "mentoring" but information transfer.
- This will be a new program for the COF, and hence it should start small and gradually grow and improve through the experience gained.
- College of Fellows could focus their mentoring with one or more of the following:
  - High school students (in essence a recruitment process into engineering and engineering technology programs) This could probably be done most effectively through involvement in high school activities, science and engineering fairs,

tutoring programs, etc. There might be a 2-generation gap, which would call for unique sensitivity on the part of the mentors – it can be tiring and testy.

- o Undergraduate students enrolled in engineering or engineering technology programs. These would most likely have a starting awareness of the importance of "networking" and see the "mentoring" as a start. They will have questions of what they really want to do, where can they get a summer internship, and where might they ultimately work. This could probably be done more effectively in a institution with an ASHRAE Student Branch and with the blessings of the faculty advisor, and through the Student Activities Chair of the "parent" ASHRAE Chapter. It is very doubtful that the mentoring process would include tutorial help in courses – it might be more likely to include counsel on how to find a life companion… This can be extremely enriching for a mentor, as it could include career guidance, as well as openness and friendship from an accomplished professional. It would take time and commitment to be effective
- o ASHRAE Branch faculty advisors (and through them student officers). This should be in cooperation with the Student Activities Chair, and probably would not be "mentoring" but more like leadership training and coaching with the explicit purpose of having a strong student branch. It would require special (training and facilitating) skills beyond those called to be an effective mentor.
- o New ASHRAE members already employed. This could be simply guidance on "how to break into the ASHRAE system" (or, how you can become a successful fellow like me, and here are the landmines to avoid and there are the ladders on which to climb). This is not bad, but it sounds more self centered – rather than service centered. (Service is an ASHRAE core value). Most likely the most effective mentoring for new ASHRAE members already employed is with the setting and dynamics of their place of work - and this could be a tremendous opportunity with a Fellow retired from an organization within which he/she still has open entry.
- There are special skills for mentoring, amongst them:
  - o Active listening (not playing policeman, preacher or professional counselor; but knowing how to listen and give feedback when appropriate)
  - o Availability
  - o Knowing when to give and when not to give advice
  - o Coaching and edifying from the perspective of a senior and wise counsel
  - o Helpful with goal setting and planning
  - o Ability to instill confidence and motivation while building trust
  - o In general:): inspiring, providing corrective feedback, managing risks/protecting, opening doors, and instructing/developing capabilities in those being mentored

Recommendation:

That we start with a small and clearly defined program (individualized mentoring of young undergraduate students with a potential interest in HVAC&R) with the following steps:
- Identify Fellows interested in serving as mentors
- Provide a condensed training session focusing on one-to-one mentoring
- Potential mentors to establish dialog with the Student Activities Chair of their local chapter, and the faculty advisor of the corresponding Student Branch, and define a mentoring program; Regional Chairs to be advised and to provide encouragement.
- Mentors, once a program is established, to maintain contact with each other sharing "best practices" and "failures to avoid"
- Report back to the COF as appropriate, suggesting metrics for evaluation of the program.