

Mentoring matters: how we grow together at Novartis

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You can be successful, as an individual or as a business, without having to do it all on your own. In fact, cultivating a community, sharing ideas and putting your trust in other people can lead to far greater achievements. That's one of the key lessons I've learned since I started my career with Novartis.

It all began during my final year studying bioengineering at the University of Michigan, when I got the opportunity to do a Novartis internship, as part of a cohort of six students from across the East Coast region. We spent a fantastic summer working together on a range of projects. This included a fascinating investigation into healthcare disparities and health equities, where we uncovered the connections between ZIP codes and access to treatments. It was eye-opening for me to see how much healthcare experiences vary by geography, and I was excited to be part of a team that was identifying opportunities to bring innovative medicines to more people.



A year later, shortly after I graduated from university, Novartis invited me and the other interns back for a second year. It was a big decision for me to do another internship when so many of my fellow graduates were applying for permanent roles – or had found them already. But I had to say yes. I couldn't resist the chance to resume work on the projects that I and the rest of my cohort had been talking and thinking about throughout that year. And you know what? We remain in close contact to this day. Our careers may be taking us in different directions, but we continue to come together in regular group chats, where we share ideas, compare our progress and gain useful insights from each other.

This is typical of life at Novartis. During both my internships and since joining the company in a permanent role, I have never once been in a situation where people haven't been happy to help me. And that's so important when you're in the early stages of your career. Young professionals, in my view, are like sponges, capable of soaking up endless amounts of knowledge and experience. What better way to do that than by watching and learning from the people around you?



Mentorship is key. As well as being assigned a formal mentor for my internship, I built a network of colleagues around me who I have been drawing on and learning from throughout my career. You can think of it as having your own mentorship 'team'. This creates the ability to cross collaborate between people in different franchises to diversify your learnings.

The great thing is that the mentoring opportunities go both ways. I've always been very passionate about inspiring the next generation and showing young women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) that they have a seat at the table. In my time here, I've had the chance to mentor young professionals one to one and contribute as part of women's associations and relevant Employee Resource Groups. I was also invited to resume my involvement in the summer internship program by coming back to give the keynote speech at this year's networking event!

What advice do I give to people just starting out in their careers? When it comes to learning, there are no limits. Every person you meet and every interaction you have here is an opportunity to gain new knowledge and understanding. So focus on building a network of mentors and friends. Combined with your own hard work, your own passions and your own learning, it's your colleagues at Novartis who can really get you where you want to be.

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