



## **ASFHG MENTOR INFORMATION: Academic and Site Mentors**

We are excited that you are considering being an Academic or Site Mentor for a Fellow or Scholar's proposed project! The following document should answer any question you have about being a Mentor.

### **Why Volunteer as a Site or Academic Mentor?**

Because working with our Fellows should not only increase the capacity of community agencies but you will get to participate in the formation and development of highly motivated, service-minded students who are the best and brightest of our emerging health leaders. You will also be invited to Fellowship events and activities like the Evening of Difference. Here's what our Mentors have to say about the experience:

"Rarely do programs possess such transformational opportunity for both the students involved and the people they are serving. The impact that I see on students designing and implementing service learning projects as well as those in the community who benefit from the engagement is deep and lasting. It is truly an honor to work with Schweitzer Fellows." Sarah Mangrem, Director of Resident Services, New Hope Housing

"An Albert Schweitzer Fellow mentor is an opportunity to meet talented people who are investing themselves in the greater good, as well as getting a front row seat to a brighter future." Leslie Kian, Director, Meals on Wheels Healthcare Innovation, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston

"I've been amazed by how deeply transformative project-based work in direct community service can be for young health professionals - it clearly changes lives for the better and improves how people see their whole professional trajectories." Dr. Dan Price, Director, Data and Society; Director, Community Health Worker Initiative, University of Houston Honors College

"I like being a mentor because it gives me an opportunity to foster budding professionals who are committed to doing good." Dr. Aisha Siddiqui, Executive Director, CHAT

“I have loved being a sounding board for the Schweitzer fellows as they brainstorm solutions to real world challenges and adapt their projects to meet the needs of those they are working with.” Judy Levison, MD, MPH, Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Baylor College of Medicine

### **About Us**

The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship Houston-Galveston (ASFHG) is a 501c3 nonprofit that offers graduate and undergraduate students the opportunity to design and implement a year-long mentored community project that addresses an unmet health need for an underserved population in our area. We were founded in 1940 by Albert Schweitzer and we are one of 13 chapters nationwide. Students are paired with Site Mentors from the host organization, Academic Mentors from the student’s home institution, a Public Health Mentor, as well as a Fellow for Life to enhance the mentorship given by ASFHG staff. The projects should extend the services of existing community organizations who serve vulnerable populations, with the goal of creating immediate and lasting impact in the Houston-Galveston area.

The Fellowship has four overall goals:

- develop Leaders in Service who are educated, experienced, and committed to addressing unmet health needs;
- improve community health by providing direct service to individuals and strengthening the capacity of community-based organizations;
- expand educational opportunities in partnering schools while raising awareness of the needs of underserved communities; and
- maintain a growing and vibrant community of Schweitzer Fellowship alumni (Fellows for Life) committed to lives of service.

Please visit our website ([www.asfhg.org](http://www.asfhg.org)) for a list of current Fellows and their projects, a listing of staff and Board, application guidelines, video about past projects and other agencies we have partnered with.

Our Executive Director is Andrea Link, MD and she can be reached at [Andrea.Link@asfhg.org](mailto:Andrea.Link@asfhg.org) or her cell 713-927-8025. The rest of the staff will be introduced in the Guidebook which will be sent to you as soon as you communicate to the Fellow or Scholar who has asked you to mentor them.

### **Project Basics**

Projects should provide a direct service that meets a community-defined need and reflects national and local health priorities. Projects should all have a sustainability plan as they are expected to be of enduring value to the community/agency served as well as an evaluation plan so that impact can be assessed.

Working in collaboration with a local community agency, each graduate student Fellow must design and carry out a service project of at least 200 hours. Junior Fellows (undergraduates) and

Scholars (physicians who are in residency or fellowship) commit to projects that are less time-intensive at 100 hours. Each Fellow or Scholar will work under the supervision of a Site Mentor from the participating agency and an Academic Mentor of the student's choice from the student's current academic institution. The Executive Director and Fellowship staff are also key sources of support and guidance throughout the Fellowship year.

At least half of the required hours must be spent in **direct**, face-to-face contact with the population being served (so for Senior Fellows, this is 100 hours and for Junior and Scholars this is 50 hours). These direct service hours do not include administrative duties or research. Fellows may choose to develop a totally unique project in keeping with Dr. Schweitzer's directive that everyone should find their own *Lambaréné*—their own special place to serve, and way of serving. Alternatively, applicants may carry on a current Fellow's project.

A core tenet of the fellowship is that it is *expected* that the proposed project will change over the year, due to new needs identified in/or by the groups being served and/or unexpected situations, such as COVID. The Fellowship challenges the Fellows to adapt their original idea to meet the needs of the group or the situation.

### **Fellowship Basics**

In addition to the project, Fellows are required to attend all monthly meetings. Monthly meetings provide the Fellows with leadership development, skills-based workshops, interdisciplinary discussions, time for reflection on community service, and an opportunity to network with like-minded students from diverse fields as well as professionals in areas of interest to them.

Fellows also must submit Monthly Reports to the ED, Academic Mentor and Site Mentor. Senior Fellows and Scholars receive \$1000 and Junior Fellows receive \$650 which should go towards supporting their projects. Fellows may apply in the winter for additional grant money for supply-heavy projects.

### **Fellowship Timeline**

While the Fellowship year officially begins in April with the Orientation, really the year starts many months before this.

FALL: In the fall prior to the start of the Year of Service, current Fellows begin recruiting sessions at their universities.

WINTER: Application Workshops and one-on-one meetings with ASFHG staff take place in November, December and January, and applicants start reaching out to prospective sites and possible faculty/academic mentors. Applicants can either approach prospective sites with an idea or ask agency representatives what their needs are. Based on these preliminary meetings, applicants will draft a proposal that has been developed in consultation with both their proposed Academic and Site Mentors. All Mentors for Fellows will be asked to complete a 2-3 minute survey on their experience with the applicant on our website. Mentors for Scholars are exempted from this.

**EARLY SPRING:** In March, applicants who have been selected for interviews are invited to a zoom interview conducted by the ED and two ASFHG stakeholders (Board members, friends of the Fellowship, current Academic and Site Mentors and our alumni who we call Fellows for Life). Decisions are made and announced by mid-April. The Fellows will have an all-day Orientation in mid-April. In early May, the incoming class is introduced at the Evening of Difference, which also serves as the graduation for current Fellows. All Mentors are invited to attend this event where current Fellows show posters of their projects at a hosted reception.

**LATE SPRING:** Scholars are oriented in June and all Project Description Plans are due prior to them beginning their projects. This form must be signed by both the Site and Academic Mentor.

**SUMMER:** The summer is usually spent in planning however, some Fellows do start working with their community.

**FALL/WINTER/SPRING:** By the fall, all Fellows and Scholars should be actively at their community site working on their projects. By March they should be working on the posters which are due at the beginning of April so that they can be printed in time for the Evening of Difference usually in late April or early May where they will present their posters in the first hour and in the second, the formal graduation ceremony. Both Site and Academic Mentors should be consulted during the poster creation process.

### **Expectations of Both Academic and Site Mentors BEFORE Fellows Have Been Accepted into the Fellowship**

- Discuss the project with the applicant making sure that Site Mentors feel it is a feasible project that meets the needs of the agency, and the Academic Mentor feels the project is a good fit for their area of expertise;
- Fill out the Mentor Survey that can be found on our website under the Apply tab or by clicking [here](#)

### **Expectations of the Mentors AFTER Fellows Have Been Accepted into the Fellowship**

#### **SITE MENTORS:**

- Meet at least once with the Fellow(s) and the Academic Mentor before the project commences;
- Provide input and then sign the Project Description Form which the Fellow(s) will submit to the ED
- Engage with the Fellow to help them understand the needs of your agency and the community you serve;
- Orient the Fellow to the organization, including its personnel, policies, physical facilities, clientele, and the surrounding geographic area;
- Facilitate introductions between the Fellow and agency staff and/or stakeholders;
- Communicate any safety issues to the Fellow;
- Provide assistance in shaping the Fellow's project;

Provide practical guidance to the Fellow on project implementation and ongoing evaluation, including overcoming challenges within the project or agency;

- Provide general guidance in the personal and professional development of the Fellow;
- Review the Fellow's monthly reflections sent via email and respond if

appropriate;

- Complete a site mentor survey at the end of the Fellowship year; and
- Report any concerns to the ASFHG Program staff.

#### ACADEMIC MENTORS:

- Meet at least once with the Fellow(s) and the Site Mentor before the project commences;
- Provide input and then sign the Project Description Form which the Fellow(s) will submit to the ED
- Provide assistance in designing and implementing the Fellow's project to include curriculum review and verification strategy development;
- Assist the Fellow in determining if the project needs Internal Review Board (IRB) approval, and guide the Fellow through the process if/when necessary;
- Be available by telephone and/or email over the course of the Fellow's project to discuss the project's implementation or to help solve any problems that may arise; • Meet with the Fellow as appropriate;
- Provide general guidance in the personal and professional development of the Fellow and assist the student in balancing academic obligations with the service project when necessary;
- Act as a resource to the Fellow for professional contacts that may assist her/him over the course of the fellowship;
- Review the Fellow's monthly reflections sent via email and respond if appropriate; and
- Report any concerns to the Program staff.

#### **Time Commitment of Mentors**

It is the expectation that Site Mentors and Academic Mentors will likely spend 1-2 hours a month working with the Fellows. Both Academic and Site Mentors are asked to touch base with the Fellows every other week over the summer and then monthly in the fall, winter and spring. These can be email check ins but meetings (which can be very brief) are preferred. The Fellows assume full responsibility for arranging these meetings. If this is not happening, please reach out to the ED.

#### **When Mentors Should Reach Out to the ED**

1. If Fellows are not meeting the commitments to the project or to the expectations we have set out for meeting with Mentors.
2. If there is a concern about the content of what they are providing or the behavior of the Fellow.
3. If there are concerns about the mental health or wellness of the Fellow.
4. Any time that the Mentor is concerned.