



APGO Mentoring Program: A Shared Responsibility

Patricia Meyer, P. Geo.

The APGO Mentoring Program was initiated in 2015 with the aim of aligning more experienced members (mentors) of the association with less experienced members (mentees). Many of us, professionals, do mentoring in various forms through our workplaces- where we give and receive knowledge, insight and expertise on everyday basis. However, the APGO Mentoring Program is a more formal way to give back to the profession, where experienced members intentionally volunteer their time to be matched with students and young professionals who would otherwise not have access to that level of knowledge and expertise on a one-on-one basis.

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As a profession, there is a need to raise the next generation of geoscientists to ensure that the profession continues to thrive in an ever-changing environment. This involves helping and supporting less experienced members to become qualified, highly competent and ethical professional geoscientists. I believe that as members of a professional association, this is a shared responsibility.

I became an APGO mentor in 2015 because I remember what it felt like when I was looking to start my career in the geoscience field. I was excited to put academics behind me and start the next chapter of my life, but I also remember feeling apprehensive and anxious. I also lacked direction. I had questions about how and where to search for jobs, and questions about the types of geoscience careers that were out there. What I really needed and wanted in that period of my life was a mentor.

APGO MENTORING PROGRAM: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

When Marlien Miguel, coordinator of the mentoring program, asked me to share one thing that surprised me most about the program, it was how invested I became in helping the mentees reach their goals in such a short period of time.

The APGO Mentoring Program did not exist 15 years ago when I started my career, but I was very fortunate to have met a woman who took me under her wing, and taught me lessons that I still carry to this day. Her mentoring made a big difference and helped mold me into the professional that I am today.

With these thoughts and memories in mind, I volunteered to be part of the APGO Pilot Mentoring Program. I was matched with my first mentee in 2015, and my second in 2016. Both are recent graduates and geoscientists-in-training whose key objective was to find a position in their field. I supported each of them in their search for new positions in the geosciences, with networking suggestions, advice on potential work contracts, and gave them insight into the types of careers available to them. While both of these mentees were at a similar life stage with similar goals, I expect that other mentees in the APGO Mentoring Program may be looking for guidance and expertise in other areas. Either way, APGO has a pool of highly experience mentors with diverse expertise, and more are needed as APGO is getting more interests from student members and GITs to join the program.

When Marilen Miguel, coordinator of the Mentoring Program, asked me to share one thing that surprised me most about the program, it was how invested I became in helping the mentees reach their goals in such a short period of time. I received an email one day from one of my mentees letting me know that she found a great position. She attached a photo of herself doing field work beside a lake on a beautiful sunny day. Seeing her reached one of her key goals filled me with such happiness and pride.

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The APGO Mentoring Program is a wonderful program as it is self-directed and completely flexible. If you are a member who is wishing you had someone with more experience to talk to, consider signing up as mentee for the program.

I encourage you to consider giving back a little bit of your time to support the geoscientists of tomorrow. It is a rewarding experience and the learning always goes both ways.

I also encourage all APGO professional geoscientists to find out more about becoming a mentor in the APGO program. Many of us, professionals, would not be where we are today without the help of a supportive mentor (or network of mentors). I encourage you to consider giving back a little bit of your time to support the geoscientists of tomorrow. It is a rewarding experience and the learning always goes both ways. **APGO**

About Patricia Meyer, P.Geol.

Patricia is a member of APGO since 2004. She works as Senior Hydrogeologist at Matrix Solutions Inc., an environmental consulting company. Patricia has over 14 years of experience conducting water supply, water budget, groundwater vulnerability, contaminant transport and watershed characterization assessments in sites across Canada, USA and South America.

In addition to APGO, Patricia's professional affiliations include APEGA and International Hydrogeologists Association.

When not juggling family and work, Patricia enjoys photography, travel, baseball, tennis, and golf.