

# APGO Mentoring Program



## The Importance of Following Through with Commitment

By David M. Leng, P. Geo.

My introduction to mentoring began when I was approached by Milan Situm, P. Geo. to participate in the speed mentoring session that he was organizing for the 2013 Annual General Meeting (AGM). I took part in the 2013 program as a mentor and enjoyed the experience so much that I jumped at the opportunity to participate again in the same program at the 2014 AGM. When APGO launched the Pilot Mentoring Program in 2015, I did not think twice about signing up for the program as a mentor and I continue to be a mentor to this day. As the Association experienced growth, particularly in the student and GIT memberships, it became clear that mentoring was a much needed program to encourage and foster the development of the next generation of professional geoscientists.

When asked by APGO's Mentoring Program Coordinator, Marilen Miguel, to write an article on practical tips around mentoring, I decided to focus on the importance of following through with commitment to time. I think this is one of the critical components of an effective mentoring relationship – both for mentors and the mentees. Time is one resource that is universally in short supply, but this should not be seen as an impediment to mentoring. In the case of APGO's Mentoring Program, the time commitment is very flexible as it is essentially self-directed. Mentors and mentees manage their time commitment by setting up a mutually agreed-upon arrangement and having a clear understanding of expectations that come with it.

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If sessions are routinely missed, then both parties should discuss the issue with openness and transparency. It is important to evaluate available options to mitigate any issues and mutually decide on appropriate action.

Once a mentoring relationship has been formally established, the mentor and mentee develop a mentoring agreement that outlines how often and how long they will meet and the scope of topics to be discussed during the mentoring sessions. This provides a framework in which the mentor and mentee can work with, which allows for proper allocation of time required for each mentoring session. Once the mentoring agreement has been completed by the mentor and the mentee, both parties have an obligation to respect their time commitment.

In my experience as a mentor, I have found it useful to refer to our mentoring timetable and watch the progress that has been made to date. This serves two purposes - it serves as a reminder for upcoming mentoring sessions and allows for timely changes to be made, if needed. Throughout the duration of any mentoring program, timely communication is an absolute must, particularly when changes to a pre-arranged meeting have to be made.

Unexpected events can get in the way of a pre-arranged mentoring session that causes either the mentor or mentee to miss a meeting. Should this happen, the other party should notify the other at the earliest possible time. If sessions are routinely missed, then both parties should discuss the issue with openness and transparency. It is important to evaluate available options to mitigate any issues and mutually decide on appropriate action.

Background Photo: Gold project in Burkina Faso  
by David M. Leng, P.Geo.



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In my experience as a mentor, setbacks have occurred where pre-arranged sessions have been missed, not due to lack of interest but when unexpected situations arise. As a mentor, I consider it critical to ensure that this does not derail the mentoring relationship by fostering an atmosphere of openness and communicating my own willingness to continue on with the mentoring relationship. As a mentor, I started to review the program with the mentee. Together, we assessed the challenges and came up with a new plan that we can realistically adhere to. Out of this exercise, we also came up with a renewed sense of purpose, which greatly encourages us both to continue.

Like my colleagues who are actively involved in the Mentoring Program, mentoring has provided me with an experience that is more rewarding than I could have expected. I want to share that same experience with others by encouraging members to join the APGO Mentoring Program. If you are considering the mentoring program as a mentor or a mentee and want to learn more, take the time to speak with members who are already involved. They can provide you with insight on what being involved entails.

In my opinion, our profession and membership is undergoing a rejuvenation and growth the likes of which we have never experienced. While membership is compulsory, we can all help foster strong connections amongst members in order to promote a sense of belonging, promote knowledge exchange and professional growth. The APGO Mentoring Program is a proactive way to achieve this goal. **APGO**

### About David Leng, P.Geol.

David has been a member of APGO since 2006. He is President and CEO of RGCI, a geological and geochemical consulting firm. David has nearly 20 years of experience in technical roles involving geochemical exploration, project evaluation and corporate development with several reporting issuers at projects throughout Canada and West Africa. David became a member of APGO Council in June 2015 and also is a member of the Association of Applied Geochemists.

Background Photo: Drill core from gold project in Mali by David M. Leng, P.Geol.

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