



## What is the UDC EnvironMentors Program?



Explore Your Environment

Founded in 1992 as an environment-based mentoring program, EnvironMentors envisions young adult leaders from all cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds becoming active stewards of their communities and the environment. By creating a bridge that encourages underserved urban youth to explore environmental education in college we open potential pathways for them to move toward successful environmental careers.

Over the course of the school year, students work with mentors to develop rigorous environmental science projects based on relevant environmental circumstances in their communities. Students' research projects include selecting their own topic, thoroughly researching their topic including using scholarly articles and expert interviews, designing and performing their own experimental data collection, writing a final paper, and presenting their findings at the annual EnvironMentors Science Fair where they have a chance to compete for college

### Who are our mentors?

Our mentors are primarily university students and young professionals in environmental professions who come from a range of organizations, agencies, and universities, including: George Washington, American, Howard Universities; NOAA, EPA, Natural Resource Defense Council, National Academies of Sciences, Defenders of Wildlife. **The DC EnvironMentors Mentoring base gathers monthly for Mentor Get Togethers, which is a prime time to network and discuss the program with other mentors.** Mentors are not required to have an environmental or science degree, but they must have a passion for working with young people and sharing their love of the environment.



### What role do mentors play?

First and foremost, we want mentors and students to develop a **relationship** where they can share aspects of your academic, work, and personal lives. Generally, student-mentor pairs meet about once a week for an hour or more to discuss the progress of the project, events at school, or anything else exciting going on in their lives. We want the program to be FUN. We encourage pairs to meet for hikes, lunch, or city events to develop a stronger and more valuable relationship.

Second, we ask mentors to work with their student protégés to develop an **environmental research project** on a topic of the student's choosing over the course of the school year. EnvironMentors supports this part of the program with a mentor manual, skills workshops, weekly meetings of EnvironMentors staff with students in their science classes, and regular e-mail and phone communications between EnvironMentors staff and mentors.



Finally, we ask mentors to encourage their students to continue to **think about college, and in particular, majors and careers in science and environmental fields.** Many of these students do not come from families of college graduates, so they need outside support in considering and applying to college. Feel free to share your college experiences with your student, or bring them to your office for a work visit.

For more information about our program, please contact Douglas Loesch, UDC EnvironMentors Coordinator at

[Douglas.loesch@udc.edu](mailto:Douglas.loesch@udc.edu).