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#RealNews2017 Assignment - Speed-Mentoring:

***Speed Mentoring Offers GMU Students Advice on Professional Aspirations***

In his opening remarks as the keynote speaker for the Ninth Annual Communication Forum, #RealNews2017, that took place Tuesday, October 24th at GMU, MSNBC's own Chris Matthews asked the audience, "Who do you trust to deliver the news?" As the other panelists of the discussion following Matthews' keynote address, which included Kevin Hall, Pam Jenkins, Jack Speer, Anthony Shop, and Richard Levick, generally agreed, news consumers should engage with multiple sources for their news. This conclusion is arguably true as well when it comes to young aspiring professional journalists seeking advice and mentorship from experienced senior members of the field. Students that attended the forum were presented with the opportunity to obtain advice from the aforementioned panelists as well as a number of other industry professionals, including Logan Rice, Marcella Robertson, Michael Dobal, and others, in the speed-mentoring session following the panel discussion.

Speed-mentoring is most commonly promoted as "speed-dating meets mentoring," as **SpeedDating.com** explains, and is a growing event type that is utilized by various professional associations, companies, and universities. In a typical speed-mentoring session, as the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs demonstrates, is "a series of short, focused conversations about specific questions" during which the "mentee" is able to discuss with a certain number of credible mentors for a limited amount of time, usually around 10 minutes, and hopefully gain new nuggets of knowledge that will help them in their future aspirations. Such an event gives the mentee the rare opportunity to discuss career goals in a less formal environment. Questions that

could potentially be asked of a mentor include: How did you get into the industry? Are there any skills you would recommend learning for my field? Is there any advice you could give me concerning job hunting in my field? However, a speed-mentoring session relies on efficiency which limits the amount of questions a mentee can ask, and consequently the answers a mentor can give their temporary mentee, according to the [ArtofMentoring.net](http://ArtofMentoring.net).

As the speed-mentoring session at #RealNews2017 was at a communication forum featuring specialists in the news industry, and the students that were present were largely interested in more news-specific fields of the communication industry, the questions students asked their would-be mentors typically focused on the process of employment and success in the communication industry. When identifying the impact of this speed-mentoring session, it is important to address the perspectives of the students that took part and trusted the available panelists with giving them career advice. Speed-mentoring might seem like an unusual source for significant and impactful advice, especially in such an informal environment, but as a GMU Communications junior who discussed making connections with mentor Logan Rice explains, the efficient process of speed-mentoring made it easier to talk to mentors she would have been “too intimidated by in a normal formal situation.” A number of the mentors available for the speed-mentoring event were actually GMU alumni themselves that had experienced some magnitude of success in the news industry, a fact which may have led to the increase in the feeling of accessibility during the session.

The inclusion of the speed-mentoring session at the #RealNews2017 event exemplifies the growing trend of speed-mentoring as a viable source of career advice for aspiring young professionals in multiple fields. It also facilitates conversation between the future members of an industry and the potentially more traditional senior members of an industry, which therefore

allows for a more efficient flow of ideas. When asked if they would attend a speed-mentoring event again given the chance, a GMU Communications sophomore decided they “definitely would, provided [he] came better prepared with clearer questions about certain topics.” It seems that, at #RealNews2017 at least, speed-mentors from the news industry can be trusted to give young communication hopefuls the advice they need to succeed.