

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR
Career Education

CCE Alumni Mentorship Handbook



Thank you for volunteering your time to be an alumni mentor! Columbia undergraduate students are eager to learn from alumni and receive guidance on personal, professional, and academic goals.

The **CCE Alumni Mentoring Program ([CAMP](#))** and the mentoring component of the **[Navab Fellowship Program](#)** are carefully structured mentoring and professional network-building programs that offer undergraduate students interning, volunteering and/or researching in a wide range of fields, the opportunity to connect with alumni while also participating in professional development workshops and activities through the Columbia University Center for Career Education.

As an alumni mentor, you will:

- **Connect** virtually or in-person with a current Columbia undergraduate student over the summer
- Provide **guidance** on professional and personal development
- Share an **insider's look into a career path** and personal experiences as alumni

This manual provides an overview of the program and contains the following content:

- I. Program Expectations and Milestones
- II. Guidelines for a Successful Mentorship
- III. Mentorship Sample Schedule
- IV. Mentorship Agreement
- V. Goal Setting Worksheet
- VI. Conversation Starters

Program Contacts:

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Program Expectations

YOUR ROLE AS AN ALUMNI MENTOR

- Understand your mentee’s career interests and aspirations
- Establish rapport and trust to create an effective mentoring relationship
- Provide guidance tailored to mentee’s goals
- Share personal experiences relevant to mentee’s goals
- Offer insights into industries, job search strategies, career paths, developing skill sets
- Commit to meeting/connecting with your mentee at least 3 times throughout the summer
- Model professional communication and behavior

THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT MENTEE

- Initiate contact with your mentor
- Define and share goals for the summer
- Commit to meeting/connecting with your mentor at least 3 times throughout the summer
- Request and receive feedback
- Strengthen active listening skills
- Integrate mentor’s guidance into career research and personal development

Program Milestones

Milestone	Description	Date
Mentor Orientation (optional)	This optional session will include an overview of the expectations associated with your role as a mentor, will provide a space to answer your questions, and allow you to network with other alumni mentors.	May 15, 2024
Pre-Program Training (<i>Students only</i>)	This session will focus on mentorship matching logistics, professional goal setting, making the most of your internship, and mentorship best practices.	May 23, 2024
Mentee-Mentor Introductions	Mentees and Mentors are matched by the Program Managers and connected via an introduction email.	May 22, 2024
Mid-Summer Check In (<i>Students & mentors</i>)	We'll check-in on your experience to discuss any questions or concerns you have related to the mentorship.	Late June – Early July 2024
Summer Email Series	You'll receive CCE's summer email series on mentorship topics, activity ideas, and conversation prompts. The resources can be used to guide your mentorship conversations.	June – August 2024

Guidelines for a Successful Mentorship

The goal of mentoring is to help a student achieve their potential and discover their strengths. As a mentor, you have the potential to be a resource, catalyst, facilitator, idea generator, networker, and problem-solver. Keep the following guidelines in mind for a successful mentorship.

Do...

- **PREPARE QUESTIONS TO ASK**

Ask questions that will get your mentee talking. Learn what your mentee's goals, interests, and aspirations are so you understand how to best help them.

- **SET GROUND RULES FOR COMMUNICATION**

Let the student know how you prefer to be contacted and how often you're open to meeting. Establish these ground rules in your first meeting.

- **BE COMMUNICATIVE**

Respond to your mentee's emails when they ask about a meeting! If you are busy, please let your mentee know a good time to check back in with you.

- **SHARE ADVICE AND EXPERIENCES**

Students enjoy hearing alumni experiences and stories, whether it's about how to maximize your time at Columbia or make meaningful strides in the first few years after graduating from college. Be generous with your insights in ways that would be helpful to your mentee.

Share the pieces of you that you feel comfortable sharing and those that you feel are most important for your mentee to know- this might include talking about aspects of your identity, for example.

- **SHARE RELEVANT RESOURCES AND CONNECTIONS**

Did you read a news article relevant to a conversation with your mentee? Or hear about an event they should attend? Is there someone in your professional network you think would be great for them to meet? Send your mentee resources and facilitate introductions to helpful connections.

- **REACH OUT TO YOUR CCE PROGRAM MANAGER WITH ANY QUESTIONS**

Periodically, issues may arise related to student wellness or other issues. You are not expected to be a therapist. Reach out to your CCE program manager who can connect your mentee to the right resources or can help out if you're feeling stuck.

Your Mentoring Summer: Sample Schedule

The exact number of times you meet with a student can vary, but we ask that you connect with your mentee virtually, over the phone, via email, or in person a minimum of three times throughout the summer. *Below is a sample of what your mentorship could look like this summer:*

ONCE YOU RECEIVE YOUR MATCH: INTRODUCTIONS

Your student mentee will reach out to you with an introduction. Introduce yourself and share some details about your career, interests, and background.

WEEK 1: THE FIRST MEETING

Meet your mentee by phone or virtually. Set aside an hour for the first meeting to get to know one another's interests and hobbies. Set ground rules for communication and expectations for the mentorship.

WEEK 2: SET GOALS

Discuss your mentee's goals for their summer opportunity and how you can best provide support. Ask the student to email you their resume for review at your next check-in.

WEEK 4: CHECK IN AND RESUME REVIEW

Schedule a meeting with your mentee to discuss how their summer opportunity is going, what projects they're working on and what they're learning; review your resume suggestions.

WEEK 5: EXPLORE NETWORKING ONLINE

Invite your mentee to an industry event or professional association meeting online.

WEEK 6: MAKE CONNECTIONS

Connect your mentee to someone from your professional network for an informational interview.

WEEK 7: SHARE RESOURCES

Email your mentee a recommended book, podcast, article, or show to learn more about their industry of interest and check in on how their internship is going.

WEEK 8: WRAP-UP AND REFLECTION

Connect to say good-bye and decide how you might stay in touch! Help your mentee add their summer internship to their resume and reflect on how and what they've learned will contribute to their career goals.

Mentoring Agreement

In order to make the most of your mentoring match this summer, feel free to use the mentoring agreement template to set expectations around how you would like to connect this summer.

COMMUNICATION

Please note that matches should plan to touch base a minimum of 3 times over the course of the summer

1. How shall we plan to connect?
 - In-person
 - Email
 - Phone
 - Texting (if both parties agree)
 - Skype / Zoom / Google Hangouts
2. Are there any dates we will be traveling or unavailable? If so, what are they?
3. How often should we plan to connect?
 - a. Once a week
 - b. Every two weeks
 - c. Once a month
4. How quickly should we plan to reply to each other if an email or voice message is received?
 - a. 24 hours
 - b. Within 2 days
 - c. Within 3 days
 - d. Within 4 days
5. If we need to reschedule a meeting, how much advance notice would be preferred? How will we let the other person know?

INTERESTS AND GOALS

What are the student's goals for their mentorship? Why did they request a mentor and what are they hoping to gain from the relationship? What are the alumni mentor's goals?

Specific industry knowledge	
Professional networking strategies	
Figuring out what major or career to pursue	
Learning how to navigate the workplace	
Identity-based concerns	

Goal Setting Exercise

PURPOSE: Students can use this worksheet to plan summer goals for career development. As a mentor, you can support your mentee in identifying and developing their “SMART” goals.

GOAL #1: _____

HOW I WILL MEASURE SUCCESS: _____

GOAL #2: _____

HOW I WILL MEASURE SUCCESS: _____

NOW TAKE ONE GOAL AND VERIFY WHETHER IT IS SMART

SPECIFIC: What specific criteria are attached to your goals?

MEASUREABLE: How can this criteria be measured?

ACHIEVABLE: How is this a realistic and achievable goal?

RELEVANT: Why and how does this goal matter to you?

TIMELY: What is the time scale and timeline to achieve this goal?

NEXT STEPS – HOW CAN MENTORSHIP HELP MAKE PROGRESS ON THESE GOALS?

- Conversation about career interests and majors.
- Conversation about specific industries, relevant resources, and insider information on how to be a competitive candidate in a field.
- Recommendations of books, websites, professional associations, podcasts.
- Discussion of Columbia experience - resources, student organizations, research opportunities, service.
- Mentor can connect the student to relevant members of their professional network.
- Mentor can engage the student in a job shadowing experience.
- Plan to both attend a lecture or event together, either virtually or in-person.

Suggested Conversation Topics

Feel free to use the following questions to guide conversations with your mentee and prompt your mentee to identify and understand their own interests and aspirations.

CAREER AND INDUSTRY EXPLORATION

- *Tell me about your current or most recent position. What did you like most and least?*
- *What do you want to do when you graduate from college?*
- *What aspect of your internship do you find most challenging? Most fulfilling?*
- *What goals do you have for your internship?*
- *What career paths are you considering?*
- *What do you want to be doing in five years?*
- *What motivates you at work and in school?*
- *Are you thinking about graduate school?*

NETWORKING

- *What are your expectations of the mentorship?*
- *What do you want or expect to get out of mentoring?*
- *Have you had a mentor before, and what worked and what didn't?*
- *What are your interests and hobbies?*
- *How do you spend your free time?*
- *What concerns and hesitations do you have about networking?*

JOB SEARCH

- *What types of roles do you plan on applying for when you graduate?*
- *What responsibilities have you most and least enjoyed in previous jobs?*
- *What regions or cities do you want to find a job in next year?*

NAVIGATING COLUMBIA

- *What are you involved with on campus?*
- *What have been your favorite classes and professors?*
- *What classes are you taking next year?*
- *What organizations are you involved with on campus?*
- *What's on your bucket list before you graduate?*

Stay Connected with CCE

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR PROGRAM CONTACTS

- If you are having trouble connecting with your mentee(s), don't hesitate to reach out to us for support.
- Periodically, issues may arise related to student wellness or other issues. You are not expected to be a therapist. Reach out to your CCE program manager who can connect your mentee to the right resources or can help out if you're feeling stuck.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED AS AN ALUMNI

- **Connect:** Join our Columbia Career Connections LinkedIn Group. The group connects students and alumni under the umbrella of career exploration, informational interviews, and job search guidance.
- **Hire:** Champion the hiring of Columbia students and graduate at your company or organization. Alumni understand the unique value of the Columbia experience and can play a critical role in establishing employer relationships with CCE. You can additionally support hiring by posting a job or internship opportunity or attend a career fair or employer info session.
- **Interview:** Conduct interviews through our Virtual Practice Interview Program. Help current students prepare for their upcoming interviews by practicing questions like "Tell me about yourself" and providing critical feedback on their interview skills. Please consider joining us especially if you have ever played the role of a recruiter or hired in your own organization.

Contact Marissa Green, Associate Director, Employer and Alumni Relations at mg4371@columbia.edu to connect about more ways to get involved!