



Pathfinder

College of Staten Island | Alumni Mentorship Program



CSI PATHFINDER ALUMNI MENTORSHIP PROGRAM HANDBOOK

*This handbook provides
best practices, resources, and tips for your
journey through the program.*

WELCOME

Thank you for volunteering to participate in the CSI Pathfinder Alumni Mentorship Program! This guide was created to help you get the most out of the program and understand the mentoring resources available to assist you.

Mentoring is an amazing opportunity for alumni to give back to the next generation of doers, innovators, and leaders. By sharing experiences and providing feedback, advice and insights on topics such as academic majors, internships, career planning, college-to-career transitions, and leadership development, mentors can positively influence the future trajectories of their mentees.

As you know, CSI is a vibrant intellectual community offering undergraduate, graduate and doctoral education opportunities to more than 10,000 students. CSI offers extraordinary educational experiences and provides the expertise, research, and talent to shape the future.

We hope that the CSI Pathfinder Alumni Mentorship Program will become an integral part of shaping future leaders by helping CSI students understand industry and various fields of interest from a mentor's perspective.

Welcome again and we hope you enjoy your experience!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- INTRODUCTION**.....4
 - Program Mission and Goals4
 - What is Mentoring4
 - Benefits of Mentoring 4-5
- PROGRAM OVERVIEW**.....5
 - Matching Process5
 - How it Works.....5
 - Mentoring Resources6
 - Your Role – Mentor6
 - Your Role – Mentee7
 - Relationship Management8
- TIPS for CONVERSATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**.....9
 - Exploring Backgrounds9
 - Selecting a Major9
 - Understanding Career Paths9
 - Understanding Industries and Companies 10
 - Leadership 10
 - Extracurricular Involvement 11
 - Building a Personal Network 11
 - Transitioning to the Workplace 11-12
 - Workplace Experiences 12
- OTHER POTENTIAL TOPICS for DISCUSSION**..... 13
- SETTING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS**..... 13
- CONCLUSION**..... 14

INTRODUCTION

Program Mission and Goals

To provide students with the opportunity to learn about their chosen field of study and to explore their career objectives.

Our goals are to provide students with:

- a mechanism for obtaining current information in a constantly changing job market.
- an opportunity to explore professional objectives.
- a practical opportunity to learn more about their chosen field of study.
- a resource for developing role models.
- initiatives for career planning.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a cooperative and nurturing relationship between a more experienced person (the mentor) and a less experienced person (the mentee). Mentees benefit from mentors who assist them in navigating the complexities of higher education, and the uncertainty and anticipation of what post-college life has in store.

What are the Benefits of Mentoring?

Benefits to Mentor:

To be a CSI Alumni means to be part of something special. Many alumni look for ways to give back and the CSI Pathfinder Alumni Mentorship Program is one of the best ways to engage with your alma mater.

As a mentor, we hope you can:

- cultivate a stronger connection with the College of Staten Island.
- connect and share stories, expertise, and knowledge with students who are looking for guidance.
- deepen your knowledge of the current student body and campus community.
- learn new skills – specifically coaching and advising.
- experience renewed pride and excitement for your work
- gain a heightened sense of purpose and belonging. One of the reasons mentors agree to come on board is because it helps them appreciate their own value as role models. Mentors can develop great personal satisfaction when they do a good job with students, and experience a renewed sense of purpose in their own career path.

Benefits to Student Mentee:

Mentoring enhances a college student's personal and academic growth by providing valuable guidance, support, and opportunities for skill development, fostering a positive impact on their overall collegiate experience. Other benefits include:

- growth in self-awareness and self-discipline.
- deepening knowledge of a specific industry, employer, organizational culture, and/or job function.
- testing of ideas and constructing a personalized development plan with the help of a real work professional.
- learning to receive and accept both praise and constructive feedback.
- sharpening active listening skills.
- improving job search and networking skills.
- enhancing overall professional effectiveness
- expanding existing professional network.
- gaining a heightened sense of belonging and purpose.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Matching Process

We invite professionals from the College and community to help prepare students for the world of work through advice-giving, job shadowing, and networking.

Once accepted to the program, students are thoughtfully paired with alumni based on a variety of factors including course of study and career aspirations. A mentor can be a recent graduate or have many years of working experience; they can come from various academic majors with backgrounds and careers in a wide range of industries.

How it works

The CSI Pathfinder Alumni Mentorship Program is structured to run over the course of an academic year. CSI matches students with alumni volunteer mentors based on career interests and availability. Once paired, the student mentee will receive an email introducing them to their mentor. It will be the student mentee's responsibility to initiate contact with their new mentor, introduce themselves, and coordinate the first meeting. Meetings can be held virtually, through a scheduled telephone call, or in person.

Attention student mentees: your mentor's role is to provide support, answer questions, and help you navigate your college-to-career transition; it is not your mentor's responsibility to get you a job. Do not expect them to help place you at their company.

A reasonable mentor/mentee relationship consists of 1 to 2 calls or meet-ups a month. Mentors may ask mentees to attend work events or shadow at their office. This is at the discretion of the individual mentor.

Mentoring Resources

Your Partners in Success:

The Alumni Mentoring Program is a cross-campus collaboration between the Office of Alumni Relations and the Center for Career and Professional Development. Both offices are always available to assist you in this journey.

If you'd like support in career planning and skill building, please contact the Center for Career and Professional Development for an appointment at careers@csi.cuny.edu or 718 982-2300.

Your Role – Mentor

Your role is to advance the educational and personal growth of the student.

- You will serve as a ***role model*** to your mentee, developing a meaningful relationship, providing advice and guidance. You also are setting the example in professional acumen, values, ethics, and integrity.
- You will model ***professional behavior and conduct***. Relationships relax over time, but it is important that students model a professional tone in your relationship; please communicate similarly with your mentee.
- This is an opportunity to assist your mentee with identifying their career goals, explaining the power of building their network, and providing them with ***job search advice***.
- You will meet with your mentee regularly. ***Meetings*** can occur on digital platforms such as Zoom, Facetime, Teams, etc. If possible, it is beneficial to have an in-person meeting with your mentee, however, we recognize this may not be feasible. Work to develop an open and trusted relationship despite the geographical distance between you and your mentee.
- Work together to identify the method and frequency you will ***communicate***. We encourage at least five (5) exchanges, meetings, or touchpoints per semester. Communication patterns may change over time; be flexible with the frequency and channels that you and your mentee find to be convenient.
- If you learn that your ***area of expertise*** does not match your mentee's career interests, identify other areas where your experience can offer value and insight. If

you would like to be put in touch with another mentor in the program, so that you can introduce them to your mentee, please let us know.

- When you and your mentee meet, be sure that each of you discuss your **expectations and goals**. When expectations are not communicated, the mentor or the mentee can become disappointed as the academic year progresses. We hope that our mentors will help set the expectations for realistic and rewarding relationships.

Your Role – Student Mentee

Your role is to take ownership and demonstrate an interest and commitment to your personal and professional development.

- As mentees, it is important to understand that your mentor is donating their valuable time to participate in this program to help you succeed. We want to make sure that their time is not taken for granted. You are therefore responsible for **being proactive** in driving the mentor relationship forward. This includes initiating contact, responding to messages, and communicating clearly and effectively.
- Make sure to maintain **professional and respectful behavior and conduct**. Remember that this is a professional relationship. Therefore, courtesy and politeness are expected at all times. Be receptive to suggestions and feedback from your mentor. Constructive criticism will only be offered to help you grow professionally.
- This is an opportunity to work with your mentor to identify career goals and build your professional network. It is important that you do not ask for a job, internship, or financial sponsorship. Your role is to accept the advice provided and use it in your future **job search**.
- **Once you receive your match email, it is your responsibility to initiate contact with your mentor.** Meetings can occur in person or on digital platforms such as Zoom, Facetime, Teams, etc. Always defer to the mentor's busy schedule and try to avoid rescheduling appointments.
- Work with your mentor to identify the method and frequency of your **communications**. We encourage at least five (5) exchanges, meetings, or touchpoints per semester. Keep in contact with your mentor and be responsive to their texts, emails, and calls.
- When you and your mentor meet, be sure that each of you discuss your **expectations and goals**. Set thoughtful, clear, and measurable goals – basically

what you want to learn. Keep your goals in mind during every interaction. Remind yourself, what goal did I set out to accomplish? This will help you keep track of your progress.

Relationship Management - *Driving the relationship forward*

Maintain frequent communications – students share that ongoing interaction works well. Try to touch base via email or text at least once every two weeks. Try to meet at least five (5) times throughout the semester to help maintain your relationship.

Evaluate progress and determine whether goals are being accomplished. Goals and expectations change over time, therefore evaluate, readjust, and renew as you both see fit.

Expand your discussion list – jot down ideas based on your conversations throughout the semester. Please refer to the next section of this handbook if you need ideas.

Respond to all communications promptly. To maintain professional courtesy, we recommend you respond to any message within 48 hours.

Inform each other of schedule changes – be respectful of time by limiting cancellations, providing ample notice, and suggesting alternate dates and times.

Resolve communication issues promptly. *If you do not receive a message or response after two attempts or within two weeks, please contact us.*

TIPS for CONVERSATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Exploring Backgrounds

Share your story (life before CSI, why you chose CSI, family, hobbies)

Personalize your relationship by introducing yourself at a deeper level.

Consider discussing:

- Your major at CSI
- Your potential career paths
- Extracurricular activities while in school
- Where you live
- Hobbies
- Family

Selecting A Major

- What key factors might I consider when deciding my major?
- How did your major influence your career path?
- Help your mentee to reflect on things they enjoy doing and situations they are comfortable with. Example: analytics, creative activities, quiet time, writing, problem-solving, meeting new people, individual vs. team activities, free flow of time, highly organized time, etc.
- Have your mentor discuss classes that they have taken thus far – what have they enjoyed or not and why.
- Encourage exploring internships to learn more about possible career areas in a hands-on setting.
- Explain the benefit of talking to professionals in career fields of interest; help them locate such individuals. If you would like to be put in touch with other mentors in the program, so that you can introduce them to your mentee, please let us know.
- Share your journey of selecting a major and applying it to your initial and successive positions.

Understanding Career Paths

- Can you tell me about your career path?
- How much went as planned and how much did not?
- How did you proactively advance your career?
- What career advice do you wish you had received when you were in college?
- Talk about your career path, the changes you have made, and why.

- Consider aspects of your role(s) that are very enjoyable and the elements that limit your enthusiasm. Encourage them to learn as much as possible in each position and demonstrate their ability to work hard and achieve stated results.
- Articulate how skills and approaches learned and demonstrated in one place could be applied to another area.
- Remind them that the selection of a major is important, but it is not a “make-or-break” decision.
- Encourage them to learn what they can from each position they hold, demonstrate their ability to deliver results, and apply those experiences to other career areas.

Understanding Industries and Companies

- What are the current opportunities, challenges, and trends in your industry/company/professional area?
- What positive and negative experiences have you had in your industry?
- How long have you been with your company? What is the culture like? Do you have any tips for how to learn about a company’s culture before accepting the job?
- What qualifications and expectations are required for an entry-level position in this industry/company? Versus your position?
- Share your experiences working with different industries and companies. Point out positive and negative aspects and items that you learned or that were unexpected. Identify how you might research at a top-level, knowing what you know now.
- Talk with your mentee about the importance of researching companies and industries they have an interest in.

Leadership

- How do I demonstrate leadership if I am not a leader in a group or organization?
- What steps can I take to develop leadership skills?
- What leadership roles did you hold as a student?
- Have your mentee describe activities they have been (or are) involved in, their role and contribution. Have them clarify how they contributed to shape progress and outcomes. They should highlight what they did to go above and beyond to achieve better results.
- Use your mentee’s insights to help them frame responses to future interview questions and identify ways to bolster their leadership experiences.

- Help them broaden their view of leadership. Share that leadership can be demonstrated in many ways through interaction with others – not all leadership comes from being the official team leader.

Extracurricular Involvement

- How do I balance extracurricular activities without jeopardizing my academic performance?
- What activities might help me gain exposure to the profession? Encourage your mentee to select extracurricular activities for a specific purpose that provides a meaningful experience, demonstrates their abilities, and supplements academic performance. These activities can help build skills, offer opportunities to engage, develop teamwork skills, and demonstrate commitment.
- Remind them that there are diverse options: clubs, university sports, intramural sports, study abroad, local jobs.
- Advise your mentee that recruiters will look for candidates who demonstrate a broader experience beyond academics. Managing a balance between academics and extracurricular activities can bring a broader perspective to their “work/life” experience.
- Discuss your mentee’s interests and development needs to identify ways that extracurricular activities may bolster their leadership experiences.
- Use your mentee’s experiences in extracurricular activities to help frame responses to future interview questions.

Building a Personal Network

- At the beginning of your career, how did you build your professional network?
- What changes would you make if you had to do it again, and what techniques have proved to be most effective?
- Questions about social networking etiquette and social media professionalism.
- If you are familiar with LinkedIn, provide an overview of this professional networking site. Encourage your mentee to build a LinkedIn profile with a professional focus that is simple, ‘clean,’ and organized. Highlight words that are likely ‘searched’ and focus on successes.
- Encourage them to attend professional events to practice networking and meet new people. Communicate the value of engaging with the people that they meet, particularly those who have specific knowledge of the mentee’s area of interest or that are in leadership positions or at jobs/companies of interest (this could include summer jobs, internships, and full-time positions).

Transitioning to the Workplace

- What experiences stand out from your college-to-career transition?

- What are the attributes of someone who shows success in the workplace, in general, and when they first start their job?
- What if my job is boring and I feel I could handle more or different work?
- How is social media used in the workplace?
- Do you have any tips or experiences to share about managing relationships with co-workers?
- Share any memories of adjusting to a permanent work life and living on your own.
- Share with them that special project work, special assignments, larger responsibilities, and promotions come with experience.
- Help them get in the habit of using full sentences and adapting to different styles of communication. Examples include email etiquette, phone meetings, and conducting in-person meetings. Remind them that chats/messaging and texts only go so far and can be misinterpreted. Also remind them to treat their colleagues with respect and inclusivity, and celebrate differences.
- Remind your mentee that to effect change, a person needs to demonstrate that their ideas are credible. The best way to do this is to deliver on what your manager asks. Encourage them to go above and beyond and seek interaction with others in the organization to become recognized for their capabilities.

Workplace Experiences

- Tell me about an experience (good or bad) that impacted you at work; what were the key insights you learned?
- How do you manage your work/life balance? Does your employer offer much flexibility?
- Share some experiences with your mentee that went well for you and/or not so well. What happened, why, what did you learn? This might include interviews, presentations, negotiating a deal, projects or assignments at work, interactions with co-workers, customers, or vendors, etc.
- Remind your mentee that they will likely encounter difficult personalities and work situations during their career. Talk through some examples and how to handle them in a professional manner.

OTHER POTENTIAL TOPICS for DISCUSSION

Life Experiences

Share accomplishments or experiences that have impacted your life or future plans.

Share good and bad – moving to a new area, establishing new friends and connections, travel experiences, choosing a new apartment or house.

Cover Letter & Resume Review

Share cover letters and resumes. Share your thoughts – what does a resume and cover letter convey about skills, strengths, and accomplishments? Could it be clearer? Provide a critical review of documents. Refer to the Center for Career and Professional Development for assistance.

Identifying Internship & Full-Time Job Opportunities

Share job experiences, types of internships, or full-time jobs. Discuss timing and useful search tools. Discuss the value of internships for gaining professional experience and career, industry, or company exposure and that sometimes, internships may lead to full-time job opportunities. Look for internship opportunities with the Center for Career and Professional Development.

Interview Preparation and Company Research

Share interview experiences. Discuss some techniques to research a company, answering interview questions, dressing for an interview, writing thank you notes, and how to accept and/or decline an offer of employment.

Tips for Conversations and Activities section modified from the Penn State Mentoring Program Handbook

SETTING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

Articulating clear goals is critical to the success of a mentorship relationship. While some mentees enter into a mentorship relationship with well-defined goals, most mentees come with a general idea about what they want to learn. The idea should be considered the starting point; using the questions below, work together to talk out your goals. These questions are meant to make you think deeper and reflect on what you want out of this relationship.

Brainstorming:

1. What are some of the challenges you are currently facing – at work, at school, at home?
2. What is your strongest attribute?
3. Do you feel anything is holding back?
4. Where do you see yourself in five years? What do you believe you need to do to

get there?

5. What skills and talents are you not using?
6. What is the most important goal you want to achieve this year?

Goal Checklist:

- Is the goal clearly future-oriented?
- Is the goal realistic?
- Is the goal challenging enough for you?
- Will this goal contribute to my growth and development?
- Is the goal achievable within the timeframe of this relationship?
- Will I feel a sense of pride and satisfaction in accomplishing this goal?
- Is this goal concrete and measurable?
- Is the goal in my best professional and personal interest?

goal Setting adapted from: The Mentee's Guide, 2009

CONCLUSION

Mentorship is not just about imparting knowledge; it is about cultivating growth, inspiring potential, and building lasting relationships. As a mentor, you hold an incredible position to shape the future by empowering and guiding others. For mentees, mentorship can propel your social, emotional, and professional growth. May this handbook serve as a compass, guiding you in your journey.

QUESTIONS

Alumni Mentors should contact

Office of Alumni Relations

2800 Victory Boulevard
Building 1A, Room 110
Staten Island, New York 10314
718-982-2266
alumni@csi.cuny.edu

Student Mentees should contact

Center for Career & Professional Development

2800 Victory Boulevard
Building 1A, Room 105
Staten Island, New York 10314
718-982-2300
careers@csi.cuny.edu