

# Sister<sup>2</sup>Sister

## Alumnae-Students Professional Mentoring Program

Dear S2S Alumnae-Students Professional Mentoring Program Participant,

Congratulations, you are about to embark on an exciting journey of growth and discovery.

Alumnae mentors, this is your opportunity to give back to the Spelman community and to inspire and change a student mentee's life. Mentees, you have been awarded this extraordinary opportunity to gain a unique perspective on the "real-world." Making the most of this program will enrich your S2S relationships and complement your academic learning experience.

Our hope is that both of you will gain equally from this program while having fun at the same time.

If you should have any questions or concerns along the way, please e-mail [sister2sister@spelman.edu](mailto:sister2sister@spelman.edu).

Wishing you the best of luck on your mentorship and upcoming academic year!

Best wishes,



Alyson Shumpert Dorsey, C'2002

Associate Director | Alumnae Engagement

## PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

1. A mentoring relationship is a partnership, with both people showing respect and support for each other.
2. Discuss your expectations early in your mentoring partnership and establish shared goals and objectives.
3. At times, mentors or mentees can experience disappointment because expectations are not met, discussed or made clear. Good communication is important for healthy, productive relationships.

## INITIAL QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. What do you expect from this relationship?
2. How often would you like to meet?
3. Where and when should our meetings take place?
4. What is your preferred method of communication (i.e. telephone, email, in person)?
5. Discuss any concerns.

## STUDENT MENTEE OVERVIEW

Now that you have been notified of your alumna mentor, you are responsible for contacting her as soon as possible via phone or email. Following your initial contact, your subsequent contacts can be when it is most convenient for the both of you. In many cases, the first face-to-face contact will occur at the Kick-Off Reception in September. The goal of the first meeting is to allow you to meet your mentor and establish a plan for the year.

Prepare for your first meeting by researching your mentor's employer and be familiar with your mentor's current position and biography. Consider your meeting with your mentor as business meetings. To that end, always dress and act professionally. Additionally, at the end of every meeting, arrangements should be made for subsequent meetings. Mentor and mentees are encouraged to discuss issues related to expectations and goals of the relationship at the outset and continue such discussion throughout the process as needed.

### POSSIBLE TOPICS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR MENTOR

Mentees, below you will find recommendations for building healthy mentoring relationships. Please also take into consideration the specific information that you can learn from your mentor that you are not likely to learn from any other sources.

#### Discuss your overall goals and expectations of the program:

- Acquire an understanding of your mentor's career/position
- What is a day-in-the-life like for your mentor?
- What does your mentor like most about her profession?
- What skills matter most?
- What does your mentor, and her employer, look for when hiring a new employee?
- What skills do your mentor, and her employer, wish more applicants had?
- What skills are best learned on the job?

#### Areas of focus:

- **Resume and cover letter review**
- **Networking:**
  - Discuss your knowledge of effective networking.
  - Discuss the value of networking.

- Discuss your mentor's approach to networking.
- Ask for suggestions regarding networking opportunities.
  
- **Discussion of interview techniques:**
  - Discuss your mentor's interview experiences.
  - Discuss interview strategy.
  - Role-play interviews with your mentor.
  
- **Fields of interest:**
  - Discuss your current interests.
  - Be open to expanding your awareness of related fields and areas of employment.
  - Discuss realistic expectations for entry level positions.
  
- **Job shadowing or interning (when possible):**
  - When given the opportunity to shadow your mentor at their job, come prepared and act professionally.
  - Ask questions in advance.
  - Write thank-you notes to all colleagues you meet during your job shadowing experience.

## **MENTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1) The mentee will submit a resume to be shared with her mentor.
- 2) The mentee will familiarize herself with her mentor, the mentor's organization, profession and industry before initiating contact.
- 3) The mentee will prepare questions and discussion topics for her mentor. Appropriate topics for discussion include asking a mentor for career advice, help with her resume and portfolio, direction on which internships to pursue, and advice on changes in the industry.
- 4) The mentee will contact her mentor during the designated period prior to the kickoff event. After the initial contact, the mentee will be responsible for maintaining and scheduling all subsequent meetings at the conclusion of every call/meeting. If the mentee is unable to reach the mentor, please contact [sister2sister@spelman.edu](mailto:sister2sister@spelman.edu).
- 5) Mentees in the program understand that alumnae are taking time out of their busy schedules for the sole purpose of making themselves available to their mentees. Participation in this program is a privilege and should be given your attention and commitment. The mentee agrees to drive the mentor-mentee relationship and will commit to maintaining open communication and being available to make meaningful contact at least once a month outside of the scheduled sessions.
- 6) Mentees are not to solicit their mentors for money or gifts. Solicitation for any of these things listed will lead to immediate dismissal from the program if reported by the mentor.
- 7) If selected, the mentee will attend the monthly virtual sessions. Unless there is a class conflict, the mentee agrees to attend, regardless of whether her mentor will be in attendance. Additionally, recordings of each session will be provided for future viewing, if needed.
- 8) The mentee must send a thank you note to her mentor at the end of the program.
- 9) The mentee must complete an evaluation survey at the conclusion of the program about the program in general and her mentor.
- 10) The inclusion of each mentee in this program is based on her credentials and whether there exists a reasonable match. Care is taken to consider the mentee's field of interest. The mentee understands that there is no guarantee that her mentor's profile will be identical to the mentee's stated career goals.

## TEN TIPS FOR MENTEES

1) Initiate. In order to sustain the mentoring relationship, take the initiative to ask your mentor questions, let your mentor know your educational and professional interests and objectives, and ask about your mentor's experiences.

2) Honor Your Commitment. Your mentor probably has a very demanding job and has volunteered to take on the added responsibility of mentoring. Please be appreciative of your mentor's time and investment and respond in a timely manner to your mentor's questions and comments. If you don't have the time to respond at length, send a short message letting your mentor know you will be in contact when you have the opportunity.

3) Help Your Mentor Help You. Tell your mentor how they can be most helpful to you. Come well prepared to each scheduled meeting. Know what you want to ask, be aware of what you need. Past mentors have stressed that this is key to a successful mentor/mentee experience.

4) Expect Support, Not Miracles. You can expect a certain level of support and advice from a mentor, but she can't solve your problems for you. Perhaps the most valuable quality a mentor can offer is an alternative point of view. A mentor can put a situation in perspective, offer feedback, serve as a sounding board, and identify others to seek for advice.

5) Communicate Clearly. Initiate contact with your mentor if you have questions or would like to discuss something. Identify your needs and communicate them as clearly as possible to your mentor. It will be helpful to invest focused energy into organizing your thoughts and concerns before talking to your mentor, so that the time is spent wisely.

6) Be Teachable. Be willing to learn new things, obtain another perspective, and be responsive to suggestions and constructive criticism.

7) Keep Up Your End of the Deal. Work hard at being a good mentee.

8) Follow Through. When you decide to act on your mentor's suggestions, act in a timely manner and report back to her. Send written thank-you notes to anyone whom your mentor arranges for you to meet or talk to.

9) Look Ahead At Your Calendar. Are there any days that you know you'll be offline or ultra-busy? If so, let your mentor know well in advance.

10) Correct Misunderstanding When They Happen. Get in touch with your mentor before a concern becomes a problem.

Please note, the mentor is not expected to:

- Provide the mentee with personal introductions to other people unless she is comfortable doing so.
- Spend more time on the relationship than she is able to give.
- Take the lead in the relationship, setting up all meetings and driving the mentee's career development.

# ALUMNAE MENTOR OVERVIEW

Once the mentor-mentee matches are confirmed, and information is sent to each participant, mentees are responsible for contacting their mentors as soon as possible. Contact between participants can be in the form of mailings, phone calls, e-mails, video, webinar, or personal meetings.

The initial contact should be informal. The goal in the first meeting is to foster an environment in which both participants are at ease. Additionally, at the end of every session, arrangements should be made for subsequent meetings. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to discuss issues related to expectations and goals of the relationship at the outset.

## **POSSIBLE TOPICS TO DISCUSS WITH MENTEE**

The outline below is intended to assist mentors with the mentoring process. Mentors are not expected to address all stated areas and this is by no means an exhaustive list. It is merely a guide. Please also take into consideration specific information that you can share with your mentee that they are not likely to learn from any other source.

## **QUESTIONS FOR MENTOR TO ASK MENTEES**

- 1) What are your plans for your professional future?
- 2) Do you need help in learning how to network?
- 3) What kind of network would you like to develop?
- 4) What are your overarching, or long terms, goals?

## **POSSIBLE TOPICS TO DISCUSS WITH MENTEES**

- 1) Discuss your mentee's current interests.
- 2) Help your mentee to expand their awareness of related fields and areas of employment.
- 3) Discuss realistic expectations for entry level positions.

## **MENTORS RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The mentor program is designed to provide S2S mentees peer to peer consultation, advice and networking opportunities regarding academic experience, internships, and careers.
2. The mentors are available to S2S mentees to provide an insight regarding Spelman College's academic experience, and career or internship advice or guidance, but are not solicited for employment opportunities or money/gifts.
3. The mentors agree to maintain monthly contact with their mentee after initial contact is made by the mentee during the first week of the program. Both the mentor and the mentee are responsible for contact throughout the duration of the program.



4. The mentors are expected to attend the monthly virtual sessions. Additionally, recordings of each session will be provided for future viewing, if needed. The mentors may e-mail [sister2sister@spelman.edu](mailto:sister2sister@spelman.edu) with any concerns or issues during the mentorship period.
5. The mentors can provide an evaluation of the mentor program at the email address above.