MENTEE HANDBOOK
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INTRODUCTION

Pace University’s Alumni-Student Mentoring Program (PASM) brings together experienced professional alumni with students who are generally in the latter part of their undergraduate academic careers. When fully implemented across the University, PASM is envisioned as a key component to the Pace Path. While in the process of creating a large scale, sustainable mentoring program, Pace University is conducting a pilot version of the program within the Lubin School of Business for the Spring 2015 semester.

The mission of the program is to foster a culture of mentoring at Pace that:

- Connects students with alumni mentors through a structured framework encouraging productive conversations around academic, professional, and life goals;
- Empowers alumni mentors to engage students in critical thinking that fosters practical and strategic considerations; and
- Enhances the student perspective on career choices, transitioning from student life to work life, and building a robust professional network.

While an important objective of the program is to help students prepare for the search, interview, and acceptance of a career position following graduation, it is not intended to secure jobs or internships for the students. Career Services is best positioned to facilitate the actual job or internship search process with the students.

As an outcome of the mentorship experience, students are more self-aware of their interests, their skills, and their skill gaps when deciding their post-graduation objectives. They are therefore more likely to be successful sooner in their transition to career or post-graduate studies.

Mentors find the experience to be a meaningful and valuable way to stay connected with Pace. They also often feel a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment, professional and personal rejuvenation, enhanced creativity, and improved interpersonal communication, and leadership skills from their engagement with the students.

**Mentorship defined:**

Mentoring is a learning partnership where a more experienced mentor draws upon their knowledge, skill set, and personal experience to provide guidance and feedback while facilitating the personal growth and development of a less experienced mentee (student). The mentee takes an active role and holds the primary responsibility for their learning and development. The mentor facilitates that growth by asking thought provoking questions, role-modeling behavior, and offering guidance of things to consider when making decisions. The intended outcome is that the mentee gains greater insight and is better prepared to make informed strategic decisions regarding their professional life.
PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Alumni Relations Office is responsible for the development and oversight of PASM. They work cooperatively with key program offices such as Career Services and the Office for Student Success as well as each school.

For the Spring 2015 semester (February – May), Pace University will be conducting a small-scale mentoring pilot program. The program offers short-term mentoring engagements for alumni mentors and student mentees. One of the objectives of the pilot is to learn more about the infrastructure necessary to conduct an effective program. As such, some of the information below is specific to how we execute the pilot and subject to change.

Undergraduate students who have achieved enough credit hours to be considered a junior or senior, hold an overall GPA of 2.5 or greater, and complete the online mentee application are eligible to participate in the program. All students must be currently enrolled at Pace prior to the start of the program cycle. For the purposes of the pilot program, only pre-selected students from the Lubin School of Business were invited to participate.

Mentors are alumni who graduated five or more years ago, are currently employed or recently retired (within the past three years), and who have completed the online mentor application form. For the purposes of the pilot program, a select group of Lubin School of Business alumni were invited to participate.

Alumni Relations facilitates the matching of mentors and mentees. For the pilot, this will be a manual process. Both mentors and mentees will complete online application forms. From these forms short alumni profiles (excluding contact information) will be provided to the students selected to participate in the program. Students will be asked for input on their preferred alumni match. Matches are not guaranteed as both student and alumni preferences will be taken into consideration. Mentors will be assigned only one mentee. The Alumni Relations Office will notify both parties of their match forty-eight hours in advance of the kick-off event. The kick-off event serves as the first introduction for the mentors and mentees. Attendance is important and strongly encouraged.

Requests for feedback and check-in emails will be sent periodically throughout the program. At the conclusion of the program both the mentor and mentee will be required to evaluate and reflect on the experience. An evaluation form must be completed by both parties and can serve as the agenda for a final discussion.

The PASM is designed to terminate the mentoring relationship at the end of the program cycle. However, the mentor and mentee can elect to continue their relationship by mutual consent.
1. **Apply and Create Your Mentee Profile**

In order to register for the mentoring program, mentees and mentors must complete an online application. A complete and thoughtfully prepared application gives both parties an opportunity to learn a lot about each other in advance. As a mentee, you will have an opportunity to search for a mentor based on content included in his or her mentor profile. A mentor will have access to your mentee profile after you have been matched with him or her.

Consider your personal interests and/or extracurricular activities, your goals for a mentoring relationship, and what you would want a potential mentor to know about you when completing your mentee profile.

2. **Requesting a Mentor**

Once your application has been completed and you are chosen to participate, you will receive the profiles of available mentors.

Identify three mentors that you think can best help you achieve your goals or match your personal and professional interests. Alumni Relations staff will do their best to match you with one of your preferred mentors. Please note, we cannot guarantee that you will be matched with your preferred mentors as we take their preferences into consideration as well. Students will only be assigned one mentor per session.

The mentor-mentee partnership is not intended as a means to secure a job or internship, but to explore fields, job types, and skills.

At the end of spring semester, the mentor-mentee partnership concludes.

3. **Setting Up Meetings**

Mentors and Mentees will be invited to a kick-off event at the start of each mentoring program cycle. This will serve as a way to make introductions and create an initial exchange of information. Attendance is strongly encouraged for both parties.

After being matched, mentees should reach out to the mentor through the mentor’s preferred method of contact (noted in profile) to set up an initial meeting. Mentees are expected to initiate contact and take ownership in arranging meetings. A sample “First Meeting Agenda” with discussion points and questions has been included at the end of this handbook for reference.

For the greatest results, mentors and mentees should aim to meet or have a substantial phone call at least two times per month. This ensures progress is being made, especially in a short program cycle. For the purposes of the pilot, a minimum of 2-4 meetings/calls should be planned. If time permits and both parties agree, more meetings/calls could be arranged.
COMMITMENT SELF CHECK

Although mentoring appears to be an easy way to grow your personal and professional skill set as well as expand your network, it should not be entered into lightly. Participating in a mentoring relationship requires time, energy, and enthusiasm. You will be required to:

- Look for suitable mentors and initiate contact once you are matched
- Attend the Alumni-Student Mentoring Program Kick-off
- Schedule and commit to regular meetings with your mentor
- Receive feedback and participate in self-reflection
- Maintain regular contact, be responsive, and follow through with action steps
- Complete an evaluation at the conclusion of the program

After careful consideration, you may find that mentoring is not right for you or that you do not have the time to invest at the moment. If this is the case, it is far better to make that decision now than to back out of a mentoring relationship after a mentor has invested time and energy into you. Although you may not be able to engage in the program now, you may want to consider participating at a later date. When you are ready to participate you will be expected to meet the expectations outlined in the following pages.
EXPECTATIONS

Following are guidelines that will help you to have a successful mentoring partnership.

Maintain regular contact. Mentors and mentees should commit to speaking a minimum of twice a month during the mentoring cycle. Although email is an important tool in distance mentoring, it cannot be substituted for actual, real-time conversation. Conversations may occur over the phone, via Skype (or similar software), and/or in person when possible.

Set clear and realistic goals. At the start of a mentoring partnership, mentors and mentees will have a conversation that addresses goals for both the mentor and mentee.

Be responsive. Both mentors and mentees are expected to return calls and e-mails in a timely manner (e.g. within two business days). If you will be unavailable for a period of time due to study, communicate that to your mentor.

Receive feedback. It is important that mentees be open to receiving feedback that is candid and delivered in a thoughtful and constructive way. If necessary, your mentor will help you learn how to receive and respond to feedback by modeling the behavior through open discussion. Actively listen to the experiences, feedback, and situations your mentor shares with you.

Participate in self-reflection and self-development. Expect thought-provoking questions designed to help you understand and articulate your motivations, accomplishments, weaknesses, etc. Mentors can assist in practicing key behaviors for success such as communication, presentation, etc.

Honor commitments. If a mentoring conversation must be cancelled, it is expected that you and your mentor will do your best to communicate in advance of the meeting and reschedule. If you decide to remove yourself from the program, it is expected that you will honor partnerships in progress. If circumstances prohibit you or your mentor from participating in the program prior to the end of a term, each party must agree to notify their mentoring partner and Alumni Relations.

Evaluate. At the mid-point and the end of each semester, both participants will be required to complete an evaluation form.

*Note: This program is not intended to facilitate job or internship placements. Mentors are not expected to offer, refer, or connect you with these type of opportunities. If you wish to secure a job or internship, please contact Career Services.*
FINDING A MENTOR

It is good practice to spend some time thinking about the skills, knowledge, experience, and personality traits that you are looking for in a mentor. Further, you should consider why you are looking for a mentor and what you hope to achieve with this partnership.

While you will be able to search for mentors based on some demographic criteria, you will need to read through the content in the mentor profiles in their entirety in order to get a sense of whether a particular mentor fulfills your criteria. Some mentors may have preferences such as meeting in person or only in the evening which you should also take into consideration. As you experience more mentoring relationships, your criteria may change. It is good practice to evaluate your criteria for a mentor and mentoring partnership each time you engage in the process. Below are some variables for you to consider.

**Age.** Is it important for your mentor to be close in age, early in their career, or a more seasoned professional? The goals you have for the relationship will help to determine your answer. For example, if your goals are to apply to grad school, it may be more appropriate to speak with someone who has gone through the process more recently. If your goals are related to your future career path, it may be more appropriate to connect with someone who is early in his or her career or more seasoned as a mentor. Even so, both options may have very different perspectives that could be valuable. Someone early in their career may be able to speak more readily to the realities of the day in the life of the position you would most likely apply to or may be able to give their firsthand account of the application process. Someone more seasoned in their career may offer a broader perspective or share interviewing insight as a hiring manager.

**Common Interests.** Is it important that your mentor like all the same things that you do, such as sports, music, books? Is it important they share the same academic pursuits? While sharing a common interest helps to build rapport and provides immediate topics of conversation, a mentor who has different interests than you may encourage you to develop new interests and explore topics or events that you may not otherwise have considered or been exposed to previously.

**Experiences.** What types of experiences do you want your mentor to have in their background? For example, is it important that your mentor share your major or work in the industry in which you are most interested? Is it important that your mentor have pursued a graduate degree or belonged to the same student organization as you?

**Other traits and characteristics.** Is it important for your mentor to be the same gender, race, or ethnicity? Having race, gender, or ethnicity in common with your mentor may provide you a perspective of how that factor has played out in their experiences, which may or may not resound with you. For example, an international student searching for a job or internship may have to explain visa status during their search, so it may be helpful to have a mentor who also navigated this situation in their career. This is also an opportunity to explore different views of the world.
CONNECTING TO ALUMNI

For most mentees, your first contact with your mentor will be at the kick-off meeting. This is your opportunity to make a good first impression and introduce yourself. You should dress appropriately (no athletic wear, neat and clean). After the initial kick-off, contact information for each party will be exchanged. If you lose the contact information for your mentor, please notify Alumni Relations right away by calling (212) 346-1286 or emailing hharris@pace.edu.

If your mentor cannot attend the kick-off meeting, you will be notified and are expected to arrange an initial meeting with him/her. Additionally, if you cannot attend the kick-off, you will also be expected to arrange a first meeting with your mentor. Alumni Relations will notify the mentor in advance of the event.

When reaching out, you should personalize emails and use professional language.

It is good practice to be formal in your initial correspondence (e.g. Mr. Smith, Ms. Jones). Alumni and employers often state that when a student does not observe professional courtesies in their communications it negatively impacts their impression of the candidate and level of seriousness. Some common mistakes include the lack of punctuation, improper use of capitalization or lack of capitalization, lack of formal greeting, use of informal tone, poor grammar, misspellings, and use of internet slang and/or emoticons. It is equally inappropriate to send a general or blanket email when attempting to make a personal connection with an individual.

Please note your mentor’s geographic location, preferred contact time, and best method to reach them. This will guide when and how you should reach out.
PARTNERING WITH YOUR MENTOR

While your mentor will not provide you with all of the answers or give you a job/internship, he or she will facilitate self-reflection and self-development so that you are able to think critically and resolve challenges on your own. To help you achieve this, mentors utilize a number of skills including:

- Active listening
- Ask thought-provoking questions
- Role-model behavior
- Provide objective feedback and guidance
- Demonstrate critical thinking
- Sharing experiences

With the guidance of your mentor, you will develop a similar set of skills outlined below that will empower you to think, reflect, and take the necessary action steps to realize your goals.

**Set goals.** In order to focus your mentoring relationship, it is important to take a moment to reflect on what you want to achieve during the relationship and where you want to be at the end of 4 weeks, 4 months, in one year. Once you have identified goals, you will be able to begin your mentoring relationship with the end in mind and work towards making concrete progress. You will learn more about setting achievable goals in the Stages of Mentoring section.

**Actively listen.** Active listening is a communication technique that requires the listener to really listen for the underlying message and not just hear the words being spoken. A common technique used to ensure that the listener understood the message is to paraphrase what he or she has heard the speaker say in order to confirm understanding. As an active listener, you should also pay attention to your non-verbal cues such as your facial expressions, body language, and eye contact to make sure that you are communicating to the speaker that you are engaged. Be aware though that non-verbal cues can also indicate a cultural difference. For example, in some countries it is considered impolite to look someone in the eye when speaking to them.

Tips for active listening:

- Focus your attention on the speaker
- Avoid distractions like cell phones, e-mail, etc.
- Find a quiet place to speak
- Do not interrupt the speaker or assume a conclusion before the speaker has finished
- Listen for feeling and tone in speech
- Do not react with judgment. Instead summarize main points once the speaker is finished using phrases like, “what I heard you say is” or “let me summarize your points to make sure that I heard you correctly”
- Take notes to capture important thoughts and concepts
Receiving and responding to feedback. Feedback, no matter how much we ask for it, can be very difficult to receive. Even when delivered thoughtfully and candidly, it can be hard to hear how we may improve or that others’ perceptions of our behavior do not match our own. However, constructive feedback can be an effective tool for personal and professional growth. So before dismissing feedback as invalid or becoming overly defensive, take a step back and consider what is being said. Good feedback is not about your worth as a person, but about your behavior.

Tips for receiving and responding to feedback:

- Refrain from reacting and responding immediately. If the feedback is particularly difficult to hear, remove yourself from the situation until you can objectively assess the message without focusing on the delivery and how it felt. Consider saying, “Thank you for the feedback. I need some time to think about what you shared before responding.”
- Ask questions for clarification and summarize in your own words what you heard before you respond. Consider saying, “I would like to be clear that I understood you correctly. What I heard you say was...”
- Reflect on your own reaction as you process the feedback. Write down your reactions. Are you reacting to the content or the delivery? While it is instinct to react to the delivery, focus on the content of the message: what is really being said?
- Ask for suggestions, from your mentor or from others, on specific steps you could take to address the feedback. For example, “I hear that you are saying that I need to work on managing priorities. Can you provide me with some examples of how I might approach that?”
- Be proactive and solicit feedback regarding ways you would like to improve. For example, “I am struggling with time management and I notice that you do a good job of managing all of the priorities in your life. Can you give me some advice on how to do this better?”

Take initiative and ownership of your own development. In your mentoring relationship, you will be expected to own your developmental progress. You should not wait for your mentor to tell you what to do and how to do it. For example, your mentor should not have to seek you out. You are responsible for regularly reaching out to your mentor.

Build effective relationships. As with any new relationship, building the trust and respect that is crucial to its success will take time and is demonstrated through action. Honoring your commitments, being on time for your meetings, being respectful and open to suggestions are actions that will be crucial to building that trust with your mentor. While you may not be the best of friends, your relationship will still require strong interpersonal skills, open communication, and a willingness to be honest with the other person.

Reflect on key learning moments. Your mentor will ask you a lot of questions that are meant to provoke deep and critical thought, reflection, and discussion. As part of your reflection process, you should consider keeping a journal where you write down your thoughts and feelings on what was discussed and agreed upon after every meeting. Your journal does not need to be shared with your mentor but may reveal topics to explore in future meetings.
STAGES OF MENTORING

Your mentoring partnership should be marked by three distinct stages. In the beginning, you and your mentor will get to know one another, set goals for the partnership, and agree on expectations. The middle stage is an on-going process. You and your mentor will revise goals, create action plans, take action, and reflect on outcomes. It is a period of sustained growth and relationship development. At the end, the partnership should be evaluated and redefined if necessary, and accomplishments should be celebrated.

The Beginning. In your first meeting, you should create a mentoring agreement that establishes goals, ground rules, and expectations for both parties. This agreement will be the foundation for your partnership. (Samples are included at the end of this handbook.)

Tips to get to know your mentor:
- Discuss your personal backgrounds, academic, work, and extracurricular experiences.
- Discuss why you chose Pace University and your most significant memory, class, etc.
- Share any previous experience with mentoring and lessons learned.
- Share why you have agreed to participate and your goals for the partnership.
- Talk about your goals and what you want out of the partnership.

Potential areas of focus for goal setting:
- Identify ways to market existing skills in the workplace and/or job search.
- Work on a specific academic goal such as selecting a graduate program or field of study.
- Develop leadership abilities.
- Explore personal interests and abilities.
- Learn how to handle school-life-work balance.
- Explore future career paths and opportunities.

Questions to establish clearly defined expectations:
- How often will you meet and how?
- Who will be responsible for making the arrangements for the meetings?
- What will be your “ground rules” for how the time will be spent and how you will communicate?
- What does confidentiality mean to you and what does it mean to your mentor?
- What topics are off-limits?
- How will you respect one another’s time?
The Middle. This stage will focus on discussing how to achieve the goals that have been outlined in the agreement. Not only will you examine these goals in more depth, but your mentor will also assist you with developing an action plan for achieving them.

An example of an effective goal statement is “Identify programs and gather information so that I can study abroad next year.” Action steps for this goal may include:

1.) Define why you wish to study abroad.
2.) Schedule a meeting to speak with the study abroad advisor to discuss opportunities.
3.) Attend a “Steps to Study Abroad” workshop.
4.) Research programs and eligibility criteria in order to identify at least 2 programs of interest.
5.) Identify 2-3 students who have attended programs of interest and arrange to speak with them about their experience.

Tips for creating effective goal statements using the SMART goal model:

- Be **Specific**—the goal statement should be concrete and action-oriented. What specifically are you trying to accomplish? Ask: Are there ways to restate the goal to remove any misunderstanding? Does the goal start with an action verb?
- **Measurable**—how will you know when you have achieved the goal? How will you and your mentor track and measure progress? How is success defined?
- **Achievable**—the goal should require work, but be attainable. Is the goal too big or too small?
- **Realistic**—do you have the ability and commitment to reach the goal? What additional resources of time, money, or capability will be needed to reach the goal? Does the goal set you up for failure?
- **Timely**—there should be a specific time-frame for achieving the goal which will hold yourself accountable.

The End. This final stage is a time to reflect on the lessons learned, wisdom gained, and progress made by both you and your mentor. Some points to reflect on are: What were the greatest challenges? What lessons were learned? How will you use new knowledge and skills moving forward? Additionally, it is a time to redefine the relationship with your mentor and set new ground rules and boundaries of your future interaction.

*Note: You and your mentor will receive a final evaluation that you may choose to incorporate into your last conversation.*
I. MENTORING PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Mentoring Term (Start – End Date):

Meeting Schedule
Responsibility for setting meetings:
Frequency and duration:
How will schedule conflicts be managed:

Goals

Partnership Expectations

Ground Rules (e.g. confidentiality, respect, boundaries, values, limits, vulnerability)

Communicating Feedback Guidelines

We agree to honor the agreement as outlined above. Our intention is to complete the full mentoring program cycle. We will complete assessments and evaluations as required by the program. At the conclusion of the program, we may extend our partnership if both partners agree to it. Should either party need to end the partnership prior to the scheduled conclusion, we will appropriately notify one another and the Office of Alumni Relations.

Mentor Signature
Date

Mentee Signature
Date
II. FIRST MEETING AGENDA (SAMPLE)

Introductions
- Exchange bios, resumes, and share a brief history of your experience.
- If comfortable, provide personal information like hobbies, passions, etc.
- Establish rapport by identifying points of connection and exchanging information.

Discuss Mentoring
- What words come to mind when you think of mentoring?
- Have you ever been engaged in a mentoring partnership before? Describe the circumstances.
- What have you learned or gained from a previous mentoring experience?

Determine Goals
- What do you want to learn from this experience?
- Articulate goals using the SMART model—specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

Determine Expectations
- What do you want out of the mentoring partnership?
- What does a successful mentoring relationship look like?
- Who will be responsible for scheduling meetings?
- How often will you meet and for how long? Will these be by phone, Skype, or in-person?
- Who will run the meetings? Will there be an agenda?
- Will you correspond in between meetings? How often?
- How will you manage time conflicts with scheduled meetings?

Discuss Ground Rules
- Where do you define boundaries (time availability, etc.)?
- Discuss guidelines around confidentiality. What does confidentiality mean?
- What topics are off-limits?
- What are your personal values?
- How do you define respect? How will you respect one another’s time? Values? Limits?

Complete the Mentoring Partnership Agreement
- Fill out the template using the information discussed above.
- Both participants sign and keep a copy of the agreement for their records.
CONTACT INFORMATION

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*Special thanks to Amherst College for allowing us to model this handbook after their Pathways Program Handbook.