

Career Mentee

Quick Start Guide

A JCC Career Mentor is a guide, a friend and a resource.

What is...?

The Career Mentor Connection?

There are few things scarier than figuring out what the future holds after you graduate from college. Wouldn't discussing it with someone who is where you want to be make it so much easier?

Now more than ever, it is critical for students to gain a perspective from outside the classroom and network with professionals.

Mentors and Mentees are paired based on similarities in their personal and professional profiles. This allows for the development of new or different perspectives on shared ideas for both mentors and mentees.

This program strengthens the bond between alumni and students as well as helps shape future leaders. By becoming a mentee, you can successfully prepare for the transition into post-JCC life and the workforce while taking advantage of the myriad of opportunities available to you today.

A Mentorship?

"Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction"-John C. Crosby

By definition, a mentorship is "a professional relationship in which an experienced person assists another in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person's professional and personal growth." Given this broad definition, you have the opportunity to construct the relationship with your mentor within a mutually beneficial framework.

A mentorship is based on mutual trust and respect, and the relationship is as unique as the individuals involved. Mentors and mentees have total responsibility of structuring the relationship. However, if needed, the program offers thorough guidelines to provide ideas and assist in facilitating interaction.

Qualities of an Ideal Mentee

Do you have what it takes? Qualities of an ideal mentee include:

Enthusiastic

No one wants a dud for a mentee! A good mentee quickly demonstrates their openness and willingness to learn through high engagement with their mentor. Show your enthusiasm by preparing for meetings and actively asking questions about your mentor's experience. Do not let your mentorship turn into a drawn out interview; occasionally challenge your mentor's ideas with your own perspective and engage in a dialogue that will be mutually beneficial.

Open-Minded

One of the reasons you probably chose to have a mentor is the fact that you are unsure of how to reach the career and personal goals you have set for yourself. Mentors are walking in the shoes you hope to fill, so listen to their experiences with an open mind. You may learn a different outlook that you never considered. Mentors are sharing advice they believe will help you on your own journey, so be ready to learn something new as a result of the conversation.

Respectful

A good mentee recognizes he/she is not entitled to this privilege and is grateful for the opportunity to learn from an experienced professional. Mentors are volunteering their time to talk with you, so prepare for your meetings and stay focused on what you want to achieve through this mentorship. Good mentees maintain a professionalism that can translate into successful workplace and personal relationships.

Future-Oriented

A good mentee realizes the importance of networking with professionals who have shared interests. Recognize the abundance of knowledge and experience you have as a resource and learn as much as you can for your own future. Ask for outside resources or contacts that can further your development professionally and personally.

Professional Etiquette

When beginning the Career Mentor Program, keep in mind that mentors are professionals and expect to be treated that way. Make a great first impression by following these tips.

E-mail

1. Briefly introduce yourself. When reaching out for the first time, be sure to include a short introduction of yourself. Include your name, class year, major, and why you are interested in having a mentor.
2. Stay classy, students. Keep your message more formal than not. Only address someone by their first name if they imply that it is ok to do so.
3. REVISE! REVISE! REVISE! Your email is a reflection of you, especially if you have never met in person before. If your email is mistake-filled and disorganized, the recipient will think the same of you.
4. Use subject field to indicate content and purpose. Be clear and concise in your subject line. Do not use all caps, lower case, or excessive exclamation points; you will be mistaken for spam!
5. No text message lingo. No more using slang and emoticons to relay what you are trying to say. Make sure to write out each word and use correct grammar and punctuation.
6. Respond in a timely fashion. Do not make your mentor wait a week for your response! An appropriate time frame for responding would be within 24-48 hours.
7. Want to add emphasis? Refrain from using a bunch of exclamation points or all caps. THIS LOOKS A LITTLE HOSTILE, RIGHT???. Properly emphasize by bolding or underlining words. Otherwise, you risk looking childish and unprofessional.
8. Beware of the premature sent email. Protect yourself from accidentally sending an unfinished email by adding the recipient's address once the email is fully revised.

Phone

1. Briefly introduce yourself. Do not assume your mentor knows your number. When they answer, introduce yourself and quickly state why you are calling.
2. Be considerate. Make sure your mentor has your undivided attention. Do not make your mentor feel like you don't value their time and knowledge.
3. Be courteous. As elementary as it sounds, always say "Please", "Thank You", and "You're Welcome". Let them know you are grateful for the time they are donating on your behalf.

Professional Etiquette Continued

4. Be punctual. If you say you are going to call your mentor at 10 a.m., then that is when you are going to call them. If for some reason you cannot make the call at that time, call and let them know you will have to postpone it. Never make them wait around for a call that is not going to come!
5. Be professional. When answering a mentor's phone call, don't just say "Hello". Get in the habit of stating your name when you answer so they know they called the right number. Ex. "Hello, this is (Name)."
6. Personalize your voicemail. If your mentor calls and you are unavailable, you do not want them listening to that weird robot voice asking them to leave a message. Instead, personalize it. Ex. "Hello, you have reached (Name). I am unavailable to take your call at the moment, so please leave your name, number, and a brief message at the tone. I will return your call as soon as possible. Thank you!"
7. Always have a notebook. When you are on the phone with your mentor, they may give you information that you want to write down. Do not make them wait while you are rummaging for a pen and paper. Get into the habit of always keeping a notebook and writing utensil near you while on the phone with your mentor.

Meeting with Your Mentor

1. Be early. Arrive to the location you are meeting your mentor at least 15 minutes early. This will give you time to get situated before you meet. If you are late, shame on you. Remember, early is on time, on time is late, and late is unacceptable!
2. Turn your cell phone off. You want to give your mentor your undivided attention. If you are expecting an urgent call, let your mentor know ahead of time and set your phone on vibrate.
3. Shake hands. If you follow the first tip, you will probably be the first one there. When your mentor arrives, stand up and extend your hand first. A handshake should be firm with an energy that communicates strength, sincerity and professionalism.
4. Be prepared. Have your own agenda and goals you wish to achieve through this meeting. Think about questions you wish to ask your mentor and topics you would like to go over.
5. Always have a notebook. Be sure to take notes while your mentor is speaking. If you are sitting there passively listening, your mentor will think you are tuned out and do not care.
6. Contribute to the conversation. Keep your mentor engaged by actively adding to the conversation. This is not a one-sided interview; they want to get to know you as well!
7. When in doubt, dress one level above what you think the appropriate dress code is. Always err on the side of caution when it comes to professional wear.

Writing Samples

Here are samples of writing you can reference when you are reaching out to your mentor. Make sure to personalize these samples how you see fit.

Email

When introducing yourself to your mentor:

Hello Mr. /Mrs. /Ms. (Name),

My name is (Name), and I am a freshman/sophomore (Major) at Jamestown Community College. I am reaching out as a participant in the JCC Career Mentor Program sponsored by the Office of Applied Learning and as your new mentee .

I wanted to express my gratitude to you for donating time from your busy schedule to be my mentor. Your knowledge and insight regarding the (Industry) field will be incredibly beneficial to me.

(Give a little background on yourself. This can include academic and personal information.)

(Explain why you are interested in the Mentor Program.)

Again, thank you very much for agreeing to become my mentor. I look forward to speaking with you and developing our relationship. It is suggested that we discuss the Mentorship Agreement Form and determine the logistics of the mentorship. When would be the most convenient time for you to talk further?

All the best,

(Name), (Class Year)

Building the Mentoring Relationship

- Every mentoring relationship is unique. We offer the following guidelines that we hope will help you in creating a satisfying relationship with your mentor.

Get to know your mentor

- Be sure to get to know your mentor on a personal level. While mentors are excellent career resources, you can learn a lot from their personal stories as well.

Set goals with your mentor

- Setting goals with your mentor is critical. It gives direction and clarity to the mentoring relationship. It also increases the likelihood of a successful relationship.
- Think about what you hope to gain from this experience and what activities you might be interested in doing with your mentor.
- Remember, goal-setting can be a process – priorities can and will change/evolve.

Set expectations with your mentor

- Determine how and when you will communicate with each other. Renegotiate as needed.
- It might be difficult to find the time to talk or meet with your mentor, so schedule your next meeting time – if only tentatively – at the end of each meeting.
- Keep the relationship a priority. Even if you cannot meet or talk with your mentor very often, at least try to keep communication consistent (i.e., send an email message every couple of weeks)
- Be proactive. If your mentor has not responded to you in a while, do not be shy about sending another email message or calling him/her again. He/she simply may have gotten busy or missed your previous message. If you don't hear after several attempts, please contact us at 716.338.1165

Suggested Questions to Ask Your Mentor

Job Description

- What is your job title?
- What is your typical day on the job?
- What percentage of each day do you spend in various work activities?
- How free are you to do your work independently?
- What types of problems are you likely to face during the day?
- What are the most satisfying and the most frustrating parts of your work?

Advancement

- How did you get to your current position?
- What are the future trends and developments that you see affecting careers in your field?

Preparation

- What preparations do you recommend for a person entering this occupation?
- What education/degrees/training/licenses are required?
- If you could start all over again in launching your career, what steps would you take?
- What courses do you recommend taking for this occupation?

Lifestyle

- What hours do you normally work?
- Is overtime common?
- Is travel a factor in this job?
- What are the professional organizations in this field?
- What are the pressures that you face?
- How does this occupation affect your private life?
- What is expected of you outside of working hours?
- Is there a formal mentor program set up in your workplace?
- Who was/is your mentor?

Tips for Mentees

- We encourage you and your mentor to start discussing your goals for the mentoring relationship as soon as possible
- Goals are important because they provide direction and clarity, and help to improve the success of the relationship.
- You both attended college, so you will be able to relate on that level Remember to communicate your enthusiasm and gratitude about working with your mentor.

Tips for a Successful Relationship

- Be open-minded and willing to learn
- Be honest and real about yourself
- Be proactive and take initiative
- Be prepared for your meetings with your mentor
- Ask questions about what you most want to know
- Ask for feedback
- Take notes
- Be a good listener
- Be forward-thinking
- Respect your mentor's boundaries
- Follow up on agreements and meetings
- Act on your mentor's advice
- Say "thank you", especially at the end of the mentorship
- HAVE FUN!

Writing Samples Continued

Thank you note (Handwritten preferable)

At the end of your mentorship:

Dear Mr. /Mrs. /Ms. (Name),

I want to thank you for all you taught me during this mentorship. The knowledge and insight you have imparted upon me has been a great help and support as I begin my journey into the (Industry) field.

I want to express my deepest gratitude. You have been an excellent friend, advisor, mentor and inspiration for me. You will forever be a major contributor to my success here at JCC and in the future. I look forward to the day I can help someone the way you helped me.

Thank you again for this experience,

(Name), (Class Year)