



## **The Abramson Scholarship Foundation** **Mentoring Experience**

**THANK YOU** for serving as a Mentor with the Abramson Scholarship Foundation (ASF). We have developed a unique and personal mentoring program for our Scholars which is managed by ASF staff and volunteers.

Every Abramson Scholar is paired with two mentors to form a mentor/mentee group. Our mentoring model engages Abramson Scholars or Mentees with as much support as possible. Many Abramson Scholars come from disadvantaged backgrounds and really appreciate the mentoring relationship and benefit greatly from the experience. Many are the first in their families to attend college. Advice from caring, engaged professionals in the community will make a significant difference in their lives.

Your goal as an Abramson Mentor will be to provide academic, professional and emotional guidance and support as your Scholar navigates the college process and works to secure internships/jobs during the summers and after graduation. By establishing trust and an open rapport, you can help your Scholar make the best decisions when setting an academic schedule (as they transition from a set schedule in high school to an open one), choosing a major, fulfilling academic requirements, developing effective study habits, managing time, pacing themselves if they are overachievers, producing a résumé, seeking academic, physical or mental health support on campus, navigating the social scene and campus clubs/activities, securing internships and evaluating career options.

Building trust takes time and effort. Frequent communication and a genuine personal connection are the most important parts of this relationship. Meet in person with your Scholar and co-Mentor over the summer and winter breaks, so that you can reinforce the relationship before your Scholar heads to college in the fall. For those of you who mentor a local student, try to meet in person a few times throughout the semester as well.

Our co-mentoring model allows for additional support to our Scholars. One mentor may be closer to the college experience, provide advice about time management, studying, and joining campus activities. The other mentor may have more experience in the professional world or with the Scholar's field of study, thereby providing help with résumés and internships. It is our hope that this model allows Abramson Scholars to truly benefit from the diverse experiences of their mentors.

Our Abramson Scholars experience one of their greatest transitions as they complete their college education. Having adults that are present, available and supportive are important attributes of the ASF Mentoring Program.

## Mentor Expectations

- **Get to know each other.** Meet in person a few times a year when your Scholar is in town (Summer, Thanksgiving, Winter & Spring Break). The first summer is very important to establishing a trusted relationship. Learn about their family, interests, journey thus far, their main concerns about college. You are here because you are kind, giving and compassionate; let these qualities shine through your sincerity and genuine commitment and Scholars will learn to trust you. If your Scholar will be studying in the DC. area, try to meet in person a few times during the semester.
- **Communicate regularly.** Communicate at least monthly with your mentee. Determine early on how frequently you will communicate and your preferred methods: text, emails, phone or video calls (e.g. FaceTime/Skype/Google Hangouts); we encourage a combination of the above. Speak on the phone or via video call a few times per semester because often more can be gauged from voice or video interactions, than from text or email. Be sure you have up-to-date contact information for your mentee and that they have yours.
- **Remain in touch with your co-mentor.** Deciding the best way to communicate with each other early in the relationship is critical to our mentoring-pair model. You might choose to co-communicate by copying each other on e-mails to your Abramson Scholar, creating a 3-way group text, organizing 3-way phone and video calls, or sharing updates if the Scholar approaches only one of you. You might both agree to speak separately with your mentee and touch base afterwards. *Deciding the arrangement in advance and sharing the plan with your Abramson Scholar is ideal.*
- **Tip: Ask open-ended questions.** This will allow for free-flowing conversations, which is especially important when establishing your relationship or reestablishing contact. Some examples are: What's a typical day like for you? What's been most surprising to you this semester? What do you hope to experience that you haven't already?
- **Attend all Abramson events throughout the year.** An annual calendar will be provided each summer so you may plan accordingly. This is important so that you can connect with your Scholar, participate in our ongoing training and support, and to strengthen your ties to the ASF community. We promise your efforts will make the mentoring experience even more gratifying.
- **Take extra care during times of stress.** If your Scholar is going through a particularly difficult time, check in more regularly to make sure they feel supported. Send stressed students frequent encouraging notes without expecting a response; let them know that you are thinking about them and rooting for them during challenging times, and remind them that you are there to listen if they need to vent, brainstorm, or prioritize. Our efforts matter even if the student doesn't say thanks.
- **Show your mentee that you are listening to them.** After meeting or talking with them, follow up with an email, text, or phone message highlighting what was discussed, any follow-up action on your part and theirs, reminding them that you are there for them, and the next time you plan to communicate. By doing so, you are modeling the importance of follow-up communication and showing appreciation for the relationship (all helpful for their own professional and personal development as well).

## MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

- **Model a balanced attitude that appreciates the successes, but also the challenges for what they are: opportunities to learn and grow.** For many Scholars, college is a gateway to a dream job or lifestyle. As motivating as that is, it can also be a lot of pressure. As we all know, college is filled with ups, downs and everything in between. Remind Scholars that, in some ways, college is a place to process and figure out what you like to do, don't like to do, and to explore the various and differing parts of your identity and interests.
- **Beware of silence.** When Scholars are not connecting with mentors despite your insistence, it is *frequently* a sign of distress and/or embarrassment that they are struggling. We are investing in them and they may be worried that we will be disappointed. They may also think that there is nothing you can do to help. They may even fear that they could lose their scholarship. This is exactly the time to consistently reach out and offer support and problem-solving wisdom. Remind your Scholar that you are always there to listen, encourage, and help them prioritize. It does not matter why they are facing a problem or concern, you are there to help them move forward from that moment onward, without judgement.
- **Respond promptly to any communication from ASF,** including prompt RSVPs to events, surveys, and check-ins by ASF staff or volunteers.
- **Check in/nudge your Scholar to RSVP** in a timely manner to our events and **encourage them to participate**, especially if you will be there. The earlier you ask them, the more likely they will be there to meet you.
- **Share your \*Special Moments\* and photos with us.** If you have a particularly meaningful interaction with your Scholar, send us a note (clear it with your Scholar first, however). You can help us inspire other Mentors and we can share your highlight in our social media and seasonal newsletters. This is the best way to show our supporters the strength of our mentoring program! Share a joint photo with us every time you meet your Scholar. It makes us happy and reassures us that your relationship is going well.
- **Warn us promptly about red flags.** Inform us ASAP if you are having difficulties maintaining regular communication with your Abramson Scholar, despite your insistent efforts, or if it is clear that they are struggling.
- **Take interest in your Scholar's curriculum planning.** Tip: your Scholar's academic calendar as well as core and major requirements are online and easily accessible, so it is easy to familiarize yourself with them. Consider adding key dates to your calendar (pre-registration deadlines, midterms/finals, winter and spring breaks) so you know the right time to reach out to them. Ask pointed questions; it is a great chance to talk about what courses they are taking, what they are interested in, whether they are fulfilling graduation and major requirements, or if they have a major research project due at the end of the semester. Do they plan to study abroad and, if so, are they considering this when planning their courses? The more you learn about their field of study and requirements, the richer your interactions will be. *Your involvement, the voice of experience and reason may help ensure that they graduate on time and prevent them from accumulating even more stifling debt.*

## MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

- **Encourage your Scholar to visit their professors often and early on.** Tell them to go to office hours early on and introduce themselves, ask questions about the class, and ask if professors have any advice to help them succeed in their class. If they are first generation students, they may even share this and ask for any advice and resources that may help them succeed at that college.
- **Help your Scholar build a career path.** Periodically review your Scholar's résumé, LinkedIn page, and basic cover letter to ensure that they have sharp and up-to-date tools to pursue internships and jobs. The summer is often the best time to do this since they usually have more time. Encourage them to apply for summer internships and jobs the prior summer. Many employers start the recruitment process through the universities the summer prior and early in the fall, so encourage them to explore career resources offered by their universities (internship listings on Handshake, visiting the Career Counseling office, reading job postings via emails from their college, etc.).
- **Encourage your Scholar to connect with professionals in their field of interest** for informational purposes and professional guidance. Brainstorm good leads with them.
- **There is *always* something more you can do to help your mentee reach a little higher.** Some Scholars will need more support than others, but even the most organized, driven, and well-adjusted student can benefit from a caring sounding board, positive feedback, and the perspective that comes with your experience.
- **Think of ways that you can help strengthen our program.** If you or one of your contacts can help us with professional development initiatives, provide career perspective and advice within various professional fields (especially non-legal fields such as engineering, business, accounting, finance, health care, teaching, FinTech, STEM, etc.), or provide an internship for one of our Scholars, please connect us!
- **Share our story.** Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn & Twitter.
- ASF will provide monthly reminders for your check-ins with Scholars, including suggested topics which would be helpful to address during that time of year.

**We are always available to answer any questions or help you in any way.**

### **Executive Director:**

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