



The Abramson Scholarship Foundation **Mentoring Experience**

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

Every Abramson Scholar is paired with one mentor, and both are supported by staff and specialized teams within the Abramson Advisor Network. Our mentoring model engages Abramson Scholars or Mentees with as much support and guidance as possible. Many Abramson Scholars face additional challenges navigating college as the first in their family to attend college, and not having access to many of the resources or support systems that their peers have. A caring, engaged mentor can offer advice and support that can make a significant difference in a Scholar's college experience.

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, choosing a major, fulfilling academic requirements, developing effective study habits, managing time, pacing themselves, 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 over the summer and winter breaks, so that you can reinforce the relationship. Meeting in person before your Scholar heads to college in the fall is **essential**. For those of you who mentor a local student, try to meet in person a few times throughout the semester as well.

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

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING

- **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 **critical** for establishing a trusting relationship. Learn about their family, interests, journey thus far, and their concerns about college.
- **Communicate regularly and proactively.** Check-in with your mentee at least once monthly. Set expectations early on for how frequently and what methods you will use to communicate. We recommend a combination of texts/video calls/emails. **Expect outreach to come mainly from you:** Very few of our Scholars reach out to mentors without being prompted, especially at first. They are overwhelmed and trying to cope with day-to-day stressors. As trust develops, and as Scholars mature and understand the various ways in which mentors can be helpful, they will reach out more. We expect that most of the frequent outreach will come from proactive mentors. Be flexible and gentle as you reach out, and be sensitive to your mentee's immediate needs and schedule.
- **Expect occasional silence and beware of it.** When Scholars are unresponsive, it is *frequently* a sign of distress and/or embarrassment that they are struggling. They may worry about disappointing you, or believe there is nothing you can do to help. This is exactly the time to consistently (but gently) reach out and offer support and problem-solving wisdom. Remind your Scholar that it does not matter why they are facing a problem or concern, you are always there to help them move forward from that moment onward, without judgment.
- **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 different parts of your identity and interests.

ACADEMIC GUIDANCE

- **Be involved in your Scholar's curriculum planning.** Familiarize yourself with your Scholar's academic calendar and requirements (easily found online), and engage your Scholar in conversation about: what courses they are taking, what they are interested in, whether they are fulfilling graduation and major requirements, assignments they are enjoying and struggling with. *Your involvement may help ensure that they graduate on time and prevent them from accumulating even more stifling debt.*
- **Help your Scholar utilize campus resources and advocate for themselves.** Most schools have additional academic and emotional support resources that new students don't even know exist! Encourage them to meet with their professors early on, especially if they start to feel overwhelmed.

CAREER GUIDANCE

- **Help your Scholar build a career path.** Help your Scholar develop a résumé, LinkedIn profile, and basic cover letter, and periodically review to ensure that they have sharp and up-to-date tools to pursue internships and jobs. Encourage them to explore career resources offered by their universities over the summer and fall for the *following summer* (internship listings on Handshake, visiting the Career Counseling office, reading job postings via emails from their college, etc.).

MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

- **Encourage your Scholar to connect with professionals in their field of interest** for informational purposes and professional guidance. Brainstorm good leads with them. Use the Abramson Advisor Network.
- **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.

Stay Connected with ASF

Read our *Mentoring Matters* newsletter, one of the principal ways in which ASF will communicate with you, providing important updates, invitations to events, mentor training tips, reminders, suggested topics to broach with your Scholar during that time of year, and more!

Respond promptly to any communication from ASF, including prompt RSVPs to events, surveys, and check-ins by ASF staff or volunteers.

Attend Abramson events throughout the year. We will also host virtual events and expect you to make every effort to participate. 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.

Keep us updated by using *GradSnapp* and by responding to our surveys. Our online student management platform is VERY easy to use and an essential tool for Abramson to track Scholars' progress, assess the Mentor-Scholar relationship, and to reduce the burden on our Scholars to keep several of us updated with details. GradSnapp is a depository of student information where mentors and other ASF representatives can quickly log a summary of their interactions with the Scholars. It's almost like sending us a quick email but it gets stored in our system, and it's just as simple!

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. Email us at programs@abramsonfoundation.org.

Share your **Special Moments and photos with us.** If you have a particularly meaningful interaction with your Scholar, post it on GradSnapp, and send us a note (clear it with your Scholar first, however).

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

Program Manager:
(programs@abramsonfoundation.org) or call/text (202) 470-5425