

## ALUMNI MENTORING PROGRAM REFERENCE MATERIAL

### Mentor Programs Research

#### How Alumni Associations Can Launch Mentorship Programs

College alumni associations play an important role in the life of the university. Not only do they provide financial support through donations and endowments, but they also offer their time and expertise to help current students succeed. Because alumni associations carefully cultivate alumni engagement, they hold a wealth of social capital that they can share across the college's departments and programs. By partnering with other campus offices, such as EOP, Student Success, and affinity-based recruitment and retention centers, the alumni association can launching impactful mentoring programs that result in student retention and job placement.

However, it takes a lot of effort to launch a program the right way. Things to consider are curriculum design, participant recruitment, relevant matching, and measuring program outcomes.

#### The Importance of Mentorship Programs

Mentorship programs have been shown to be extremely beneficial for both mentees and mentors. For students, having a mentor can provide guidance, support, and role models during a time when they may feel isolated or uncertain.

Studies have shown that students who participate in mentorship programs are more likely to succeed in school and receive job offers after graduation. In fact, the University of Colorado, Boulder found that students who participated in their career mentoring programs were 40% more likely to land an internship or job than those who did not participate in such programs.

For alumni mentors, participating in a mentorship program provides an opportunity to give back to their alma mater and help shape the next generation of leaders. It also allows them to develop connections with young professionals who may one day become valuable business contacts.

A well-executed mentorship program can be a win-win for everyone involved.

#### Intentional Program Design

One of the most important aspects of launching a successful mentorship program is designing a curriculum that meets the needs of both mentors and mentees. There is no one-size-fits-all mentorship model, meaning that it is important to identify the student demographic that you are targeting. Alumni Associations can partner with campus offices such as EOP, Student Success, and affinity-based recruitment and retention centers to co-launch a mentorship program that is relevant for that specific student community. A successful program design process will incorporate insights from these campus partners as they tend to be more in tune with the needs of that specific student demographic.

Creating a high-quality curriculum is essential for ensuring that your mentorship program meets its objectives.

#### Participant Recruitment and Matching

Once you have designed your mentorship program curriculum, it is time to start recruiting participants. It is important to meet students where they are at, and you can do so by collaborating with relevant campus offices to help co-launch your program. For example, if your program is targeted at first-generation college students, you can ask the EOP office to include information about your program in their outreach.

After recruiting a pool of qualified participants, it's time to start matching them up! We have created a novel methodology to match mentors and mentees based on their interests, experiences, identities, and goals. This ensures that each participant gets the most out of their experience by being matched with someone who can provide them with the specific guidance they need.

#### Measuring Program Outcomes

Once your program is up and running, it's important to track its progress and measure its success against pre-determined benchmarks. This allows you see how well it is achieving its objectives so that you can adjust course if necessary.

However, many benefits of mentorship are hard to measure as it requires longitudinal data collection. Our team has developed a unique system to help collect data efficiently and effectively. We use a mix of surveys, interviews, and mentor-generated observations to gather rich insights about program outcomes.

Approaching the data collection and analysis with a structured process will help other stakeholders, such as administration and potential funders, clearly see the impact of your program. These insights help you assess your program's effectiveness and make whatever changes are needed for continued success.

#### Conclusion

Alumni associations hold a vast amount of social capital that colleges can harness to improve student retention rates and job placement outcomes. By partnering with other offices on campus, alumni associations can break down siloes and launch impactful mentoring programs that achieve these goals while also providing value for mentors.

#### END OF RESEARCH REFERENCE

The Northwestern Network Mentorship Program is an online platform designed to cultivate meaningful mentorship opportunities for the global Northwestern community, with alumni mentors providing valuable support and guidance as mentees navigate their careers. Students and alumni can use the platform to connect with alumni in various career fields. Alumni with degrees from all class years, programs, and schools may participate as volunteer mentors, mentees, or both; degree-seeking students may participate as mentees. Learn more about being a mentor or participating as a mentee.

## How It Works

Participants register and complete a profile, which takes 10 to 15 minutes.

Alumni may participate as a mentor, mentee, or both at the same time. Students may participate as mentees.

Student and alumni mentees are then able to search for and request a mentor who best matches their career interests.

Mentors may accept up to three mentees at a time; mentees may have up to two mentors at once.

Alumni mentors may either accept or decline a mentorship request.

Mentors remain anonymous until the connection is accepted. Once mutually established, the mentor-mentee pair then agree on goals and communication preferences, including whether they'll speak by phone or meet in person and how often they'll connect, whether it's once or multiple times throughout the year.

## How to start an alumni mentorship program

An alumni mentorship program is a great way to both reengage past members of your institution or organization and add more value to your current members. Whether you're in academia, non-profit communities, or organizations, here's how to start an alumni mentorship program.

The world is full of uncertainties — but a mentor offers clarity. Undergraduates need more insights into the things that happen outside the institution's four walls. That's where an alumni mentor comes in.

An alumni mentor can be a valuable resource for current students of their alma mater, helping them prepare for the outside world and build self-confidence.

A 2021 alumni survey conducted by the Centre for Applied Research and Innovation in Supply Chain - Africa (CARISCA) to graduates from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology — concluded that students should be offered more networking opportunities before graduation.

Over time, most educational institutions worldwide have seen the need for alumni mentoring programs — but are unsure how to begin.

## What is an alumni mentorship program?

An alumni mentorship program involves matching current students or young professionals with alumni of the same institution or organization for the purpose of receiving guidance and support for personal and professional development.

The mentorship program aims to provide mentees with:

Advice on career decisions

Insights into their chosen field of study or profession

Access to a professional network

Students gain confidence and inspiration to set a course for their future.

Alumni mentors are typically chosen based on their experience and expertise in their field.

Why is it important to have an alumnus mentoring program?

A research study shows that an alumnus mentoring program benefits not only the mentees but also the institution and mentors.

The study found that alumni mentoring programs positively impact students' perceptions of graduate employability, their overall student experience, and their likelihood of wanting to mentor future students. Specifically,

70% of students felt more confident about finding work after participating in the program

80% felt more equipped to discuss their skill sets

75% of students reported being more satisfied with their experience, and 95% said they were more likely to want to be a mentor in the future.

The following reasons highlight the importance of an alumni mentoring program.

Improves the soft and technical skills of both the mentor and mentees

Participation in this program enhances both the soft and technical skills of the mentor and the mentee.

Mentors improve their management and leadership skills through interactions, while mentees improve their communication, networking, and problem-solving abilities.

Networking and Job opportunities

Mentees benefit from their mentor's industry knowledge and connections, leading to increased job opportunities.

For example, Garrett Arnold attributes his success in finding a full-time job prior to graduation to the skills he gained through a mentorship program offered by the Arkansas Tech University Alumni Association and ATU Norman Career Services.

As a member of the ATU Class of 2023, Harry Jacobs, a business data analytics major from Maumelle, states that the best benefits of the program are networking opportunities and career skills development.

"I'd say the best benefits are the connections you get by networking and developing your career skills with someone who is in the field."

Students gain clarity on their career goals

Working with alumni mentors helps students gain focus and clarity in their career path. Through working with a mentor, students can develop the thought process and focus needed to navigate their professional journey with confidence and resilience.

This guidance is especially helpful for students who may feel overwhelmed or uncertain about their future. By dedicating just a few hours each week to working with an alumni mentor, students build the skills and foundation necessary to succeed in their chosen fields.

#### Build lasting relationships

Besides learning and growing professionally, students who participate in an alumni mentorship program have the opportunity to make long-lasting friendships with their mentors. Fryer, one mentee at ATU, makes friends with his mentor during the program. "The mentor is a friend," says Fryer.

The shared experiences, stories, advice, and guidance exchanged during the mentorship create a strong bond beyond the academic setting.

The special bond that forms between students and alumni mentors can have a lasting impact on both parties.

#### Improves students' academic performance

A recent study conducted at Al Azhar medical college found that a mentorship program significantly improved the academic performance of first-year medical students.

The students were divided into small groups and paired with mentors, and the results of a post-program exam showed a significant increase in performance compared to pre-program scores.

The benefits of the mentorship program were particularly pronounced for female students and those who had previously scored below average on exams.

#### Two ways to structure an alumnus mentoring program

An alumnus mentoring program can be structured in two ways: matching alumni with current students or connecting alumni with other alumni.

#### Pair alumni with current students

In this structure, an alumni mentor is matched with a current student or recent graduate to provide guidance and support for a set period.

This type of mentorship focuses on helping current students reach their personal goals while contributing to the organization's success.

#### Pair alumni with other alumni

An alumni mentor is matched with other alumni with similar interests and experiences. With this kind of structure, it is easier for alumni with the same experience or at the same level to connect and support one another.

It also provides networking opportunities that can help alumni stay connected and help them benefit from their peers' knowledge and experience.

No matter what structure you choose for your alumni mentoring program, it is essential to ensure all participants are thoroughly briefed on expectations, guidelines, and policies.

How do I create an alumni mentorship program?

Many organizations are unfamiliar with how to create an alumni mentorship program. However, you are on the right track to creating a profitable platform if you follow these steps.

Decide what the purpose of the program is

Your alumni mentorship program needs clear mentoring goals and objectives if you want it to be successful. Likewise, stakeholders and participants need to be aware of them.

Although everyone usually has a personal motive for joining a mentorship program, the ultimate aim must align with the expectations of both the mentor and the mentee.

The aims and objectives of the program must be clear and SMART — that it should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, reliable, and time-bound.

Create guidelines for who can join

Establishing clear mentorship program guidelines for who is eligible to participate ensures that mentors and mentees get the most out of the program. When determining who joins the program, consider the qualifications and requirements for mentors and mentees.

For mentors, consider requiring that they have graduated from the institution or have first-hand experience in the industry. This will ensure they have the knowledge and expertise to guide their mentees.

For mentees, consider requiring that they be current members or recent graduates of the institution and that they are actively seeking professional advice and are willing to engage with their mentors.

Consider factors such as job level, experience, and areas of expertise when establishing your guidelines — this will help ensure that participants are well-matched during the pairing process and can benefit from each other's knowledge and experience.

Also, don't forget to consider diversity among your participants to ensure a range of perspectives and experiences.

Prepare and set expectations with your mentors

Setting expectations with your mentors will not only help put the relationship between the alumni and mentees on the right track — but will also ensure the program's success.

To reach their full potential, mentees must clearly communicate their goals and areas for growth and improvement to their mentors at the start and throughout the program.

A mentoring program will be one-sided if the mentors have to make all the decisions. The mentees are expected to come prepared with thoughtful questions and a teachable spirit, while the alumni provide actionable insights and strategies.

Open and promote registration

Once you have identified and prepared your mentors — and other participants, opening and promoting registration for your alumni mentorship program is next.

One effective way to do this is by sending an announcement email to all alumni and mentees, informing them about the program and its benefits.

This can be followed up with additional promotion through social media or other channels that reach your alumni network.

To encourage early registration, inform participants about the opening and closing dates for registration in advance, so they can plan accordingly.

Pair participants intelligently

The pairing of participants in a mentorship program is a crucial factor in its success. Incompatible mentor-mentee pairs can lead to resentment, frustration, and a lack of progress. That's why it's important to take the time to ensure that participants are well-matched.

One way to do this is by using mentorship software that can match participants based on various factors, including their goals, personalities, working styles, work history, hobbies, achievements, strengths, skill sets, needs, and areas of expertise.

This helps to ensure that mentors and mentees are compatible and can benefit from each other's knowledge and experience.

The Together platform is one such tool that offers intelligent participant pairing. Its automated questionnaires and precise matching algorithm ensure that every participant is matched in a way that will lead to a successful and fulfilling mentorship experience.

Using a tool like this takes the guesswork out of participant pairing and focuses on supporting and nurturing the mentor-mentee relationships.

Support relationships and check-in

Program managers and organizers should prioritize supporting and nurturing the relationships between mentors and mentees throughout the alumni mentorship program. This can be done through regular check-ins, feedback sessions, or other methods that work for your organization.

Establishing a rapport between the alumni and the mentees often takes a while. The connection might be there at the beginning of the program, but trust must be earned as they progress.

Essentially, you want to foster the relationship between the mentor and the mentees — by attending virtual conferences, reading a book, going on field trips, sharing career experiences, taking mock interviews, and completing a project together.

We've put together some ideas on finding the right activities to help foster the relationship between mentees and mentors.

Report on success and collect feedback

An effective mentoring program should prioritize getting feedback at every stage of the program. The means of collating reports and feedback should not be limited to only questionnaires — but include survey questions and post-session ratings.

Anecdotal records should be kept to determine the overall success of the program. The alumni are to report on the learning progress of the mentee at intervals with different metrics.

END OF RESEARCH REFERENCE

The Penn Medicine Alumni Mentorship Program is an easy-to-use online platform designed to cultivate meaningful mentorship opportunities for the global Penn Medicine community. Students, house staff, and alumni can use the platform to connect with alumni in various career fields. Alumni from all Penn Medicine degree programs and current/former trainees from all programs may participate as volunteer mentors or mentees or both. Current MD, PhD, and Masters students may participate as mentees. These mentoring relationships are meant to provide valuable support and guidance to student and alumni mentees as they navigate their careers, explore new career paths, or consider further education and training.

Alumni Mentorship Program

About the Program

The Penn Medicine Alumni Mentorship Program was designed by Penn Medicine Development and Alumni Relations (PMDAR) to foster meaningful relationships between alumni mentors and student, housestaff, or alumni mentees that will help mentees better navigate their career paths. The program



also offers an important opportunity for alumni mentors to engage with the Penn Medicine community and experience a rewarding relationship with a mentee who is eager to learn from them.

#### Program Benefits

PMDAR is focused on engaging Penn Medicine alumni and offering them meaningful opportunities to stay connected with one another and the University, as well as providing continued education, professional connections, and resources. The Alumni Mentorship Program was designed to help alumni connect with fellow alumni in their field; to facilitate connections between alumni, house staff, and current students; and to assist alumni, students, and house staff in growing professionally and offering resources for development.

A strong mentorship program has the power to mutually benefit mentors and mentees:

Student, housestaff, and alumni mentees have the opportunity to receive advice, guidance, and perspective from their mentors.

Alumni mentors have an opportunity to share their story and invest their time in a rewarding relationship with an alumnus/a, trainee, or student who is eager to learn from them, as well as mutually learn from the mentee about their industry, profession, and perspective.

#### Who can be a Mentor?

Penn Medicine Alumni Mentors are graduates of the Perelman School of Medicine or former Penn Medicine trainees who are passionate about sharing their knowledge and resources with current students, housestaff, and recent graduates. Volunteering as a mentor is a great way to make an impact and to stay connected with the Penn Medicine community.

#### Who can be a Mentee?

Mentees are current Penn Medicine students, housestaff, or alumni who are looking for guidance as they navigate their career, consider a career change, or explore further education and training. Mentees are passionate about growing professionally, learning new skills, navigating their career path, and expanding their professional networks to give them a competitive advantage in the workplace.

#### How it Works

Using the Alumni Mentorship Program online platform, mentors and mentees will each complete a profile, which includes their specialty, industry, demographic information, and career history/interests. Mentees will then select the mentor who best matches their current and future professional goals and request to work with that mentor. If the mentor accepts their request, the mentor and mentee can then get in touch via the matching platform. In their first meeting, the mentor and mentee are expected to work out a mentorship agreement, which outlines how long the relationship will last (typically 3-6 months), how they will communicate with one another, and both parties' objectives, so that mentors and mentees understand the other's needs and expectations for the relationship.

Penn Medicine Development and Alumni Relations (PMDAR) has purposefully designed this program to be flexible for busy alumni mentors and mentees. Mentors and mentees have complete control over the mentorship relationship and can decide how the relationship will work.

#### Step-by-Step Guide

- 1) Complete a profile to become a mentor or a mentee (this takes approximately 15-25 minutes).
- 2) Mentees search for and request a mentor; the mentor accepts or declines the request.
- 3) Meet with your mentor/mentee and decide together the parameters of the relationship, such as how often and how you will meet (view the Mentorship Agreement Form to set your goals for the relationship).
- 4) Review the program's Resources section to facilitate relationship-building.
- 5) Meet as often as possible either in person or via email, phone, or video chat.
- 6) Share feedback with PMDAR about your experiences and ways we can improve the program.

#### Contact

For assistance or questions about the program please contact us [here](#).

#### Mentoring Programs

Alumni are the College of Law's most valuable resource when it comes to developing today's students and recent graduates to become tomorrow's leaders in the legal profession.

We invite all alumni, regardless of your location, occupation, practice area, or age, to become involved with our mentoring programs. Your willingness to volunteer your time and knowledge will make a difference in the careers of our bright students and recent graduates!

#### END OF RESEARCH REFERENCE

#### ALUMNI-STUDENT MENTORING PROGRAM

The Alumni-Student Mentoring Program seeks to connect first-year students with alumni in one-on-one, student driven relationships in order for students to benefit from the experiences and knowledge of Illinois Law alumni. Alumni mentors provide an invaluable service to first-year students by providing advice that can help them succeed in law school and better understand the legal field.

#### The Mentoring Relationship

Mentors are assigned to a student for the academic year. Even though the students are expected to contact their mentors once a month, we understand that alumni are busy and sometimes may not be able to get back to the student right away. We expect that most of the communication between the mentor and mentee will happen via email, but we hope that each pair finds time for a phone call or video chat at the beginning of the relationship and an in-person meeting, if possible, at some point during the academic year.

Mentors and students should discuss a variety of topics, including strategies for finding and selecting a job, but mentors are not expected to provide job leads. Alumni should not forego the opportunity to volunteer as a mentor because they do not think they are in the position to help a student find a job.

The College of Law will help guide the mentoring relationship by providing discussion topics in the areas of academics, getting involved, job search, networking, practice areas/settings, and professionalism/general understanding of the practice of law.

#### Timeline

Incoming students and alumni register to participate in the program in August. Matches are made in September, and mentors and mentees are free to begin communicating with each other in October.

Registration information is typically shared with alumni via email and on our social media channels. For more information about the Alumni-Student Mentoring Program, please contact the Office of Advancement.

#### ILLINI CONNECT

Illini Connect is a network of alumni who are willing to be contacted by Illinois Law students who are seeking information or advice specific to the alumnus's geographic location, practice area, or practice setting. Alumni will provide one-time or occasional advice to students to answer their particular questions and connect them with useful resources to help them navigate the hidden job market in a particular area of the legal profession or geographic location. A longer-term mentoring relationship may result from such interactions, but is not the primary focus of Illini Connect.

Contact information for alumni in Illini Connect will be held by the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development in their Symplicity system, which can only be accessed by Illinois Law students. Students can browse alumni in Illini Connect and will reach out to those that they are interested in speaking with and learning from.

To volunteer to be included as an alumni contact in the Illini Connect database, please contact the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development.

#### LAWYER-TO-LAWYER MENTORING PROGRAM

The Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program seeks to partner recent law school graduates in the state of Illinois with experienced in-state practitioners to promote professionalism, civility, and integrity in the legal profession. Mentors are required to participate in an orientation program and meet face-to-face with a recent graduate of the College of Law eight times during the year, at times and locations convenient to the participants. Mentors who participate in the program are eligible for six hours of Continuing Legal Education (CLE) professional responsibility credit, to be awarded in the year in which the mentoring occurs.

This program is sponsored by the College of Law and the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism (ISCCP).

#### Program Requirements

Admitted to practice in Illinois for at least six years (mentors) or no more than two years (mentees)

Registered on the Illinois ARDC Master Roll of Attorneys as active

Never have been suspended or disbarred from the practice of law in any state or jurisdiction and have no formal disciplinary complaint pending (mentors)

Practice law in Illinois or intend to practice law in Illinois (mentees)

For more information about the Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program, visit the ISCCP mentoring program website.

What are examples of successful alumni mentorship programs?

Powered by AI and the LinkedIn community

1

Peer-to-peer mentoring

Be the first to add your personal experience

2

Reverse mentoring

Be the first to add your personal experience

3

Industry-specific mentoring

Be the first to add your personal experience

4

Cross-cultural mentoring

Be the first to add your personal experience

5

Group mentoring

Be the first to add your personal experience

6

Social impact mentoring

Be the first to add your personal experience

7

Here's what else to consider

Be the first to add your personal experience

Alumni mentorship programs are a great way to connect graduates with current students and foster a sense of community, support, and professional development. They can also help alumni stay engaged with their alma mater and contribute to its reputation and success. But what are some examples of successful alumni mentorship programs in higher education? Here are six cases that showcase different approaches and outcomes.

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1

Peer-to-peer mentoring

One way to create a strong alumni network is to encourage peer-to-peer mentoring among graduates who share similar interests, goals, or backgrounds. For example, the University of Michigan's Alumni Association offers a variety of peer groups, such as Women of Color, LGBTQ+, Entrepreneurs, and Young Alumni, that provide online and offline platforms for members to exchange advice, resources, and opportunities. These groups help alumni build meaningful relationships and expand their professional and personal horizons.

2

Reverse mentoring

Another innovative way to leverage alumni expertise is to implement reverse mentoring, where younger alumni mentor older alumni on topics such as technology, social media, or emerging trends. For example, the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management has a reverse mentoring program that pairs MBA students and recent graduates with senior alumni who want to learn new skills and perspectives. This program benefits both parties, as the mentors gain confidence and leadership experience, while the mentees gain insight and relevance in a changing world.

3

Industry-specific mentoring

A more traditional way to design alumni mentorship programs is to match graduates with students or alumni who are pursuing careers in the same or related industries. For example, the University of California, Berkeley's Career Center has a Career Connections program that connects alumni mentors with students who are interested in specific fields, such as engineering, law, health, or education. The mentors provide guidance, feedback, and referrals to help the students explore their options and prepare for their future.

4

Cross-cultural mentoring

A more diverse way to enrich alumni mentorship programs is to incorporate cross-cultural elements, such as language, culture, or location. For example, the University of British Columbia's Alumni UBC has

a Global Alumni Network that connects alumni mentors with students or alumni who are living, working, or studying abroad. The mentors offer support, advice, and connections to help the mentees adapt and thrive in different cultural environments.

5

#### Group mentoring

A more collaborative way to facilitate alumni mentorship programs is to organize group mentoring sessions, where one or more mentors interact with a group of mentees who have common interests or goals. For example, the University of Oxford's Alumni Office has a series of group mentoring events, such as webinars, workshops, and panel discussions, that feature alumni mentors from various sectors and disciplines. The mentees can learn from the mentors' experiences, ask questions, and network with each other.

6

#### Social impact mentoring

A more impactful way to engage alumni mentorship programs is to link them with social causes or initiatives that align with the values and mission of the institution. For example, the Harvard University's Center for Public Interest Careers has a Public Service Venture Fund that provides grants and mentoring to alumni who want to pursue careers in the nonprofit or public sector. The mentors are alumni who have established or worked in organizations that address social issues, such as education, health, or human rights. The mentors help the grantees develop their skills, strategies, and networks to make a positive difference in the world.

END OF RESEARCH REFERENCE

#### Top 20 Best Alumni Networks (Public Schools)

Based on college student ratings of alumni activity and visibility on campus.

#1

Penn State University Park

University Park, PA • 40,600 Full-Time Enrollment

#2

Kansas State University

Manhattan, KS • 15,046 Full-Time Enrollment

#3

University of Michigan—Ann Arbor

Ann Arbor, MI • 32,695 Full-Time Enrollment

#4

University of Virginia

Charlottesville, VA • 17,496 Full-Time Enrollment

#5

Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, VA • 30,434 Full-Time Enrollment

#6

University of Texas at Austin

Austin, TX • 41,309 Full-Time Enrollment

#7

Georgia Institute of Technology

Atlanta, GA • 18,415 Full-Time Enrollment

#8

New College of Florida

Sarasota, FL • 669 Full-Time Enrollment

#9

University of Florida

Gainesville, FL • 34,552 Full-Time Enrollment

#10

Clemson University

Featured

Clemson University

Clemson, SC • 21,653 Full-Time Enrollment

#11

University of Georgia

Athens, GA • 30,714 Full-Time Enrollment

#12

Purdue University—West Lafayette

West Lafayette, IN • 37,101 Full-Time Enrollment

#13

North Carolina State University

Raleigh, NC • 26,254 Full-Time Enrollment

#14

Washington State University

Pullman, WA • 21,923 Full-Time Enrollment

#15

The University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa

Tuscaloosa, AL • 32,458 Full-Time Enrollment

#16

Florida State University

Tallahassee, FL • 32,936 Full-Time Enrollment

#17

William & Mary

Williamsburg, VA • 6,797 Full-Time Enrollment

#18

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Madison, WI • 37,230 Full-Time Enrollment

#19

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Chapel Hill, NC • 20,210 Full-Time Enrollment  
#20

City University of New York—Baruch College  
New York, NY • 15,859 Full-Time Enrollment

END OF RESEARCH REFERENCE



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# University alumni mentoring programs: a win-win?

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## University alumni mentoring programs: a win-win?

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## University alumni mentoring programs: a win-win?

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### ABSTRACT

Alumni-student mentoring programs have become commonplace at many universities, and yet, scholarly research has rarely explored the impact of these programs on participating students and alumni. To address this, we investigated three alumni mentoring programs at a large research-intensive university in Australia. Using a mixed methods approach (a web based survey and interviews), we sought both students' and mentors' perceptions of their alumni mentoring program and how their involvement may have impacted their perceptions of the university (n=197). The findings highlight that alumni mentoring programs provide distinct benefits to both students and alumni and may result in improved university engagement. Our results also indicate new revelations about alumni mentoring programs, including the challenges associated with mentoring postgraduate students and recommended best practice to ensure the success of alumni mentoring programs.

### KEYWORDS

Alumni; mentoring; employability; alumni engagement; higher education management; university marketing

## Introduction

There is growing literature in higher education that discusses the potential benefits of integrating alumni more closely within the university community. These benefits include access to resources through philanthropy or industry collaboration, marketing and promotion of the university, and alumni's potential to help students to support graduate employability (Ebert, Axelsson, & Harbor, 2015; Heckman & Guskey, 1998; Pearson, 1999). Especially of interest to this article, numerous scholars have noted that alumni are increasingly key stakeholders and can potentially offer a wide variety of value to students' employability (Helgesen & Nettet, 2007; Nguyen & LeBlanc, 2001).

In order to explore this potential value, this article discusses the experiences of students and mentors in three alumni mentoring programs. While the bulk of alumni-related research has occurred in the US context (e.g., Bastedo, Samuels, & Kleinman, 2014; Unangst, 2018) this study took place in Australia, where there has been growing interest in alumni engagement, including by the Australian government (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [DFAT], 2016) and yet less scholarly research has occurred. The aims of the study were to explore the experiences and motivations of students and alumni mentors across three distinct alumni mentoring programs, as well as to explore

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how students' participation in the program impacted their perceptions of the university and/or their student experience. The three research questions guiding the study included:

- (1) To what extent does participation in alumni programs influence students' perception of graduate employability and/or students' subsequent career outcomes?
- (2) How does participation in alumni programs impact students' overall student experience?
- (3) To what extent does participation in alumni program impact alumni perceptions of their perceptions of the university and impact their future behaviour to engage with the university?

Through the analysis below, findings will add several key contributions to the existing literature, including how participation for students and alumni may impact their perception of the university and the specific challenges that may arise for supporting postgraduate students in alumni mentoring programs. This article then provides a series of recommendations, based on empirical findings, to support the development of alumni mentoring programs both in and outside of Australia.

## Background to alumni mentoring programs

Mentorship has very broadly been defined as a strategy where a more experienced person assists, supports or encourages a less experienced person or group of people (e.g., in Elliott, Beltman, & Lynch, 2011, July). While an array of mentoring programs exists within higher education, including academic-student and peer-to-peer programs, alumni-specific mentoring programs have received less scholarly attention and/or evaluation with only a few studies to date (e.g., Pfeifer, 2002; Renuga & Ezhilan, 2014). Crisp and Cruz (2009) write that while some mentoring programs on campus may have a foundation in developmental psychology, alumni mentoring programs are often instead aimed at connecting students with business and industry, often to improve students' confidence in finding work, or understanding which career path they may want to pursue. As there has been growing literature on the importance of graduate employability within higher education (Clarke, 2018), it is expected that universities will continue to focus on alumni mentoring programs as a mechanism to support students' pathways into future work.

Within alumni mentoring programs, there are two distinct streams that are aimed at different audiences. One stream is aimed at helping disadvantaged groups, such as first-in-family, and/or students who may be on particular equity-related scholarships (e.g., Boardman, 2003; Colvin & Jaffar, 2007). Delvin et al. (2012) write that across institutional efforts to engage with disadvantaged students, peer mentoring programs have become 'a key institutional strategy' (p. 45). The second stream of alumni mentoring programs, and also an increasingly key institutional strategy, is to connect highly engaged/high achieving students with industry partners. These programs often include an application process and have the additional bonus of connecting highly talented students with affiliated business and/or organisations. Yet despite growth in both types of alumni mentoring programs, and heightened institutional marketing

related to programs, alumni mentoring remains an under-researched area (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Lunsford, 2011).

The findings that do exist on alumni mentoring programs have been largely positive, particularly for student outcomes. Studies, for example, have found that student participants in professional/alumni mentoring programs are more likely to graduate with a job and have higher levels of satisfaction of their university experience than students who did not participate (Crisp, Nora, & Taggart, 2009; Murphy & Ensher, 2001; Orpen, 1995; Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gliner, 2001). Studies exploring the outcomes of mentoring in university settings show that students believed mentoring programs were worth the time and had benefits such as providing students with a better picture of life after graduation (Schlee, 2000). Mentoring at university has also been linked to retention (e.g., Noonan, Bullen, & Farruggia, 2012; Phinney, Campos, Cidhinnia, Padilla Kallemeyn, & Kim, 2011). Similarly, D'Abate (2010) found in a study with business students and alumni that students who were mentored reported higher levels of psychosocial support. D'Abate's study further related to other mentoring research that distinguished between how benefits of mentoring could unfold over time, as he found that some students did not see the full benefits of mentoring until 3–5 years had passed.

It is not only student retention, student graduate employability and student experience that may be linked to mentoring programs. Increasingly, higher education is also interested in understanding the precursors and the impact of mentoring on the mentors themselves, as alumni have been shown to be beneficial as sources of information and financial support for the university and its students (Volkwein, 2010; Weerts & Ronca, 2007). For example, graduates with high levels of financial resources have been shown to be more likely to donate funds (Hoyt, 2004). Mosser (1993) additionally found a relationship between the number of degrees and alumni support. Other factors that research have sought to link to alumni engagement behaviour have included: student governance, community engagement, multicultural activities, financial aid, quality of instruction, enhanced abilities, satisfaction, perceived impact, overall evaluation and willingness to enrol again (Volkwein, 2010). A student's satisfaction with their learning experience also effects their likelihood of giving financially to the university, supporting the concept that alumni engagement and student experience are interrelated (Pearson, 1999).

While there is a link between student experience and alumni engagement, how the quality of the student experience may impact future alumni engagement, is a question still being explored. This background review of alumni mentoring programs has also highlighted that there are potential benefits of investing and supporting alumni mentoring programs within higher education, and that the benefits would serve the students, the alumni, and the university community. It further suggests that there is a specific benefit in investigating how such programs may best encourage both student outcomes and alumni engagement.

## The study

To further investigate this, the study discussed in this article aimed to holistically understand both students' and mentors' perceptions across three unique programs. By doing so, the study was uniquely positioned to compare both the findings from

previous literature and differences across three distinct programs, to explore the three central research questions.

### *Study design*

The study used a mixed-methods approach which included two phases. The first phase was a web-based survey which included a combination of closed-choice and open-ended response questions. At the end of the survey, all participants were asked to leave an email address or phone number if they wished to also participate in an interview. The interview phase (second phase) included a 30 min follow-up interview with participants who elected to volunteer their time. This combination of methods added depth to the quality of the data and included as many perspectives as possible (Creswell & Creswell, 2005; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). The first phase of the study began in March 2018 and was distributed to all potential participants.

The collected data from the survey were analysed in conjunction with the data collected from interviews to ascertain how themes may arise in both data sets (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). We used Bazeley's three-step approach of 'describe, compare, relate' (Bazeley, 2009, p. 10) to analyse the data. All data collection methods for this study were approved by the university's ethical review committee and were consistent with the terms of ethical approval.

### *Overview of three alumni mentoring programs*

The study drew on three separate alumni mentoring programs all situated at a large research-intensive university in Australia. One of the three programs was managed centrally through an office for student equity and was offered to all undergraduate students who had received a specific equity scholarship regardless of discipline. It is referred to in this article as the 'Access' program. The second program ('Business') was also geared towards undergraduate students but was located in a business faculty and students were required to apply to enter the mentoring program. Students from this program were typically in the second or third year of their degree and, as places were limited, students were selected based on the prior academic achievement as well a written statement of interest. The third program was the only program included in this study for masters' students and was located in the law faculty ('Law'). Similar to the program in the business faculty, students needed to apply to be accepted to this program with the process considered both prior academic achievement and a written statement. This highlights a significant point of difference within the programs, as two of the three programs required a student application process. However, it should be noted that all three programs were offered to typically high-achieving students, as students in the Access program had received a prestigious scholarship.

All mentoring programs included within the study were aimed at improving graduate employability and tried to match students with mentors who currently worked in students' desired careers. However, findings indicated that often students' desired career path and mentors' careers did not always align. While all three programs were managed by different professional staff, the programs shared many commonalities. For

example, all mentors received pamphlets and guiding materials on what their roles in the program would be and how to lead mentoring meetings (e.g., sample questions to ask). Students were also invited to pre-training sessions where they were given advice on how to contact mentors and voice concerns or questions. It was expected in all three programs for mentors and mentees to meet twice during the semester, using an online video chat program if someone was abroad. However, more meetings were encouraged if the mentor/mentee decided to pursue this option.

### **Participant sample**

The study took place at a large research-intensive university in Australia. A total of 197 participants took part in the study, with 134 participants (68 per cent) identifying as mentors and 62 participants (32 per cent) identifying as students (See [Table 1-2](#)). However, not all participants responded to every question; therefore, the total number of participants for each question varies. Participants were recruited through three different alumni mentoring programs: one in the business faculty (n = 79, 40 per cent), one in the law school (n = 65, 33 per cent), and one program that connected students on an equity and diversity-related scholarship (n = 53, 27 per cent). Potential participants were those who completed the program in either Semester 1 or Semester 2 of 2017, as all three programs were only one semester in duration. All potential participants were emailed an invitation to participate as well as a reminder two weeks later.

**Table 1.** Overview of participants.

Participant's Role	Business Program	Law Program	Access Program	Total
Student	29	21	13	62 (32%)
Mentor	52	44	40	134 (68%)
Total	79 (40%)	65 (33%)	53 (27%)	197 (100%)

Note: The 'Total' column refers to the total number of respondents, not the total number of participants.

**Table 2.** Overview of participants' age.

Age Bracket	Student	Mentor
18–22	8 (17%)	0 (0%)
23–29	35 (74%)	6 (5%)
30–39	3 (6%)	31 (25%)
40–49	1 (2%)	23 (19%)
50–59	0 (0%)	24 (19%)
60+	0 (0%)	38 (31%)

Gender was approximately even across the groups (56 per cent male, 43 per cent female). As expected, age between the two groups varied, with 91 per cent of students identifying as under 29 years old, but 70 per cent of mentors identifying as 40 or older. Mentor participants were asked how long they had served as a mentor, with 30 mentors (23 per cent) indicating over 5 years, 79 mentors (61 per cent) indicating between 1 and 5 years, and the remaining 21 mentors (15 per cent) indicating less than one year. Also, many mentors identified as having attended the same university themselves

(82 per cent), however, not all, as the alumni programs also allowed for graduates of other universities to serve as mentors.

Mentee participants were asked to indicate if they were international students or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. A total of 15 student participants ( $n = 15$ ) identified as international and a total of 3 student participants identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Additionally, 46 students (27 per cent) identified as first-in-family to attend a university.

## Findings

The next section provides an overview of the major findings or themes to emerge from the study, evidencing with data either from the survey and/or interviews. When it is critical to note differences between programs, this will be done, for example, in findings related to challenges for postgraduate students. Relevant sections also compare students' versus mentors' perceptions, for example, in the theme 'motivations for participation'. The following sections highlight findings based on four key areas: participants' motivations; students' perceptions of employability; impact on the students' university experience; and furthering alumni engagement with the university.

### *Motivations for participation*

Students and alumni mentors were both asked about their motivations to participate in alumni mentoring programs, and findings suggest that the two groups often had different objectives. While mentors seemed to focus on the more feel-good benefits, students were more interested in specific, career-boosting possibilities.

Specifically, mentors across all three programs indicated similar results through the web-based survey. The majority of mentors ( $n = 102$ , 78 per cent) indicated they wanted to help students in need of career support while 78 of the 130 mentors (60 per cent) indicated they wanted to give back to the University. Other responses included that they wanted to learn about younger generations of workers ( $n = 35$ , 27 per cent), wanted to make connections with students and other mentors ( $n = 28$ , 22 per cent) and received similar assistance or were part of a mentoring program when they were a student ( $n = 11$ , 8 per cent).

Through open-ended responses, mentors were able to offer more detailed responses on why they had decided to participate in the program. A total of 24 mentors wrote a personal response, and comments about helping others and supporting younger generations were some of the main themes to emerge. A few mentors noted that they wanted to serve as a mentor because they did not have the opportunity themselves when they were a student. Quotes included:

'I am passionate about this age range, being able to see them come out the other side.' -Mentor, Access

'When I see my mentees get the jobs they want it's really great.' – Mentor, Business

'I want to give back to society. And it's part of my social corporate responsibility. You can look in my LinkedIn profile to see the comments from my mentees.' – Mentor, Business



Then, when students were asked about their motivations and expectations of the alumni mentoring programs, the majority of students indicated that they participated in the program to increase their career skills or industry knowledge. Frequently, students also noted that they hoped they would build a professional relationship with their mentor. A few students also mentioned that their expectations included Australian-specific knowledge, networking more broadly or that they were unsure what to expect.

For example, in the selection of quotes below it can be seen that students wanted to learn about their mentor's industry and specific company in order to have greater insight into how to apply for jobs in the future. Students hoped that mentors would give advice or tips on how to apply for jobs and build their careers. International student mentees also often mentioned that they wanted Western/Australian-specific tips on applying for jobs or industry knowledge, as they believed the process would be different in Australia than in their home countries. A few other students mentioned that they did not know what to expect but signed up for the program because it looked interesting.

'I wanted industry experience and learn more about the profession. And help me decide where I should go with my own career.' – Mentee, Law

'I really needed someone who could open me a door, because my family couldn't.' - Mentee, Access

Thus, in comparing students' and mentors' responses, findings revealed a slight mismatch between mentors and students' motivations for participation. Mentors mentioned a more general desire to help prepare future generations, while students often had more instrumental expectations, such as gaining access to important professional networks. It further became clear through comments made in interviews that mentors were more interested in the larger picture of mentoring (i.e., sharing stories or helping build young people's confidence), while mentees themselves needed more instrumental and specific help (i.e., personal letters of recommendation and specific career guidance).

To further illustrate, many mentees who were interviewed were highly engaged students who had part-time jobs or had previously done internships. As one Access mentee noted, 'I had already done an internship, but was looking for insider information. Generally, students are concerned about future jobs'. However, many mentors in the interviews believed the mentoring program was about giving students broad advice on their future career, not only helping them gain employment. When mentors were asked to tell a specific story of guidance or advice they had given a mentee that they believed really helped the mentee, many struggled to respond. Instead, mentors often referred to the general information they had conveyed. For example, one Business mentor responded, 'I help my mentees by equipping them with life skills, so they can be street smart. Not career skills. You know I tell them to focus on human values, like honesty and how to deal with disappointment'.

### *Students' perceptions on employability*

A key aim of all three programs drawn on for the study was to improve students' perceptions of their own future employability. Aligning to this, the study explored the impact of the program across employability, student confidence, and self-efficacy. Initial

**Table 3.** Student perceptions of employability.

As a result, in my participation in the alumni mentoring program..	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total
I am confident about finding work in the future	4.08%	2	8.16%	4	16.33%	8	38.78%	19	32.65%	16	49
I am able to discuss my personal skill sets	6.12%	3	0.00%	0	14.29%	7	48.98%	24	30.61%	15	49
I have a clear vision towards future career paths	6.12%	3	12.24%	6	16.33%	8	38.78%	19	26.53%	13	49
I feel comfortable networking with professionals	6.12%	3	12.24%	6	10.20%	5	38.78%	19	32.65%	16	49

analysis found that student participants responded positively in each of these areas. For example, a total of 39 students (79 per cent) indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to discuss their personal skill sets. Likewise, a total of 35 students (71 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed with the statements, ‘I am confident about finding work in the future’ and ‘I feel comfortable networking with professionals.’

However, not all students agreed with these statements, and further analysis revealed that the program of participation may have made a difference in students’ response to these statements. Most notably, the majority of students who strongly disagree or disagreed about the employability aspects of the alumni mentoring program were from the law program specifically. For example, 4 out of 21 law students strongly disagreed or disagreed that they were confident about finding work in the future, and five law students strongly disagreed or disagreed that they have a clear vision towards future career paths. This may be linked to the law course being as postgraduate course, rather than an undergraduate course. Further, while overall the percentage of students who did not perceive a positive benefit from the alumni mentoring programs in regard to their employability was relatively small, these students still reflect a critical population that is not currently seeing benefits in the programs. It also supports the idea that differences between programs exist, as do the needs of their participants (See Table 3).

### *Perception of impact on university experience*

It also seemed that students’ participation in the alumni mentoring programs positively impacted their perceptions of their overall university experience. For example, 37 students (75 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, ‘I was satisfied with my student experience’ and 39 students (79 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘The alumni mentoring program was unique to other experiences such as career days and internships’. Additionally, 47 of the 49 mentees further responded that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, ‘Due to my participation, I would like to become a mentor myself one day.’ (See Table 4.)

Similar to student responses on the alumni mentoring program’s impact on their employability, it was again found that the majority of the participants who strongly disagreed or disagreed with the programs positive impact on their university experience were from the postgraduate law program specifically. For example, of the seven students who strongly disagreed or disagreed that they were satisfied with their student experience, five were from law, and of the six students who strongly disagreed or disagreed

**Table 4.** Student perceptions on university experience.

As a result, in my participation in the alumni mentoring program..	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total					
I was satisfied with my student experience	8.16%	4	6.12%	3	10.20%	5	36.73%	18	38.78%	19	49
I felt like I was a member of the university community	8.16%	4	4.08%	2	24.49%	12	32.65%	16	30.61%	15	49
I had a deeper understanding of how my subjects were preparing me for my future career	12.24%	6	10.20%	5	26.53%	13	32.65%	16	18.37%	9	49
I felt that members of the university cared about me	6.12%	3	10.20%	5	16.33%	8	51.02%	25	16.33%	8	49
Due to my participation, I would like to become a mentor myself one day	2.04%	1	2.04%	1	2.04%	1	48.98%	24	44.90%	22	49
The alumni mentoring program was unique to other experiences such as career days and internships	4.08%	2	6.12%	3	10.20%	5	38.78%	19	40.82%	20	49

that they felt like a member of the university community, four were from law. Additionally, both responses that indicated they strongly disagreed or disagreed that they would like to be a mentor one day were both law mentee participants. Given the small, exploratory size of this study, this finding would need to be explored in more depth in the future. However, combined with the before-mentioned outliers from the Law program, it may indicate the specific challenges of providing beneficial alumni mentoring opportunities to postgraduate students, who may have already worked in industry or may have higher expectations. It is also possible that student participants in Law had more fine-tuned and well-established career goals and subsequently expected more directed mentoring.

One of the aims of this project was to better understand how current participation in alumni mentoring programs would later influence mentees' motivation to become mentors themselves. Therefore, in an open-ended response, mentees were also asked about whether they wanted to become a mentor themselves one day, with a total of 42 responses recorded. Common mentee responses included that they wanted to be mentors to give back to the community or help the next generation. A few mentees expressed that they wanted to mentor one day, but it depended on their future career paths. Other responses included that mentees wanted to serve as mentors to help build a professional network, and two mentees responded they already served mentors to younger students.

These responses resemble the motivations of the mentor participants, and the shift suggests that the difference between students' and mentors' motivations may be due less to conflicting motivations between individuals and more to the perceived benefits of each role.

### **Furthering alumni engagement**

Overall, the majority of mentors indicated that they felt connected to the university and committed to participating in alumni programs. Specifically, mentors were asked how the program influenced their connection to the university. The majority of mentors ( $n = 78$ ,

**Table 5.** Mentor perceptions of impact.

As a result, in my participation in the alumni mentoring program..	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I feel like I am a member of the university community	6.40% 8	7.20% 9	24.00% 30	50.40% 63	12.00% 15	125
I am likely to participate in other alumni opportunities such as guest lecturing or helping inform industry-related curriculum	2.40% 3	8.80% 11	31.20% 39	39.20% 49	18.40% 23	125
I will continue to serve as a mentor	4.80% 6	6.40% 8	16.80% 21	44.80% 56	27.20% 34	125

60 per cent) indicated they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 'I feel like I am a member of the university community.' Further, 80 mentors (71 per cent) indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that they would continue to serve as a mentor. Additionally, 72 mentors (58 per cent) indicated they would like to participate in other alumni opportunities such as guest lecturing or helping inform industry-related curriculum (See Table 5).

However, there are two caveats to mention about furthering alumni engagement. The first emerged through interviews, finding that alumni mentor participants often already had a close connection to the university. For example, many participants noted that they formerly worked at the university or had previously guest lectured or served on industry panels. This may have resulted in a reporting bias in these findings, as mentors were already engaged. It is also relevant to note that not all mentors had positive experiences. While the majority of mentors responded that mentees were highly engaged and respectful, a few mentioned that they have encountered some issues with disengaged mentees. For example, one mentor told a story about having mentees not show to up meet him for their arranged meeting. This negative experience had made him hesitant to participate in the program in the future.

## Discussion and recommendations

Similarities among the participants' responses highlight the considerable opportunity that alumni mentoring programs can provide for improving both student outcomes and alumni engagement. In addition, the findings suggest that these benefits may exist across different program types, both with and without a student application process. The differences that emerged among responses also offer insight into the particular benefits and challenges of establishing an alumni mentoring program that meets the unique needs of its targeted participants. The difference that presented most strongly seemed to relate to the challenges of creating alumni mentoring programs for post-graduate students. While this article has acknowledged possible reasons for these differences, it would be valuable for future research to investigate this in more detail.

This study was limited primarily in its selection process, in that mentee participants were already higher achieving students and mentors, for the most part, had existing

connections to the university. Future research may want to explore how differing student cohorts are impacted by alumni mentoring programs. The size of the study also meant that it is also not possible to state explicitly that differences between participants' responses were due to variations in the programs' implementations. There is, therefore, great scope for future research to follow on this study by investigating, explicitly, the potential for students who may not have self-selected into these programs or exploring participants' pre- and post-participation attitudes. Likewise, a comparison of participating and non-participating students' perceptions would offer a helpful next step in understanding the specific benefits of alumni mentoring programs, as would an investigation of programs across institutions.

Nonetheless, what is apparent from this study is that alumni mentoring programs are distinctively situated to provide benefits to *both* students' employment perceptions and alumni engagement with the university. While more work is needed to understand more clearly how these programs may epitomise their benefits, the findings align with previous research that found the opportunity to connect students with alumni is indeed one worth pursuing (e.g., Priest & Donley, 2014; Schlee, 2000). Yet, it was also clear that there is scope to improve such programs in practice. In particular, findings support the importance of clearly explaining the objectives of the program and making sure that mentors and mentees each have reasonable expectations – or that they understand how to express those expectations. That said, the consistent themes found in these findings and expressed by both students and mentors have enabled us to devise four key recommendations for future practice. Our recommendations with descriptions are listed below.

### ***Take care with matching process, especially for postgraduate students***

Both mentors and mentees frequently commented on the challenges of being paired with someone whose interests did not align with their own. This was most pronounced for the postgraduate law students but was evident in all three programs. At times, finding mentors in relevant careers may be more important than including someone who had graduated from the same program. It may also be helpful to encourage mentors to discuss their career trajectory and decision-making process, regardless of their chosen career. This may help all participants see the value in a match that might appear less than ideal initially.

### ***Encourage mentees to discuss their specific course information and subjects with mentors***

Mentees sometimes responded that they did not see the value in their subjects to their future career paths. This is likely due to their inexperience in the industry, rather than the content of the subjects. Therefore, it could be helpful for mentees to discuss their past and current subjects. This would not only aid discussion between the mentor and mentee but also help the mentor discuss what they learned in similar subjects and how it has helped them in their field.

### ***Outline specific time commitments and emailing/phone etiquette***

Select mentors and mentees both highlighted their frustration over what they perceived as a lack of engagement from their assigned mentor/mentee. This issue could be mitigated by outlining clear and specific time commitments before mentors/mentees enrol. For example, each program could indicate to all participants that the program should take up 1 h of time each week. Additionally, programs could remind mentors/mentees about the expected emailing and phone etiquette for the program. For example, mentors/mentees could be reminded that while etiquette may differ in their culture/industry/lifestyle that, in the program, all emails or phone calls are expected to be responded to within 48 h.

### ***Provide additional structure to mentor/mentee meetings for those who request***

While some mentor–mentee relationships may not need additional structure, there may be a few matches that need additional resources to help guide conversation. For this reason, programs could offer optional topics to discuss that mentors/mentees could suggest to one another, including improving the CV, interview skills, or to discuss a recent headline related to their shared industry. Mentors could also give ideas on what specific jobs within the industry they think will grow or diminish and give advice to mentees on how to best prepare for future jobs (e.g., upskilling).

## **Conclusion**

The study presented in this article supports the idea that alumni mentoring programs offer unique benefits to both students and alumni, thus benefiting the university as well. As aligned to our earlier research questions, we found that alumni mentoring programs had a positive impact on students' perceptions of graduate employability, their overall student experience, and their likelihood to want to serve as a mentor one day to future students. To illustrate, we found that approximately 70 per cent of students agreed or strongly agreed that post-mentoring they were more confident about finding work and that approximately 80 per cent of students felt more equipped to discuss their personal skill sets. We also found that the majority of students felt due to their participation in an alumni mentoring program they were more satisfied with their student experience (75 per cent) and more likely to want to be a mentor themselves one day (95 per cent). These findings, while limited by the number of participants and situated in a specific context, highlight the benefits of alumni-mentoring programs.

Similar to previous research, we also present recommendations for future practice and find alignment to our recommendations on how to improve processes with studies conducted in the US context (e.g., Campbell, Smith, Dugan, & Komives, 2012; Priest & Donley, 2014). While it may be expected that students and mentors have different motivations for participating within programs, clarity and transparency of these differences may help alleviate misunderstandings. In order to maximise the value of these programs, there needs to be a stronger link between research and evaluation and the design of programs. There is further scope to investigate differences across fields and to compare pre- and post-participation attitudes. Even so, this study has provided

important confirmation regarding the potential for alumni mentoring programs to improve both student employment perceptions and alumni engagement with the university. This particular combination of benefits is uniquely valuable and, as such, further research into these programs should be warranted.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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## ALUMNI MENTORING PROGRAM REFERENCE MATERIAL

### The Best 10 Free and Open Source File Sharing Software

#### #1 FileZilla

FileZilla is one of the most reliable and feature-rich cross-platform File Sharing Software. This FTP Client software is free to use and is an open source version allowing room for improvement always. The best thing about FileZilla is that it offers an intuitive graphical user interface that makes working with this software easier. Most of the web browsers support FTP file transfer protocol.

Features:

The software is easier to use

Reliable

Supports bulk file transfers

It flawlessly supports FTP, FTP over SSL/TLS (FTPS) and SSH File Transfer Protocol (SFTP)

Runs on platforms including; Windows, Linux, Mac OS X

The software comes with IPv6 support

The software is made available in multiple languages

Facility of Bookmarks

Drag & drop facility

Allows Network configuration

Supports remote file editing & file search

Easy directory browsing

Users can transfer large files of more than 4GB

Tabbed user interface

Intuitive Site Manager and transfer queue

Restore and reconnect facility

Multiple server transfers

FileZilla Pro, a professional version of FileZilla comes with added support for cloud storage protocols.

FileZilla Pro can be used with WebDAV, Amazon S3, Backblaze B2, Dropbox, Microsoft OneDrive,

Microsoft Azure File Storage, Microsoft Azure Blob Storage, Google Cloud Storage, Google Drive,

OpenStack Swift and so on.

#### #2 HFS

HFS is yet another feature-rich free and open source file sharing software that guarantees to contain zero malware. Sending and receiving files via HFS is much easier. The software uses web technology thus making it more compatible with the latest Internet. The software has been successfully tested.

Features:

Easy and effortless download and upload facility

Options of Virtual file system

Highly customizable

Facility to use HTML template

- Complete Bandwidth control
- Options to switch between Easy and Expert mode
- Total control over connections
- Dynamic DNS updater
- HTTP file server

### #3 Arbore

Arbore File Sharing Software allows anyone to send pictures, data without any limitations. The software assures complete privacy as the transfer happens directly from the sender to the recipient. Just create your identity, manage contacts, share and relax. Since this is an open source software solution, it has enough space to iterate, validate and enhance to make it more acceptable.

Features:

- Create your account and have as many identities as you want
- Easy to build your contact list
- Easily share files, documents, images of any size
- Offers total privacy
- Share without limits
- Multi-platform support - Windows, MacOS, and Linux
- No spyware
- Absolutely no user tracking
- No troubling ads
- Share any type of files
- Chat facility

### #4 ProjectSend

ProjectSend is absolutely free to use file sharing software. It is an open source software solution allowing total freedom to the users. The software is secure and easy-to-use. Anyone who wishes to send/ transfer files can use ProjectSend. Businesses, non-profits, individuals, start-ups, etc. are some of the top users of this software.

Features:

- Share files safe and securely
- Can be installed on your own VPS or web hosting account
- Suits all file sharing needs
- Upon enabling the option, even the receiver can upload a file to share with the sender
- Detailed panel to the administrators
- Share files to individuals or groups
- Share files on any server
- No limitations of size and number

### #5 Ares Galaxy

Download and share anything like files, documents, movies, music, games, etc. quickly with Ares Galaxy, the free file sharing software. Ares is one of the most secure P2P platforms.

## Features

- No unsolicited Malware or Adware
- The latest version supports Bit Torrent protocol
- Hashlinks functionality
- Supports Shoutcast radio stations
- Join chat rooms
- Quick Downloads
- Efficient library organizer
- Free 24/7 technical support
- Unlimited Downloads
- Privacy Protection

## #6 Limewire

Limewire is one of the most popular and the most easily downloadable free file sharing program. Although a version of this software was shut down, few older versions are still functional. More than 100 million monthly users are taking total advantage of this open source file sharing software.

### Features:

- Uses Bit Torrent protocol
- Supports Mac OS9
- Automatically sets-up packet forwarding
- Compatible with major platforms
- Runs over Gnutella network
- Well established code-base
- Friendly software
- Built-in Audio & Video Player
- Clean and simple interface
- Easy scanning of search results
- User-friendly
- Graphical interface

## #6 StrongDC++

StrongDC++ is yet another powerful free and open source file sharing software that allows P2P file sharing effortlessly.

### Features:

- Requires no installation
- Securely share files
- Segmented file sharing
- High-speed sharing
- Totally customizable
- No Adware
- Identifies files through Cryptographic hash value
- Universal Plug and Play protocol
- Network Address Translator

A distributed hash table  
Proxy server  
DHT search engine

<Apparently the company overlooked the fact that the author cannot count as there is no #7>

#### #8 OwnCloud

OwnCloud is an Open Source file sharing software ideal for every level right from individual users to large enterprises. The software allows synchronizing and sharing files easily. All data shared are secured by SSL/end-to-end encryption

Features:

- Open & flexible architecture
- Safe & Secure file synchronization
- Allows sharing one or more files easily
- Shared data is accessible from any device and at any time
- Access anything and share with anybody
- Facility to power up the file search with Elasticsearch server
- Trace activities easily
- Phone notification
- Share with email
- Powerful permission management rules
- Extensible with App framework
- Password protection
- Anonymous and full access sharing
- Link expiration

#### #9 NextCloud

NextCloud is a powerful open source file sharing software that allows users to share, protect, monitor and control data across easily and effortlessly.

Features:

- Easy and transparent access to data on any storage
- Extensive auditing capabilities
- Mobile friendly
- Two-factor authentication
- Easy collaboration of large files
- Secured transfer
- Unlimited number of sharing
- Facility to share-view only documents
- Smart and intuitive sharing menu
- Powerful group folder integration

#### #10 Pydio

Pydio is an easy to deploy-and-run file sharing software that allows a safe and secure way of sharing files. Designed to fit every business need, Pydio can be deployed right on your servers or anywhere you wish as cloud-based. Written in Golang, Pydio is capable of handling large files.

Features:

Secure access to files anywhere and at anytime

Facility of online chat

Single point of access for all the data storage

Compliant with data management, audit and reporting tools

Intuitive interface

Real-time collaboration

Developed on a micro-service architecture

Admin console for better analysis

Other than the above listed free and open source file sharing software solutions, there is yet another name which is getting more popular these days. Let us know this software in detail;

D-Lan

D-Lan is a LAN file sharing software that enables users to share large files freely and easily within the local area network environment without any additional configuration. The software, being Open Source software, is continuously enhanced to add better features and added experience to the users.

D-LAN software

Key Features:

Easily share files and folders in a local area network environment

Facility to transfer files in the distributed pattern. Such a facility can improve both file sharing performance and reliability

Transfer files without any additional configuration

No central server

Indexed search

Facility to easily browse files and folders of others within the network environment

Easily add, delete and re-order the download queue

Chatting facility with peers within the network environment

D-LAN runs without graphic interface

Users can control the software remotely

Safe and secured

File sharing is a critical task for all organizations and individuals. If you are looking for advanced features in a file sharing software, then probably, you can look for some commercial or paid file sharing software. There are plenty of popular file sharing software solutions that offer exceptional features for a reasonable cost. One such software is Binfer, a software that makes large file sharing simple and easy without uploading.

Binfer

Binfer allows its users to share large confidential files securely using a military-grade AES 256 bit encryption. Interestingly, sharing files does not depend on server speed.

Key Features:

High-speed file transfer

No restrictions on the type of file, size or quantity

Secured file sharing

Facility to share files directly to the recipient

No uploads or downloads

AES 256 bit encryption

Drag and drop files

Facility to send 10GB+ video files

Detailed tracking facility of all file sharing

Advanced and customized reports

The software is free to use upto 200 MB data. Apart from this, there are six different monthly subscription plans and pay-as-you-go plans too.

Information provided by: [goodfirms.com](http://goodfirms.com)