

## **Program Overview**

The Ascend USC Mentorship Program is a program created for selected students to explore career interests and engage in mutually beneficial, professionally oriented relationships with alumni and community members. The program's mission is to enrich and support the professional, academic and personal experiences of undergraduate students in order to assist them in transitioning from academic to professional life. This approach aligns with that of Ascend USC's function as a bridge between seasoned professionals and emerging leaders and an incubator for partnership and leadership.

The Ascend USC Mentorship Program begins each fall and spring and lasts for one semester. We will host three general events such as workshops, social events, and a celebration event. To enroll in the program, mentors and students will be asked to complete a brief profile form identifying their education, career path/goals, professional background, and personal interests in order to be paired up. Mentors are normally paired up with no more than three students but will be able to specify the amount of students they wish to mentor in the application form.

## **Mentor Expectations**

A mentor is an advisor who may provide career or academic guidance, networking opportunities, and insights into the working world. Similar career goals, shared interests, or common academic backgrounds provide the foundation for the student/mentor relationship. The mentor and the student will mutually agree upon the nature of the relationship. We encourage our mentors to meet the following expectations:

- Participate in regular contact with your student via phone and e-mail, as well as meet with your student once or more (as determined by you and your student)
- Participate in some of our mentorship group events including workshops, social activities and a celebration event
- Complete evaluations for students after the program
- Notify the program coordinator if you feel your student is not fulfilling his or her

responsibilities.

- Work with the student to help him/her develop and establish realistic and obtainable goals
- Provide guidance through the job search process, information about specific industries, and/or advice regarding professional etiquette.

*This program is not intended to be an internship, nor is it designed to lead to a job in the mentor's place of employment.*

## **Why Become a Mentor?**

Mentoring a student is a rewarding experience for a number of reasons:

- Enrich your own life by making a difference in someone else's though sharing your own experiences and insights
- Becoming a part of the Ascend national network, which reaches 60,000 people with 34 student chapters and 17 professional chapters within the United States.
- Connect and invest in USC and the Marshall School of Business on a more personal level
- Gain new skills as you advise and counsel students.

## **Time Commitment for Mentors**

The fall mentorship program runs from approximately September through December. After students are selected based on their applications and assigned to their mentors, they are asked to arrange meetings with their mentors at least once per semester. We also plan to host three group events in which mentors and students can foster their relationships in a group setting. Although not all events are mandatory for mentors, we highly recommend coming to these events if you are available. You will be able to indicate which group activities you plan to attend in your application. Mentors are encouraged to continue the mentor/mentee relationship beyond one semester and are invited to rejoin our program for the spring mentorship program.

Below is the tentative timeline for the Fall Semester's Mentorship Program:

Date	Ascend Mentorship Event (Fall 2015)
26 September, 2015 (Saturday) 10:00am - 2:00pm	Mentorship Kickoff Event (Welcome Luncheon, Goal-Setting, and Workshop)
22 October, 2015 (Thursday) 7:00pm - 8:30pm	Professional Event / Workshop
21 November, 2015 (Saturday) 3:00pm - 9:00pm / 6:30pm - 9:00 pm	Mentorship End-of-Semester Celebration (Optional Social Event + Dinner)

## Students – Role and Expectations

Students, as the primary beneficiaries of the mentor relationship, are expected to make initial and continued contact with their mentor. They are selected through written applications and essay questions that help us understand their professional and academic commitments, competencies and interests. Students must:

- Discuss their needs and clearly communicate expectations with mentors; think about what they want out of the program prior to each meeting.
- Discuss ideas and activities with mentors and commit to agreements made
- Be receptive to suggestions and feedback.
- Keep mentors informed of their progress. Contact mentors in a timely manner if they are unable to attend scheduled meetings.
- Realize that having a mentor is privilege and work hard to take advantage of the opportunity.
- Maintain a professional demeanor and keep communication professional.
- Be respectful of mentor’s time

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: How frequently should we meet?

A: We recommend meeting no less than once per semester. A majority of previous mentors and mentees have indicated that participating in events organized through Ascend USC and its mentorship program provide a good environment for

communication and relationship building.

**Q: Where should we meet?**

A: Most participants meet with their students on campus, but some choose to meet at their place of business or other convenient locations. Students selected to participate in the program are strongly reminded that they have the responsibility to be respectful of their mentor's time. Our previous experience has indicated that students take this responsibility seriously and keep their scheduled appointments.

**Q: How long should meetings be?**

A: Feedback from professionals and students indicate hour-long meetings are the most efficient and productive.

**Q: How should subjects to be discussed be selected?**

A: As it is important that the student take a proactive role in determining the content of the meetings, they are reminded of this during their application process and in the student mentorship handbook. Previous participants noted that a half hour interview followed by a half-hour discussion is the most content-generating way of discussion.

**Q: If my student is interested in an internship or job prospects what do I do?**

A: The mentorship program is not intended to meet job-placement or internship requirements of the student. However, these are subjects that are frequently addressed during mentor meetings. If you are comfortable doing so, we encourage mentors to assist the students by identifying any opportunities they may be aware of.

**Q: How many students will I mentor?**

A: We recommend that each mentor work with two to three students in order to maximize the number of students that are able to participate in the program. However, it is entirely up to you how many students you mentor.