

# KAMP

Knox Alumni Mentoring Program

## Mentoring Handbook

THE HUMAN POWERED EDUCATION

**Mentee**



**KNOX**  
COLLEGE

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## Knox Alumni Mentoring Program

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## Knox Alumni Mentoring Program

Dear Mentee,

Welcome to the Knox Alumni Mentoring Program (KAMP)! At the heart of Knox's mission to challenge each other to explore, understand, and improve ourselves and our world, stands a tradition of alumni engagement and active involvement. KAMP is designed to foster new opportunities for alumni to assist current students in connecting the classroom experience to preparing for career paths. We are excited for the connections you will make and the life-learning information that will be gained. With more than 16,210 living alumni with enriching stories to share, we are certain your experience will open mentees' eyes, keep you connected to the innovation that defines Knox, and play a crucial role in building a dynamic, enriching Knox community.

KAMP is a collaboration between the Bastian Family Career Center and Alumni Relations. It serves three critical functions: to ease the transition from college to the real-world for students, foster networking opportunities, and provide engagement for our alumni. In order to meet these goals and to ensure lasting relationships between students and their mentors, a great attention to detail is placed in the pairing of alumni mentors with students who share similar hobbies and career interests.

This handbook will provide you with an overview of the program and, hopefully, answer some basic questions about mentoring. Please use it as a guide and resource throughout your mentoring experience and feel free to share with us any suggestions for improving its usefulness to our future alumni mentors and students.

Thank you for your participation. If at any time you have questions or concern, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Eric B. Johnson  
**Associate Director for Alumni Engagement**  
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**(309) 341-7648**

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## Knox Alumni Mentoring Program

### PURPOSE

Community is central to the Knox College experience, dating back to the founding years of putting learning to use to accomplish both personal and communal goals. The Knox Alumni Mentoring Program links the classroom to the real-world, by fostering meaningful and productive connections between students and alumni mentors. The yearlong program provides students with practical application of networking skills, an understanding of the occupation of interest, and personal and professional growth.

### GOALS

- Provide insight and tools to help Mentee make informed & ethical career decisions.
- Provide a forum for the observation, practice and mastery of professional networking skills.
- Grant alumni an opportunity to expand their affinity to Knox College by interacting with current students.
- Develop confident graduates with creative thinking and interpersonal skills who will discover where their degree will lead them.

### QUALIFICATIONS OF A MENTEE

A Mentee must be a current Knox College student in their second, third or fourth year (sophomore, junior or senior standings) with a sincere interest in developing a personal and professional network that supports their effort towards graduation.

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### BENEFITS

#### **Mentee**

Following are some general ways that we hope the Mentor will benefit from being in a mentoring relationship:

- Build a professional network.
- Develop and enhance professional and communication skills.
- Connect academics and career; gain perspective and support on academic pursuits and challenges.
- Explore new ideas and areas of interest.
- Gain exposure to career options.
- Develop an affinity to Knox College.

#### **Mentor**

We believe that mentoring will be a positive and enriching experience for you. Specifically, we hope you will:

- Refine coaching and mentoring skills.
- Develop meaningful connections with students.
- Learn about the Knox of today and the next generation.
- Gain professional synergy.
- Expand your professional network.

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### EXPECTATIONS

The role of a mentee is to be a true student, absorbing the knowledge and life experience of his/her mentor. It is important to think of your relationship with your mentor as an evolution. As time passes, you will develop a comfort level at which conversation becomes more specific towards your professional and academic life.

#### **Mentee:**

- Initiate (at least) monthly communication. You drive the relationship and indicate needs. Your mentor may reach out as well.
- Respond to correspondence within 48 hours.
- Proactively prepare for meetings and identify goals you hope to achieve.
- Follow through with timelines and communication.
- Contact mentor in a timely manner if unable to attend scheduled meeting.
- Be open and listen to mentor. Accept criticism and listen to constructive feedback.
- Share your ideas and insight.
- Look for opportunities where you can help your mentor. Recommend new apps or software, educate them on social media, pop culture, etc.
- Contact program staff if there is a concern with the mentor relationship.

#### **Mentor:**

- Listen to the needs and expectations of your Mentee.
- Be committed to serve as a resource to the Mentee.
- Encourage your Mentee to explore new areas.
- Work with college staff on how to successfully navigate students through Knox College.

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### EXPECTATIONS (continued)

#### Both:

The amount of time we ask to be committed is illustrated below:

- **In-person meetings:**

Face-to-face interactions throughout the year

- Face-to-face interactions may also be conducted through Skype, Facetime, or other forms of video communication.
- In-person meetings will most likely vary depending on your mentor's proximity to Knox. Mentors are encouraged to notify you if they plan to visit campus or will be present for events such as homecoming.

- **Communication:**

- **Communicate at least once per month.**
- Respond to your mentor in a timely manner.
- Clearly articulate expectations for mentorship
- Be flexible with expectations and meeting changes.
- Maintain confidentiality during and after mentorship.
- Discover common ground and respect your differences.
- Review the Mentor & Mentee Agreements.

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### PROCESS

#### Match:

Once you complete and submit the Mentee Profile, we will e-mail you confirming receipt of your profile. The pairing process is determined by the KAMP committee, comprised of Alumni Relations and Bastian Family Career Center Staff. The committee will match mentors and mentees by similarities in their personal and professional experience and demographics. Once we find a mentor that best matches your profile, we will reach out to both parties and notify you of a match.

Complete and submit the Mentee Agreement form before initial contact with mentor is made. It is your responsibility to conduct the initial contact with your mentor. Therefore, be attentive to the best form of communication they have provided such as email or phone number.

#### Initial Meeting (October)

You are paired with a successful mentor with great knowledge in your career field. Demonstrate your enthusiasm for the connection by initiating contact once the match is made.

Meetings should be relaxed and casual and typically last an hour. You are not responsible to pay for your Mentor's meal or any of your Mentor's expenses, nor vice versa.

**Topics of conversation** for this meeting will vary.

There are two objectives:

- Become acquainted.
- Establish communication expectations, including frequency and methods (email, phone, in-person, etc.).
- Share the three areas you hope for your mentor can provide guidance.

Below are some questions to think about as you prepare:

- What are some things I should tell my mentor about myself that would help us get to know each other?
- What about me and my life story might be interesting and relevant to this person?
- What do I want to gain from the mentoring relationship?



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### MONTHLY COMMUNICATION TOPICS (NEW FOR 2016-2017)

- **November (Career Planning)**
  - Continue your discussion about your mentor's history
  - Discuss short, mid, and long term goals and how you both plan to achieve them
  - Discuss skills and on-going professional training necessary to achieve these goals
  - Updating a résumé, letters of recommendation, and improving interview skills
  
- **December (Work-Life Balance)**
  - Discuss the challenges in achieving work/life balance
  - Work together to create a plan for you to pursue educational and professional success without sacrificing your personal/family life/hobbies
  
- **January (Managing people and dealing with difficult people)**
  - It's natural to gravitate toward those relationships that bring you the most happiness, growth, and fulfillment. However, despite your best efforts and intentions to the contrary, we're sometimes forced to deal with challenging relationships and difficult people.
  - Discuss ways to better deal with stress, tension, and anxiety that negatively impact your mood and expose you to unpleasant emotional toxicity.
  
- **February (Improving communication style and skills)**
  - Communication is more than just exchanging information. It's about understanding the emotion/intentions behind the information. Effective communication is a two-way street.
  - How to convey different messages? Was your message understood?  
How to be a better listener?
  
- **March (Service work/Philanthropy, Professional Organizations)**
  - How to get involved
  - Pros and cons and appropriate selection
  
- **April (Turning a degree into a profession)**
  - Some degrees do not set a student up for specific jobs.
  - Unless you are earning or have earned your degree in a very specific field, you have many options as far as you career choice goes.
  - This means that half the battle is deciding what you actually want to do.
  
- **May (Evaluating & Looking ahead)**
  - Discuss what worked and didn't work in your mentoring relationship
  - Create a list of suggestions to help future mentoring teams for next year's program

**A DINNER FORUM WILL BE SCHEDULED MONTHLY FOR MENTEES TO MEET AS A GROUP AND DISCUSS TOPICS WITH ONE GUEST MENTOR VIA WEBEX VIDEOCAST, ALONG WITH KNOX ALUMNI RELATIONS AND CAREER SERVICES PROFESSIONALS.**

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### QUESTIONS FOR MENTOR

#### Personal

- What is your greatest memory during your time at Knox College?
- Were you involved in any extracurricular activities at Knox College?
- What are your hobbies, outside interest, volunteer activities?
- What inspires you? What holds you back?
- What accomplishments have made you most proud?

#### Professional

- What was your first job out of college, and how did you get it?
- What trade-offs have you made in balancing work and family as your career has developed?
- What is a typical day for you?
- What aspects of your job take the most time?
- What do you like most or find most interesting about your work?
- Is there a preferred major for your position?
- How is the job market in your field right now? Do you expect changes in the future?
- Are there any professional associations connected to your field that you would recommend?

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### BEING AN EFFECTIVE MENTEE & MENTOR

#### Communication

An initial goal for the mentorship should be to establish a knowledge base of one another, so that a comfort level develops.

Effective communications are essential to any healthy relationship. We have created four stages of guiding the mentoring conversation.

#### 1. Explore

The end result of this phase is to have an understanding of what is going on in the mentee's world.

#### 2. Collaborate

A key outcome of this phase is a plan of action.

#### 3. Implement

This phase is where the mentee implements or commits to implementing the strategy.

#### 4. Evaluate

What worked? What did not work?

At least one correspondence a month has proven to be most beneficial for cultivating mentee-mentor relationship. Establish a schedule that works best for both and plan around it.

#### E-Mails

E-mails are very important, a simple pledge to one another to acknowledge and respond to each other's request in a timely manner is highly recommended.

- E-mails will be acknowledged within 48 hours.
- Response to content will be provided within 5 days.
- The mentor should inform the mentee when other obligations affect availability and when he/she will be available to the mentee.

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### SUGGESTED MENTORING ACTIVITIES

#### Conversations

- Discuss your educational background and the role of educational preparation in your field.
- Share information about a current event or issue in your field.
- Inquire about Mentee/Mentor internship endeavors.
- Discuss projects and developments in your company and industry such as: technology and trends, time management, globalization, diversity, and ethics in the work place.

#### Career Search Process

- Critique the mentee's resume and/or cover letter.
- Lead your mentee through a mock interview.
- Offer guidance on where to best look for jobs/internships in your field.
- Role-play telephone skills in anticipation of phone interviews.
- Share articles relevant to his/her major or career interests as well as encouragement to read relevant magazines, and journals.

#### Graduate School

- Share what you learned about navigating your graduate studies.
- Discuss how you worked with your advisors.
- Communicate the transition from school to the real-world.

#### Networking

- Introduce your mentee to other colleagues and/or contacts.
- Attend a professional association meeting or conference together.
- Guide your mentee in how to conduct an informational interview.
- Have them attend a morning staff meeting, or shadow you for a day.
- Encourage your Mentee to connect with you on LinkedIn and critique their profile.

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### Appendix (A)

#### SAMPLE EMAIL INTRODUCTION

The ultimate purpose of mentoring is learning. Your mentor is someone who has taken an interest in you and has a desire to help you learn what you need to know in order to become as successful as possible in your professional career. However, sometimes it can feel awkward meeting someone new, especially an accomplished alumnus or alumnae who is being introduced to you via email.

For students who are initially introduced to their mentors via email, we have put together some helpful notes to guide you in contacting and introducing yourself to your mentor. Please edit your message to suit your specific situation; the intent is to be professional while also sharing something of yourself in your communication. This is a skill you will be using over and over during the course of your professional career, so now is a great time to practice and develop it! If you have questions about contacting your mentor for the first time via email, do not hesitate to contact me at [ebjohnson@knox.edu](mailto:ebjohnson@knox.edu) or 309-341-7648 for advice.

#### **SAMPLE EMAIL INTRODUCTION:**

We encourage you to use your Knox email address for your mentor correspondence and to read and respond to your messages at least once a day. As you transition from life as a student to life as a professional, it also is a good idea to add a signature line to your email account to provide your contact information.

Your initial email to your mentor should follow this general structure:

Salutation (Dr., Mr., Ms. followed by last name),

*Paragraph #1* – Brief introduction explaining the reason for your message and referring to your match through the Knox Alumni Mentoring Program.

*Paragraph #2* – Information about your major(s), classes, and extracurricular interests. Refer to an attached draft copy of your resume (if you have one) or some of the things you hope to gain from your participation in the program.

*Paragraph #3* – Details regarding your availability, preferred contact number and email address, and a request to meet in person (depending on location), by phone, or by Skype.

Closing,  
Your Name

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### A SAMPLE EMAIL INTRODUCTION:

“Dear Dr. Jones,

I was excited to learn I have been matched with you through the Knox Alumni Mentoring Program (KAMP), and I wanted to write to introduce myself and to schedule our first meeting. I am a <insert major> major, and I will be starting my <insert semester> term at Knox College this fall. My classes have been a combination of <insert a few subjects>, and outside of class, I am involved with <insert student orgs or things you like doing in your free time>. This summer, I completed a volunteer/research/internship experience (select one) with <insert organization name>. I have attached a draft copy of my current resume, so you can learn a little bit more about me. I look forward to talking with you about ways I might improve my resume for future opportunities.

I am free on the following days/times, and I hope we will be able to meet in person during the networking reception on October 15, 2015.

I can be reached at abc123@knox.edu or by phone at 309-555-5555.

My availability within my schedule is as follows:

Tuesday, July 16 between 1:00 and 4:00

Wednesday, July 17 after 5:00

Monday, July 22 between 11:00 and 1:00

Could you please let me know if any of these days and times would work with your schedule? Thank you for your willingness to mentor me, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith

Knox College

B.A. in History (Expected May 2015)

Tel: 309-555-5555

Email: [jxz5111@knox.edu](mailto:jxz5111@knox.edu)

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### Appendix (B)

#### SAMPLE PHONE INTRODUCTION

Most likely you will be contacting your mentor via cell phone, so we suggest finding a quiet spot with good reception for your call. Since many mentors may provide their office numbers, it is possible you will be speaking to an administrative staff member before you will be connected with your mentor. Be sure to introduce yourself and explain why you are calling, whether you reach a staff member or your mentor directly.

Keep your conversations professional, as this will set the tone for future correspondence. Since your mentor may be able to introduce you to prospective employers and professional contacts, you want him or her to know you are serious about your goals. You also want your mentor to be confident in your abilities if he or she is assisting you with your job and/internship search.

You may have to leave your name and number for your call to be returned. Please be sure not to take the return call if you are in some situation where you cannot talk freely (driving, at work, shopping, etc.).

It would be better to let the call go to your voicemail (make sure your voicemail box is set up), and then you can return the call when you are in a more convenient location. Also be sure that your voicemail is professional; ensure that it clearly states your name and contains a polite message.

Your initial phone call to your mentor should follow the same general structure as the introductory email above. To ensure you remember all of the information you want to share during the call, you may want to make some notes of some of the information included in the email above—major, classes, interests, extracurricular activities, what you hope to get from the mentor program, etc.

#### A structure for your phone conversation could be:

Greetings and introduction.

Conversation starters regarding the weather, things happening on campus, exciting events throughout your summer, etc. You can also ask them questions as well, in order to establish a back and forth dialogue.

Share details about your major, interests, extracurricular activities, and what you hope to get from the mentor program experience. Ask a question or two about your mentor's major during their student years, their current job title or organization, etc.

Share days and times when you are typically available to meet in person, by phone, or by Skype, and discuss your mentor's availability and how you want to structure your interactions.

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Thanks and closing, with a reiteration of whatever you have decided on regarding the date, time, and method of connecting for your next meeting, as well as any specific things you may need to do in advance to prepare (i.e. forwarding a copy of your resume, etc.). Make sure you share contact information so you both have each other's preferred email addresses and phone numbers. Don't forget that a conversation means both people contribute.

Your first phone conversation might sound something like the following:

"Hello Mr. Thompson. My name is Jane Smith, and I have been matched with you through the Knox Alumni Mentoring Program. Is this a good time for you to talk with me for a few minutes?"

### <Comments from mentor>

I'm an International Politics major, and my courses last term were really interesting. I especially liked my course on International Political Economy, and I was able to get an internship in a Washington think tank this summer working on this issue. Outside of classes, I'm involved in various committees, I am a member of the Union Board, and I also am a member of Amnesty International.

### <Comments from mentor>

I'm really excited that we've been matched for the mentor program, and I'm interested in learning more about your career path and your advice for me at this point in my academic career. Can we set up a regular meeting time that works with your schedule? I'm generally available on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays between 3:30 and 7:00 and on Tuesdays and Thursdays any time after 4:30. What is your preference for how we communicate? Phone, email, or Skype are all great options for me, and of course, I look forward to meeting you in person during the networking reception at Knox College.

### <Comments from mentor>

Thursdays at 6:00 would be great for me. The second Thursday of every month via phone at this number? That sounds fine; I'll add it to my calendar. Is there anything specific I should plan for our next conversation on Thursday, November 13? I could send you a draft of my resume, so you could learn a little bit more about me, if that would be helpful? Great – I'll do that tonight. Can you please confirm your email address for me? Got it – thanks.

I really appreciate your willingness to mentor me and will look forward to talking with you on Thursday, November 13, at 6:00. I'll call you then at this phone number.

Thank you for your time, bye.