



SKIDMORE

# Zankel Experience Network

**Mentoring Program Handbook**

---

## Program Overview

The Mentoring Program was created in 2021 as part of the Zankel Experience Network (ZEN), which was established in 2020 by Jimmy Zankel '92 and Pia Scala-Zankel '92 to foster Skidmore's deep commitment to experiential learning through programs such as the Summer Experience Fund, the Summer Faculty Student Research Program, and the new Mentoring Program.

The Mentoring Program seeks to connect current Skidmore students with recent Skidmore alumni/ae, based on shared academic areas. This connection will provide student participants with opportunities to share Skidmore experiences with alumni/ae, develop strategies to manage challenges at Skidmore, learn about mentors' career paths, and gain their advice for succeeding at Skidmore and beyond.

Mentors and mentees will be invited to participate in the program and will be matched by the program coordinator. Mentors are Skidmore graduates, and mentees are current Skidmore juniors or sophomores. Matches are made primarily on career interests but, depending upon program participation, matches may be made on a broader basis. The program will run for a full academic year.

---

**Mentoring Program Contact:**

Skidmore College Career Development Center  
(518) 580-5790

# Mentorship Benefits

## FOR MENTORS:

Participation in the Mentoring Program will provide the opportunity to:

- Share your college and post-college experiences with the next generation of Skidmore alumni/ae.
- Enhance your leadership and mentoring skills.
- Make a critical, non-financial contribution to Skidmore College.
- Help current Skidmore students solve problems and set goals.

## FOR MENTEES:

Participation in the Mentoring Program will provide the opportunity to:

- Receive feedback and ideas on your academic and professional challenges.
- Have your resume critiqued by a professional in the field.
- Practice your communication and networking skills.
- Learn about potential career paths from an alumnus/a with shared academic interests.
- Connect with someone who has “been there, done that.”
- Have access to a \$200 professional development budget, which can be used to pay for expenses, such as professional attire, travel for interviews, registration fees for networking events or professional development organizations, and other career-related costs.

## Mentor Expectations

- Work with your mentee to develop a meeting schedule that works for both of you. **You should have at least two substantive meetings via phone, Zoom, or in person during the first month of the program, and at least one per month during the remainder of the program.** More frequent, informal connections via text or email are also encouraged.
- Ask questions, actively listen to your mentee, and be supportive and encouraging.
- Provide constructive feedback on student's resume.
- Share your Skidmore and post-graduate experiences, serve as a sounding board, and offer advice or suggestions to your mentee.
- Respond to outreach from your mentee in a timely manner (e.g., within two business days).
- Complete a final assessment of mentee growth and share feedback on the program at the conclusion.

## Mentee Expectations

- **It is your responsibility to make the first contact with your mentor within one week of receiving contact information from the program coordinator.**
- Work with your mentor to develop a meeting schedule that works for both of you. **You should have at least two substantive meetings via phone, Zoom, or in person during the first month of the program, and at least one per month during the remainder of the program.** More frequent, informal connections via text or email are also encouraged.
- Be open, ask questions, and listen to constructive feedback.
- Share your resume with your mentor for constructive feedback.
- Respond to outreach from your mentor in a timely manner (e.g., within two business days).
- Share feedback on the program at the conclusion.
- Check in with program coordinator at least once a month.
- Recognize that having a mentor is a privilege and work hard to take advantage of the opportunity.

## Mentor and Mentee Expectations

- Be respectful of each other's time and make sure you are on time for all meetings.
- Establish the best ways to communicate and the frequency of communications. Discuss potential busy periods when frequency might have to be adjusted.
- Honor confidences.
- Communicate with the program coordinator about any concerns or conflicts that may arise.

## Program Participation Termination

Should a mentor or a mentee have a concern about their partner's behavior or commitment to the program, they should initially address it with the other party in an open and respectful manner. If the partners are unable to resolve the issue on their own, they should immediately contact the program coordinator.

Participation in the Mentoring Program is a privilege and requires a time commitment. If a mentor or mentee is unable or unwilling to meet this commitment, they will be asked to terminate their participation.

# First Meeting Objectives

It is the mentee's responsibility to contact their mentor to schedule the first meeting. In that initial outreach, mentees should introduce themselves, share some convenient dates and times for a meeting, and ask the mentor to share convenient dates and times for them. Meetings should typically last about an hour.

The topics of conversation during your first meeting may vary, but there are three objectives:

- 1. To become acquainted.**
- 2. To share communication preferences and establish expectations.**
  - How will you meet: In person, via Zoom, or by phone?
  - Who will be responsible for scheduling meetings?
  - Will you schedule multiple meetings in advance or one at a time?
  - What "ground rules" do you want to establish for your meetings?
  - How will you connect in between meetings – text, email, phone?
- 3. To set some initial goals for what you would like to accomplish during the relationship.**
  - Discuss how to best translate your experiences at Skidmore into your post-graduate life
  - Explore career paths for your major.
  - Learn how to balance school, post-graduate planning, and personal life.
  - Enhance professional skills, such as communication, leadership, or project management.

# First Meeting Discussion Topics

- Favorite classes, professors, and campus activities.
- Career paths — intended and actual.
- Best campus life memories.
- Challenges at Skidmore.
- How you chose your major(s).
- Personal life: home, family, siblings, children, pets, etc.

## Additional Meeting Discussion Topics

- Mentor review of student's resume, cover letters, and/or LinkedIn profile
- Resources and tools most useful to mentor in pursuing their career goal
- Greatest impediment(s) student facing to achieving their career goal and strategies for overcoming them
- College classes, professional development opportunities, networking events, types of internships helpful in achieving career goal

## Program Duration

The ZEN Mentoring Program will kick off in mid-October, and will run through April. Participants are expected to meet twice in November/December, and at least once per month January through April. Participants are welcome to continue meeting beyond the end of the program.

# Meeting Preferences Form

**Please discuss at your first meeting.**

**What is the preferred way to meet?**

In person     Zoom     Phone

**If in person, what are the most convenient places to meet?**

Meetings should take place in public locations: coffee shops, libraries,

---

**(Mentor) The best days to reach me are:**

Mondays     Tuesdays     Wednesdays     Thursdays     Fridays

**(Mentor) The best times to reach me are:**

---

**(Mentor) The best phone number and email address to reach me are:**

---

**(Mentee) The best days to reach me are:**

Mondays     Tuesdays     Wednesdays     Thursdays     Fridays

**(Mentee) The best times to reach me are:**

---

**(Mentee) The best phone number and email address to reach me are:**

---

**(Mentee) Outline your goal(s) and timelines to meet them & share them with your mentor:**

**Additional tips (links) on successful mentoring:**

- [7 Tips About How to Mentor Someone](#)
  - [Mentoring for the First Time? 14 Steps to Set Off on the Right Foot](#)
  - [How to be an Amazing Mentor: 12 Ways to Make a Positive Impact on Others](#)
- 

### **Anti-Discrimination Statement**

Discrimination is defined as any act or failure to act that is based upon an individual or group's actual or perceived status (sex, gender, race, color, age, creed, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, veteran status, pregnancy status, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression or other protected status) that is sufficiently severe that it interferes with, limits, or denies the ability to participate in or benefit from College programs or activities. The College reserves the right to sanction discrimination even if the behavior in question does not rise to the level of legally recognized or actionable discrimination.

### **Policy on Anti-Harassment**

Skidmore College affirms that its community members (faculty, staff, administration, and students) have the right to be free from acts of harassment (based on the protected characteristics of an employee or student) that constitute unlawful, offensive, and hostile behavior. Such acts include (but are not limited to) sexual or racial harassment. In general, such harassment may consist of (but is not limited to) words, signs, jokes, pranks, acts of intimidation, or acts of physical violence that unreasonably interfere with an individual's work or educational pursuits or that create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating work or learning environment. By College policy, all members of the Skidmore community are prohibited from engaging in any such acts of harassment. Applicable federal and state laws also prohibit harassment in the workplace.

### **Mentoring Program Contact:**

Skidmore College Career Development Center  
(518) 580-5790

---

**Skidmore's Career Development Center** is committed to supporting all students and alumni through the creative process of integrating their liberal arts education and experiences into a satisfying career. In keeping with the College's founding principle of linking theoretical with applied learning, we help students and alumni develop self-knowledge, cultivate partnerships on and off campus, prepare for experiential opportunities, and manage their careers proactively. We encourage students to build skills and participate in engaged liberal learning practices early in their Skidmore experience, and we offer guidance to both students and alumni in forging meaningful careers for a world of rapid change.