



UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA
ST. PETERSBURG CAMPUS

Innovation Scholars Career Exploration Program

Guide for Mentors

WELCOME!

Thank you for taking an interest in the Innovation Scholars Career Exploration Program. We value your dedication to preparing students for future careers through the gift of mentorship.

WHAT IS THE INNOVATION SCHOLARS PROGRAM?

The Innovation Scholars Career Exploration Program provides unique job shadowing opportunities for incoming high-achieving first-year students at USF St. Petersburg by partnering them with companies and professionals in and around Downtown St. Petersburg and within the St. Petersburg Innovation District. This program provides students an introduction to one or more industries or job fields as they shadow mentors and test career options to help solidify major choices and academic paths early in their university experience.

USF St. Petersburg Campus has partnered with the St. Petersburg Innovation District to identify professional mentors from organizations in and around downtown St. Petersburg. Mentors will interact with incoming students, introducing them to professional topics, and assessing possibilities for future internships and roles within their organizations.

The benefits received are invaluable. Not only will students gain real world career knowledge and experience, they will also expand their career network. Some students find their networking has led them to find a lifelong mentor, an internship, and even a full-time employment offer.

The program runs along the fall and spring semester calendar, where mentors and mentees are matched at the start of each semester. Mentors meet with their mentees for at least two hours per month for three months starting in September (Fall) or February (Spring). The total required time commitment for any mentor is six hours. Mentors are not required to participate in both semesters.

Currently, we are conducting the program with both online and in-person options. If mentor organizations are operating in-person and choose to do so, mentors can host their student mentee at their facility. If the mentor organization is operating virtually, students and mentors may connect via phone or video.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

Fall 2022

June 1 | Student Application Deadline
July – August | Mentor Recruitment
September 15 | Fall Program Kickoff Meeting
November 28 | End of Fall Program
December 8 | Mentor End of Semester Surveys Close

Spring 2023

November 1 | Student Application Deadline
Dec – Jan | Mentor Recruitment
February 1 | Spring Program Starts
April 25 | End of Spring Program
May 5 | Mentor End of Sem. Surveys Close

MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

1. Complete the online application form to help us identify which student(s) might be the best fit.
2. Attend the program kickoff or meet with program coordinator individually to learn more about the program, your mentee and address any questions you may have.
3. Respond to your mentee's emails or voicemails within 48 hours, and let the program coordinator know if your mentee doesn't respond to your email / voicemail promptly.
4. Let the program coordinator know if your mentee is a no-show to a scheduled meeting.
5. Sign the mentee's Learning Agreement form.
6. Complete a short five-minute survey (sample attached) once per month about your mentorship meetings.
7. Complete an end of semester survey.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

1. Complete the online application and meet with the program coordinator to discuss interests.
2. Attend an orientation and the program kickoff.
3. Initiate contact with their mentor. Be prepared with questions. Be curious and polite.
4. Submit signed Learning Agreement after first mentor meeting.
5. Respond to mentor email / voicemail within 24 hours.
6. Attend every scheduled meeting with the mentor – no-shows are not acceptable.
7. Participate in mid-semester and end of semester surveys.

INITIAL MEETING – GOAL and EXPECTATION SETTING

During your first meeting with your mentee(s), establish 3-4 goals for the mentorship. The student will be coached to approach this first meeting with a few initial goals drafted. Review those together and refine them based on what is realistic and possible within your time constraints. Complete the Learning Agreement (see sample) together, sign it and leave it with your mentee to submit to the program coordinator.

Setting goals with your mentee at the beginning of the relationship is critical because it gives direction to the relationship and informs you in how to help the mentee. If your mentee doesn't know his/her goals, this can be your first mentoring moment. You can ask questions such as "What made you sign up for the mentoring program?" or "What are your specific concerns and questions right now?" or simply "How can I help you?"

Remember, goal setting can be a process, so make a point to check-in and ask the mentee if his/her priorities are changing or evolving.

Clearly set expectations about how / when to contact you. Make sure to discuss and define the amount of time you have available to dedicate to the mentee. The program requires at least 3 meetings and a total of at least 6 hours of contact for the semester. Review your contact information, your preferred method(s) of communication and schedule your meetings for the semester.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Mentors discuss job responsibilities, explain how they got into the profession. Discuss the academic and personal preparation needed for the career field.
- Have the mentee observe a team or client meeting.
- Provide a tour of the workplace. Explain how different departments work together.

- Have lunch to discuss everyday challenges you encounter in your work.
- Attend a professional association meeting or event with the mentee.
- Introduce the mentee to other staff or professional contacts. If possible, introduce them to employees who recently graduated from college to hear their perspective.
- Review the mentee's resume and offer suggestions for future career-building experiences. And/or have the mentee meet with an HR representative to discuss how recruiting and hiring works at your organization.

CONVERSATION TOPICS

- **Share "your story."** How and why you are in your current position/career. Students love hearing about your past experiences! You probably learned a lot from your past experiences and they can be invaluable to your mentee. Think about how you have learned from your mistakes or how you might have done something differently in retrospect.
- **Get to Know Your Mentee.** Ask thoughtful questions about the mentee's interests, experiences and background. Follow up on any important steps the student has taken, such as a job interview or a leadership experience, and ask what he/she learned. Developing a personal relationship could make the experience much more rewarding. It makes both mentors and mentees look forward to the next conversation.
- **Be Proactive.** Take initiative in the relationship. Often students can be shy and intimidated at first by the idea of reaching out to mentors. Make it easier for students by reaching out about professional development opportunities.
- **Relate to their Student Experience.** Share stories from your time as an undergraduate student. What would you have done differently if you were to go back to college now?
- **Provide a Fresh Perspective.** As a mentor, you are often more distanced from an issue at hand and thus be able to provide a fresh perspective for your mentee. This can help students tremendously as we are often clouded by our emotions and biases.
- **Coach the Student.** Remember, students have much to learn from a professional like you - everything from how to dress to being on time. Don't hesitate to give your mentee feedback if he/she is not acting in a professional manner - it could make a huge difference for his/her first interview, job and other life experiences.

Other

- **Be Committed.** Mentoring is a long-term commitment to a student. Please make sure you have the time and motivation to stay committed to the mentoring relationship. We do understand, however, that conflicts arise, so make sure to communicate with your mentee in a timely fashion.

Thank you for your time to be a mentor. If any issues arise or if you have any questions about the program, please contact us at:

USF St. Petersburg Career Center
 Kasey Kobs, Career Experience Coordinator
 727-873-4381
kkobs@usf.edu

St. Petersburg Innovation District
 Alison Barlow, Executive Director
abarlow@stpeteinnovationdistrict.com

INNOVATION SCHOLARS CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAM

Mentee Learning Plan & Agreement

Student:	
Contact Info:	
Mentor:	
Contact Info:	

I agree to:

- Meet with mentor/mentee for at least 6 hours throughout the semester
- Look for multiple opportunities and experiences to enhance my/mentee learning
- Remain open-minded to conversations, ideas, information and opportunities
- Maintain confidentiality of our relationship
- The Mentor/Mentee Agreement and Liability Release as stated on the back of this document
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Mentee Learning Goals:

Learning Action Plan:

Action/Activity	Resources Needed	Date

Signature:	Date:
Student:	/ /
Mentor:	/ /

MENTOR AGREEMENT & LIABILITY RELEASE:

By participating in the Innovation Scholars Career Exploration Program as a Mentor I agree to the following:

Legal and Ethical Compliance

I agree to comply with all laws enforced by federal, state and local governments. This includes but is not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title IX, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and adhere to all U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) employment laws and regulations.

For specific [ADA](#), [Title IX](#), [EEOC](#) and [DOL](#) questions, consult the appropriate state/federal office(s).

View the USF System Policies on [Diversity and Equal Opportunity: Discrimination and Harassment](#) and [Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Harassment \(Including Sexual Violence\)](#)

Release and Waiver of Liability and Assumption of Risk

I hereby assume the risk of inconvenience and harm and release the State of Florida, the State Board of Education, The Florida Board of Education, the University of South Florida St. Petersburg Board of Trustees and the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, as well as the agents, employees, and members of the aforementioned from all actions, causes of action, damages, claims or demands which I, my heirs, executors, administrators or assigns may have against any and all of the aforementioned for any and all personal injuries known or unknown which I have or may incur by participation in the above stated program and for all damages to my property.

I certify that I am physically and emotionally capable of full participation. I realize that I am responsible for any injuries to persons or property that may be incurred as a result of my participation in this program. I expressly agree that the foregoing Release and Waiver of Liability and Assumption of Risk is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by Florida law and that if any portion thereof is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect.

MENTEE AGREEMENT & LIABILITY RELEASE:


By participating in the Innovation Scholars Career Exploration Program as a Mentee I agree to the following:

Release and Waiver of Liability and Assumption of Risk

In consideration of being permitted to participate in any way in the Innovation Scholars Career Exploration Program, I do hereby release, waive and discharge the State of Florida, University of South Florida Board of Trustees, their representatives, its officers, employees, agents, advisors, employees, and members, and its advisor(s), officers, and members from any and all actions, damages, claims or demands which I, my heirs, personal representatives, executors, administrators or assigns may have against any and all of the aforementioned for any and all personal injuries, accidents or illnesses (including death), known or unknown, which I have or may incur by participation in the above stated event and for all damages and loss to my property. I understand that my participation in this event is voluntary and that this event carries with it certain dangers and risks, which could ultimately result in injury, permanent disability, or death. I realize that I am responsible for any injuries to persons or property which may be incurred in connection with my participation in this event. I also agree to indemnify and hold harmless the State of Florida, University of South Florida Board of Trustees, their representatives, its officers, employees, agents, advisors, employees, and members, and its advisor(s), officers, and members of the aforementioned from any and all costs, damages, liabilities and losses that they may incur due to my participation in this event. I hereby agree to abide by any policies, rules and regulations adopted by the aforementioned. I further expressly agree that the foregoing acknowledgement of risk and waiver of liability is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by the law of the State of Florida and that if any portion is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect.

SAMPLE MONTHLY CHECK-IN SURVEY:

← Back Computer Mobile



USF St. Petersburg Monthly Mentor Check-in

Hi Kasey, when you submit this form, the owner will be able to see your name and email address.

* Required

1. Mentor Name *

2. Mentor Organization *

3. Student Name *

4. Did your mentee meet with you this month? *

Yes

No

5. If yes, please enter the date of your meeting below.

6. If your mentee has been unresponsive, difficult to reach or failed to show up for a scheduled meeting - please indicate that below.

7. Would you like the program coordinator to contact you regarding an issue or concern about your student?

Yes

No

Send me an email receipt of my responses

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