

Discussion Guide



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Before You Begin

Welcome!

We understand jumping into this experience can seem daunting. You might not be sure where to start or what to discuss. To help, we outlined a series of suggested topics and activities for you.

Mentees - you should review the activities for your next upcoming meeting ahead of time, so you can prepare.

It is not mandatory to use this guide, however we wanted to provide one for guidance if it is needed.

Meeting #1

For this meeting you will take some time setting expectations, getting to know each other, and conducting an informational interview.

It is important to set expectations for the mentoring relationship as it can make the rest of your time together flow smoothly.

Additionally, spending time getting to know each other can strengthen the relationship.

Meeting #1

Expectations

Take time to discuss the following:

- **Both** - How long do you want to schedule your mentoring meetings for? (30min, 1 hr, etc)
- **Both** - What will be the way you connect with each other for your formal mentor meetings? (Zoom or phone)
- **Both** - Are you okay with talking about your personal lives or do you want to stick to only professional lives?
- **Mentees** - Let your mentor know your hopes and goals for this program.
- **Mentees** - How will you reach out to your mentor to schedule formal mentor meetings? (Text, email, Tiger Link platform)
- **Mentees** - Let your mentor know if you expect any challenges to come up regarding schedule (busy block, study abroad, etc).
- **Mentors** - Let your mentee know what you hope to get out of mentoring them.
- **Mentors** - Are you okay with your mentee texting/emailing you periodically throughout the program to ask questions?
- **Mentors** - Are you willing to connect your mentee with your network?

Meeting #1

Ice-Breakers

1. Where did you grow up?
2. What are your hobbies?
3. What's your favorite TV show or movie?
4. What career did you want when you were a kid?
5. What is/was your favorite spot on campus?
6. What clubs and extracurriculars are/were you involved in?

Directions

- Take turns answering each question.
- Aim to answer the questions in under a minute.
- Mentors first, then mentees.

Meeting #1

Informational Interview

An informational interview is a meeting to learn about the real-life experience of someone.

The purpose of an informational interview is not to get a job, but to learn more about someone's current role and company. You both will conduct an informational interview!

For mentees it is to teach you about informational interviews and help you feel comfortable conducting them.

For mentors it is to get you back into the shoes of a student. You may remember conducting informational interviews throughout college, this may remind you of your experience.

Meeting #1

Informational Interview

Feel free to choose your own questions, but if you need some guidance you can use the questions below.

Mentee Questions for your Mentor:

1. How did you decide what to major in?
2. Can you tell me about your current role and what the day to day looks like?
3. What is your most rewarding part of your job?
4. How did your time and experiences at CC prepare you for your current role?
5. Can you walk me through your career development journey? Such as what positions you've worked in, how you decided what you wanted for a career?
6. What advice would you give me to make the most of my time at CC and feel prepared for after?
7. What advice would you give to someone trying to get into this field?
8. Did you have a mentor at some point in your career? If so, how did they help you? If not, why did you never seek one out?

Meeting #1

Informational Interview

Mentor Questions for your Mentee:

1. What are you currently studying at Colorado College? If you are undeclared, what are you interested in?
2. Are you currently working or have you had any work experiences up to this point? What did you enjoy about these experiences?
3. If you know, what are you hoping to do for a career one day? What draws you to this industry/career?
4. What experiences are you hoping to have while you are at CC? (Internships, research, clubs, etc).
5. What professional skills are you hoping to develop while you are at CC? (Communication, technical skills, etc).
6. How did you decide to attend Colorado College?
7. How do you like to receive feedback? (Verbally, written, etc).
8. What goal(s) would you like to set for this program?
COMPLETE GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

Before You Go:

Determine when you will meet for your 2nd formal mentor meeting!

Meeting #2

For this meeting you will take some time identifying your strengths and challenges.

This will help you understand what specific areas you are excelling in and which areas you want to actively work on.

Your mentor can share their experiences with strengths and challenge areas and how they have evolved throughout their career journey.

Meeting #2

Strengths & Challenges

Being able to identify your strengths and challenges will show people your ability to be self-reflective and dedication to consistently improving yourself.

Be sure you are able to support your strengths with specific demonstrative examples, specific instances where this strength was utilized.

Examples: leadership skills,
communication skills

Your challenge areas should be accompanied by a plan on how you can learn or improve in this area.

Examples: public speaking,
disorganization

Meeting #2

Ice Breakers

1. If you have an hour of free time to read or do anything, what would it be and why?
2. If the zombie apocalypse hits, your ability to _____ will come in handy. What's that ability?
3. When was the last time you felt like you were in a "flow state" because time went by so quickly. What were you doing?

Directions

- Take turns answering each question.
- Aim to answer the questions in under a minute.
- Mentors first, then mentees.

Meeting #2

Strengths & Challenges

Work with your mentor to try to identify your strengths and challenges by answering the following questions (it can be helpful to write your answers down).

Strengths:

- Name 5 qualities that come naturally to you? (Ex: confidence, honesty, kindness)
- What do people tell you that you are good at?
- What do you excel at even when you are not trying?
- What do you enjoy or love doing?
- What are your favorite subjects in school?
- What do you admire most in others? Now, where do you already do this in your life?

From your answers identify your top 3 strengths

Challenges:

- Name 5 qualities that do not come naturally to you but you wish they did.
- What do people in your life tell you that you need to work on?
- What are areas in your life that you wish you were excelling in?
- What makes you nervous about navigating the complexities of college?
- What do you admire most in others that you wish you could cultivate?

From your answers identify a challenge area for you

Meeting #2

Cultivate

Work with your mentor to try to identify ways in which you can cultivate your strengths and work to improve in your challenge areas.

Strengths

From your top strengths, identify 3 ways you will continue to cultivate your strengths:

- 1.Strategy for your first strength
- 2.Strategy for your second strength
- 3.Strategy for your third strength

Challenges

From your challenge areas identify 3 ways you will work on improving in these areas:

- 1.Strategy for a challenge area
- 2.Strategy for a challenge area
- 3.Strategy for a challenge area

Meeting #2

Mentors Share

Directions:

Mentors take some time to talk about what you've learned about your strengths and challenge areas throughout your career and share with your mentee.

- How did you identify your strengths and challenge areas throughout college?
- What strategies did you use to cultivate strengths and improve challenge areas?
- How did your awareness of your strengths help you get to where you are today?
- How do you actively work toward improving your current challenge areas?
- Have you had jobs when you knew you weren't using your strengths to their full potential? How did it feel?
- Has your appreciation of your own strengths allowed you to better identify and appreciate the strengths of others? Can you provide examples?

Before You Go:

Determine when you will meet for your 3rd formal mentor meeting!

Mentees, before you meet next, research potential career paths that utilize your strengths. Take note of the careers that interest you the most.

Meeting #3

For your final meeting you will take some time discussing your future and what different paths you could take.

Additionally, you will identify strategies to learn more about these paths.

Finally, you will reflect on this experience with your mentor and talk about how you will utilize what you learned from your mentor.

Meeting #3

Your Future

To help you think about your future, you and your mentor will brainstorm by utilizing the Career Pyramid Activity.

This pyramid shape will help you clarify and develop your career ideas into a plan.

Directions:

- In this exercise, you're going to use the bottom of the pyramid to fill in the basic values and skills you want to see in your career.
- Then, you'll start indicating where you might use those skills at the next level.
- Then, start to hone in on actual jobs or opportunities.
- Finally, you will identify your specific career plans and goal.

****Try to complete at least two different Career Pyramids that represent two different areas you might like to see your life go.**

On the following pages there will be instructions and examples. Please see the "Discussion Guide Workbook" to complete the activities.

Meeting #3

Career Pyramid

Directions:

- Utilizing the “Discussion Guide Workbook” you will begin filling out the different sections of the pyramid
- At the base of your pyramid, indicate the skills/strengths, work place values, interests, and knowledge you hope to use in your career (e.g., knowledge of sociology and medicine, wanting a career where you are active all day).
- At the next level up, start to define the various fields or industries where you would like to use your talents (e.g., hospitals, rehab centers, nonprofits).
- At the next level up, name specific job titles and employers that interest you (e.g., social worker, doctor, etc.).
- At the top of the pyramid, write out your career plan: what career you hope to pursue

Meeting #3

Career Pyramid Example



Meeting #3

Brainstorm

Discuss the following with your mentor:

- Was it hard to identify what skills, values, interests, and knowledge you want to utilize in your work? If so, why?
- Do you think you would like to research more fields and industries after this activity to see what else is out there?
Research is key!
- When your mentor was in college how did they learn about different industries and careers? What suggestions do they have for you?
- What strategies could you use to learn about different industries and careers?
With your mentor's help, come up with 3 different strategies you could utilize to learn about different careers or industries.

Meeting #3

Mentee Reflection

1. What is one thing that has surprised you while being in this program?
2. What has felt natural or unnatural?
3. What can you take away from the mentorship experience?
4. How has the experience provided clarity on your professional interests and goals?
5. Can you take what you've learned and apply it to something else?
6. Did you achieve your goal that you originally set for this program?

Before You Go:

Thank your mentor for their time! If you would like to continue your mentoring relationship in a more informal way - please discuss this now.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

Directions

- First, mentees share your thoughts on these questions.
- Mentors, be active listeners. Only respond to your mentee's answers with more questions.

OPTIONAL: CAREER COMPETENCIES

Career Readiness is a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite *core competencies* that broadly prepare college students for success in the workplace and lifelong career management.

Career & Life Design = the ability to proactively manage your personal and professional growth throughout your life journey.

Communication = the ability to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively to exchange information, using a broad range of communication styles, appropriate platforms to deliver and receive messages, and effectively communicate to different audiences in a variety of situations.

Creative & Critical Thinking = the ability to exercise sound reasoning to analyze information, make decisions, identify problems, and develop workable solutions. The ability to engage dynamically with the unknown and willingness to reconsider existing problems or situations in new ways.

Equity & Inclusion = the ability to demonstrate awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from all identities from cultures. engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the system, structures, and policies of racism.

Leadership = the ability to recognize and leverage personal and the individual strengths of others to achieve common goals and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.

CAREER COMPETENCIES

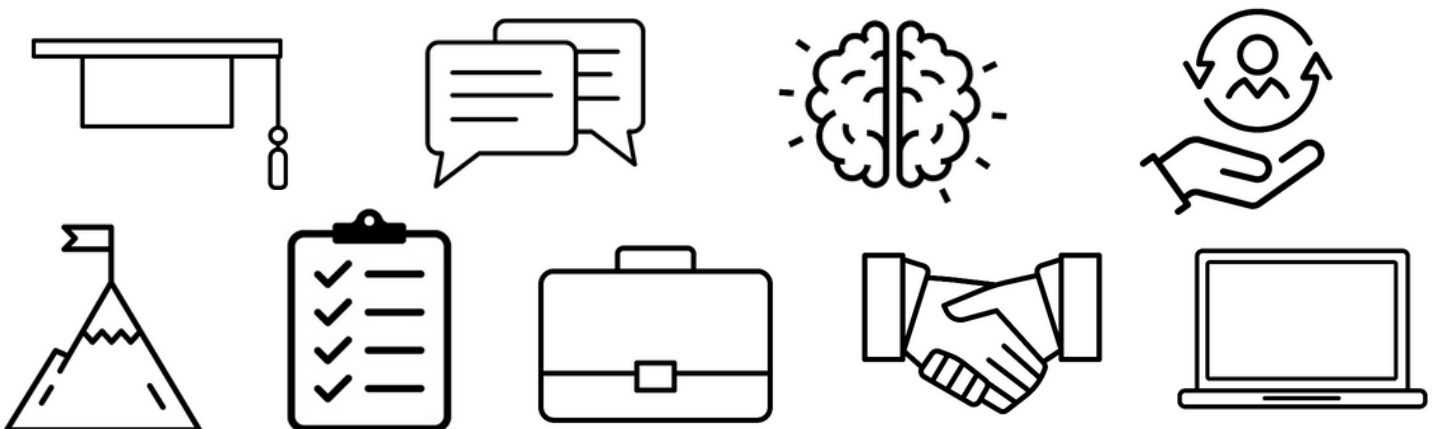
Manage Information = the ability to obtain, critically interpret, use, and communicate information, turning qualitative and quantitative data into knowledge.

Personal & Professional Effectiveness = the ability to demonstrate accountability to self and others through effective habits to be productive in work and life.

Teamwork = the ability to collaborate with others toward a shared goal, participating actively, and maximizing team performance.

Technology = the ability to select and leverage existing technologies and use them ethically to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals efficiently. Ability to identify, learn, and effectively use new and emerging technologies.

Adapted from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Career Readiness and Competency Taskforce which conducted extensive research with higher education and talent acquisition professionals.



CAREER AND LIFE DEVELOPMENT

Competency Description: The ability to manage your personal and professional growth throughout your journey.

Questions for your mentor -

- What is your mentor's career journey
- What was your mentor's Colorado College experience like?
- Does your mentor have any advice about skill development, experiences, activities, etc.
- Has your mentor had an opportunity arise because of a networking contact?
- If you wanted to have an informational conversation with an alum, does your mentor have recommendations/suggestions on how to approach that conversation?

Things for you to talk about -

- Where are you in your career journey Note: It is ok to say you are still exploring.
- What has your Colorado College experience been like so far?
- What has your experience with networking been (if any)? Do you enjoy it, does it make you nervous? What kind of tips does your mentor have in approaching networking?

COMMUNICATION

Competency Description: Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively to exchange information, using a broad range of communication styles, appropriate platforms to deliver and receive messages, and effectively communicate to different audiences in a variety of situations.

Questions for your mentor -

- What are employers looking for in a resume and a cover letter? How can you stand out in the right way?
- What is the best way to prepare for an interview? What type of interview questions might you receive? What makes a complete answer to an interview question? When and how should you follow up?

Things for you to talk about -

- How can you share your unique story with employers and networking contacts in a compelling way? (Who are you, what do you bring to contribute, etc.) Give your pitch to your mentor and ask for their feedback.)

CREATIVE THINKING

Competency Description: The ability to engage dynamically with the unknown and the willingness to reconsider existing problems or situations in new ways.

Questions for your mentor -

- How do you utilize creative thinking in your work?
- How would you define creativity in your industry?
- Can you tell me about a time creativity was central to solving a problem in your work?

Things for you to talk about -

- How you are demonstrating creative thinking at CC
- How you seek to improve your creativity through your academic experiences
- An example project that required you to think outside of the box

CRITICAL THINKING

Competency Description: The ability to exercise sound reasoning to analyze information, make decisions, identify problems, and develop workable solutions.

Questions for your mentor -

- Can you tell me about a time you had to deal with a difficult or challenging issue at work?
- How have you used creativity in your work to solve a problem?
- What steps do you take to critically examine issues?
- What are things you did throughout your time at Colorado College to build your critical thinking competency?

Things for you to talk about -

- How you are currently demonstrating the critical thinking competency
- A time you had to use creative thinking to solve a problem

EQUITY & INCLUSION

Competency Description: The ability to demonstrate awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from all identities and cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.

Questions for your mentor -

- Can you tell me about a time when you strategically leveraged differences to come up with more innovative solutions?
- How have you demonstrated viewing issues through a lens of equity and inclusion?
- How do you incorporate global/cultural awareness into your professional work?
- What type of experiences did you participate in at CC to strengthen your Equity & Inclusion competency?

Things for you to talk about -

- How you are currently demonstrating the equity & inclusion competency
- A time you adjusted your communication to effectively collaborate with people from different backgrounds and identities
- A time you had to deal with conflicting cultural or political views on an issue

LEADERSHIP

Competency Description: Recognize and leverage personal and the individual strengths of others to achieve common goals and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.

Questions for your mentor -

- What inspires you, how did you discover this inspiration? What inspires your mentor and how did they find it?
- Who are the leaders you admire? What are some of the lessons you have learned from them? Who are the great leaders your mentor looks to for leadership lessons?
- What are your strengths as a leader? What type of leader are you? When good leaders are looking to hire, what qualities, competencies, and leadership skills are they looking for in candidates? Which of these do you believe are strengths of yours? Are there any you could enhance or develop? Does your mentor have ideas for how you might work on these qualities?

Things for you to talk about -

- What skills have and are you developing as a college student that contributes to your ability to lead?

MANAGE INFORMATION

Competency Description: The ability to obtain, critically interpret, use, and communicate information, turning qualitative and quantitative data into knowledge

Questions for your mentor -

- What types of information systems do you have to use in your professional role?
- Where does this competency show up most for you in your work?
- Can you tell me about a time you had to communicate complex information to a group of people who had no prior knowledge of it?
- Can you tell me about a time you had to collect and analyze information in order to make an important decision?

Things for you to talk about -

- How you are currently demonstrating the manage information competency
- Talk about any prior experiences you've had with research at CC
- Talk about a time you had to communicate complex information to a group of people who had no prior knowledge of it
- Describe how you approached a project when you were not familiar with the material or subject matter

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Competency Description: Demonstrates accountability to self and others through effective habits to be productive in work and life.

Questions for your mentor -

- Are there additional skills your mentor believes you develop as a CC student? How have these skills helped them in their personal and professional effectiveness?
- What are some of the common mistakes they made as young professionals or that they see young professionals make in their organizations?
- What does it take to stand out in the right way as an intern or new young professional?
- How have they overcome obstacles and setbacks in their career and lives? What obstacles or set backs have you had to overcome? How have you approached this?

Things for you to talk about -

- What skills have you developed as a student? How have these contributed to personal and professional effectiveness?
- How are you at setting goals and prioritizing especially when it comes to your career journey? Does your mentor have strategies or advice they would offer based on their experience?

TEAMWORK

Competency Description: The ability to collaborate with others toward a shared goal, participating actively, and maximizing team performance.

Questions for your mentor -

- Can you tell me about specific times you've had to collaborate with other people? What types of strategies did you use to demonstrate you are a good team player?
- Have you gotten constructive feedback before and how did you handle that?
- Do you often give constructive feedback? How do you go about doing that professionally?
- What are things you did throughout your time at Colorado College to build your teamwork competency?

Things for you to talk about -

- How you are currently demonstrating the teamwork competency
- A time you received constructive feedback and what you did with it
- Ways you have collaborated with other people

TECHNOLOGY

Competency Description: The ability to select and leverage existing technologies and use them ethically to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals efficiently. Ability to identify, learn, and effectively use new and emerging technologies.

Questions for your mentor -

- Does technology show up a lot in your work?
- How have you gone about learning a new technology platform?
- Can you tell me about a time you relied on technology to help streamline a project or process?

Things for you to talk about -

- How you are demonstrating the technology competency
- If you are aware of any technology platforms that are utilized in the career field you might be interested in (for example excel) and how are you increasing your knowledge of this platform
- How you have used technology to help you streamline a project