



Program Startup Guide

Brothers Mentoring Brothers

To foster the personal growth of each man's mind, heart, and character.

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Why Brothers Mentoring Brothers

Within the structure of the Fraternity, history tells us that a member's first loyalty is to their chapter. This reality makes a mentoring effort backed and led by chapter alumni much more appealing to alumni and collegiate brothers.

Mentoring is a tremendous opportunity to engage alumni. It allows them to share their knowledge and experience with a collegiate brother who shares similar professional goals with the alumnus.

Brothers Mentoring Brothers (BMB) is a demonstration of the lifelong commitment of alumni. By mentoring collegiate brothers, specifically soon-to-be graduates, alumni are making a personal investment in the future success of their mentee(s).

How It Works

Putting together a mentoring program will, for some, feel daunting. For others, it may seem simple. The reality is somewhere in the middle.

A Mentoring Committee

Don't try to take this on by yourself. **It is recommended that the mentoring program be led by an alumni entity such as the alumni chapter, alumni advisory board, or the house corporation.** Preferably, a small committee of alumni (e.g., three or four) can be established to manage this program.

The committee will need to address the following in establishing a local one-on-one mentoring program:

- Set program goals.
- Set expectations for both chapter members and alumni.
- Establish the program timeline/schedule.
- Develop a process for, and assist in, the recruitment of alumni to serve as mentors.
- Develop a process for, and assist in, the promotion of the program to chapter members and their parents.
- Establish criteria and a process to match chapter members and alumni.

Setting Program Goals and Expectations

If the mentors and chapter members don't have some guidelines to which they can hold the program and each other accountable, then the program is likely to have a lot of lip service but little follow-through.

Mentoring Committee

- Important that a local mentoring program, whether that is Brothers Mentoring Brothers or something else, be alumni backed and led.
- Select an alumnus to serve as the Mentoring Chairman.
- Committee members could include a representative from each of the primary alumni entities – Alumni Chapter, Advisory Board, and House Corporation.
- Promoting the program to parents can be a great opportunity to drive member interest. Parents can help give members a “push” to register/sign up.
- Program goals, as well as participant and mentor expectations, are vital components of a mentoring program the committee must address early.



Alumni Entity
(Alumni Chap.,
AAB, House
Corp.)



Mentoring
Chairman



3-4 committee
members
(alumni)

What is the intention of the mentoring program, and what is it supposed to achieve? Some examples of program goals may include:

- Create, facilitate, and support member engagement with a professional mentor as an important component of a college education.
- Contribute to member development through a unique opportunity for professional development.
- Provide a realistic expectation of what it is like to work in a particular career field.
- Create an environment that engages alumni and builds relationships between generations of brothers.

What expectations should there be for chapter members to participate? Some examples of member expectations may include:

- Be in good standing with the chapter and the Fraternity.
- A minimum GPA expectation for participation.
- Be a Junior or Senior.
- Connecting with an assigned mentor once per month, at minimum, during the mentoring term.
- Represent Sigma Nu in a professional manner throughout the mentoring term.
- Maintain the personal, professional, and contact information provided as confidential and with the utmost discretion.

Recommended Timeline

When establishing a mentoring program, the months of August and September are excellent opportunities to promote the program and get members registered/signed-up to participate. There are two primary reasons this time of year works best for recruiting members to participate:

1. It's the return to school. Chapter members are getting back into the flow of class, part-time jobs, and chapter operations. Engaging them in awareness and sign-up gives them something to look forward to, and it capitalizes on the energy of returning to school and starting something new. If a program targets seniors, the excitement of this being their last year can be a catalyst to participating in something that has direct value for them.
2. The months of August and September are typically devoted to new member recruitment for most collegiate chapters, and this effort requires the focus of all chapter brothers. Promotion and encouragement to participate in the mentoring program will also be fresh in the chapter members' minds, meaning it is more likely to be brought up in conversation with potential new members.

Program Goals & Expectations

- Goals must be clear and easily understood.
- Participants must be able to make a connection between the goals and their own development.
- Collegiate participants must understand what is expected of them and the role they play in the mentor-mentee relationship.
- Alumni mentors must also understand what is expected of them and the role they play in the mentor-mentee relationship.

Program Timeline

August-September:

Participant and mentor registration

October: Matching of mentoring pairs; BMB Kickoff event

November-April: Mentoring Term (monthly meetings/interactions)

April/May: BMB Wrap up event; and evaluations (if applicable)

It is also important that the mentoring program not interfere with the end of the school year, especially finals. It is sound practice to wrap up the “mentoring term” by mid-April to ensure sufficient time for chapter members to adequately focus their attention on final exams.

Generally, these previously mentioned practices will leave a window of approximately five to six months to be blocked off as the mentoring term – October/November–April. Below is an example of a mentoring program schedule during the academic year:

- August 1 - September 15: Mentor Recruitment/Registration
- August 15 - September 15: Mentee Registration
- September 15 - October 15: Mentor/Mentee Matching
- September 25: Mentor Training/Overview
 - Review program goals
 - Review mentor expectations
 - Review mentee expectations
 - Review program schedule
- September 30: Mentee Training/Overview
 - Review program goals
 - Review mentor expectations
 - Review mentee expectations
 - Review program schedule
- October 30: Program Kick-off Event
 - Program expectations review
 - Introduction of Mentor/Mentee Matches
- November 1 - April 10: Mentoring Term
 - Mentoring pairs to meet once per month, at minimum, but allow pairs to establish a meeting schedule that works best for them.
- April 10: BMB Wrap Up
 - Evaluations
 - Final Words

General Best Practices

- Talk to the collegiate brothers. Get their input and ideas.
- A program like this needs structure, but there is flexibility available on the local level not available on a larger scale. Be structured, but not rigid.
- Don't assume participants – alumni and collegiate brothers – will understand expectations that are unsaid.
- If your program is just getting started, or is very young, consider targeting your program to those brothers who are expected to graduate, in the beginning.
- If you know you are going to have more alumni mentors than collegiate participants, then let your mentors know, up front, that not everyone may be matched to a mentee that year.
- It may take a few years before a program like this really takes off, so don't be discouraged if participation isn't what you were hoping for right away. Keep at it, and keep talking to the members, and the alumni, to determine what adjustments are needed.
- Don't limit mentors to just those alumni who are local. It's great if they are local, but effective mentoring can easily occur via phone, video conference, and text.

Recruiting Mentors

Once a program framework is in place, the next step will be to recruit alumni to serve as mentors. If you do not have an alumni listing, then the [General Fraternity](#) can help by providing a contact listing of all living alumni for the chapter.

Recruiting alumni to serve as mentors should be a transparent process. **The alumni need to know why their involvement is important and what will be expected of them as mentors.**

- How many hours per month?
- When will they start? When will they be done?
- Who is responsible for scheduling meetings between them and their mentee?
- What is expected of mentors, and what should they expect from chapter members?

Alumni interested in serving as mentors should register to participate, which will serve two purposes:

1. Updates the contact information of those alumni, making it easier to contact them in the future.
2. The alumni registration should collect background and professional information, which can be used both for the matching process and as introductory information for their assigned chapter member, should they have one.

How alumni register to participate in your local program should be determined by the Mentoring Chair and his committee.

Engaging Members in the Program

Generally, when alumni approach chapter members with an opportunity to assist in their professional development, the chapter members tend to get excited. That said, collegiate members can be apprehensive. They may be excited by the prospects of alumni mentorship, but they will likely need to be given a metaphorical "push" to engage. **It is highly recommended that a consistent and ongoing promotion campaign be employed to help get members signed up.**

This campaign may include, but is not limited to:

- Direct emails from the Mentoring Committee.
- Emails to their parents describing the program and its purpose.
- In-person reminders at chapter meetings or one-on-one.

Another method of engaging chapter members is to target the program to a specific set of members, like graduating seniors or juniors and seniors.

Like the mentors, it is sound practice to have those chapter members who wish to participate register/sign-up. Again, this registration serves two purposes:

Recruiting Mentors

- As wide a selection of alumni professions as possible.
- General Fraternity can assist by providing a contact listing of chapter alumni, if needed.
- Difficult to know for what professional fields mentors will be needed, so it will be important to recruit as many potential mentors as possible.
- Make sure alumni mentors are aware of the time commitment required to be a mentor.

Engaging Members

- Consistent outreach to chapter members.
- Periodic outreach to parents.
- Promotion through chapter officer(s) and alumni attendance at chapter meeting.
- Use previous year's graduates to promote participation.

1. Creates an informational profile that can be provided to the mentor, so he can better understand who the mentee is before their first meeting.
2. Provides the committee with important information to help match the member to the best alumni mentor possible.

Register Your Program with the General Fraternity

Registering your local program with the General Fraternity is a simple process requiring answering a few questions and providing a list of alumni serving as mentors. Registration is open year-round.

It is important to note that if a chapter has a mentoring program in place, registering with the General Fraternity will NOT require a change in that program. **BMB is NOT a replacement for any pre-existing local mentoring program.** However, if a chapter registers as a new mentoring program, it will have an opportunity to participate in start-up consultation with the General Fraternity. Local mentoring programs already in place that would like assistance from the General Fraternity may request help by completing a request for a BMB consultation.

Further, this registration will ensure the following:

- Recognition of the chapter as a BMB chapter.
- Helps the Fraternity to maintain an accurate record of all chapters providing mentoring programs.
- An accurate record of alumni who are willing to serve as mentors.
- Improved ability to collect and share best practices with other chapters and brothers.

Matching Chapter Members and Alumni Mentors

This aspect of the mentoring program may prove to be the most challenging for the committee. **On the surface, identifying match criteria may seem to be obvious – e.g., chapter member’s major/field of study and the career/professional role of an alumnus – but there are additional considerations that may prove to be just as important.** Again, it will be up to the committee to determine the criteria for mentoring matches. Some examples of matching criteria may include:

CHAPTER MEMBER	ALUMNUS
Desired career path/professional position	Current profession/position
Major/Field of study	Industry/Sector
Personal interests/hobbies	Personal interests/hobbies
Hometown	Hometown/Current city
Chapter offices held	Chapter offices held

Match Making

- Likely to be a slower than expected process, so give yourself plenty of time.
- Be thoughtful in choosing matching criteria.
- Determine a formula for criteria-based matching (e.g., match between major and current position = +2, match between personal interests = +1, etc.)
- If conducting interviews, need to know what personal factors/traits you are looking to match together before doing the interview.

Mentoring relationships are no different than personal/social relationships. They build from like interests and personality matches. As a third-party making a match, it can be difficult to make an effective match based purely on paper criteria. One option that may help address the human component is to **interview your participants** – mentees, for sure, and alumni when needed. Adding an interview into the process injects some subjectivity, which isn't always good, but in this scenario, that subjectivity can be beneficial.

Educating Participants

Once the process of matching collegiate brothers to their respective mentors is complete, it is **a good idea to provide the participants – collegiate and alumni – with some education/training about their roles**. In the example timeline mentioned previously, it was suggested that a “training session” for mentors be held approximately ten days after mentee sign-ups concluded and a session for mentees be held 15 days after the close of mentee sign-ups. This separation is so any specific questions from mentees or mentors can be addressed.

Generally, the agenda for these sessions will be similar and should likely address the following points, at a minimum:

- Goals of the program.
- Expectations of their participation.
- Frequency of meeting between mentee and mentor.
- Importance of the collegiate brother driving conversations with his mentor. The mentee knows what questions he needs to ask.
- How they will be introduced to their assigned mentor/mentee.

The last item, introductions to matches, is an opportunity to get alumni and collegiate brothers excited about the program and create an event around the announcement of mentoring matches.

A Kick-off Event for the Mentoring Term

Having an event to announce the mentoring pairs serves multiple purposes:

1. **It builds excitement.**
2. **Helps in connecting alumni to the chapter and other alumni.**
3. **Centralizes the launch of the Mentoring Term (i.e., everyone starts at the same time).**

This event can be played from many angles – think NCAA March Madness team announcements, or NFL Draft, or announcements of appointments to a federal office – the point, though, is that the participants find it impactful, have a good time, and that chapter members and their mentors get introduced. Ideally, it would also be great if the mentees and their mentors could speak one-on-one as well. The beauty of technology today is that those who cannot be there in person but can join virtually can still have a chance to meet with their mentor/mentee.

What to Discuss Between Mentors and Mentees

- Professional Goals and Career Field
 - Mentee's goals for their career
 - Mentee's goals, and needs, for their first job
- Finding a Job in Your Career Field (Job Search Strategies)
 - Where to find jobs in this field
 - Putting together a process for finding job opportunities
 - Introducing yourself before applying
- Important Relationships
 - Who to talk to at a potential employer
 - Who you know that can help you in your search
- A Resume for Your Field
 - Personalized to the employer
 - Important experience and background to highlight
- What to expect in your first year on the job
 - Company culture
 - Type of work to expect
 - Opportunities for growth
- Reality of life after school
 - Maximize your money/ Living within your means
 - New hobbies and experiences

The Mentoring Term

The mentoring term is the period between the kick-off event and the wrap-up event. During this time, the actual mentoring occurs among the assigned pairs. **During this period, it is important that the mentoring committee check in periodically (e.g., every 3-6 weeks) with the participating collegiate brothers to gauge how things are going and if the mentor match is a good one.**

The Wrap Up

Hosting a wrap-up event is about giving the mentoring term some finality. It also allows mentors and mentees to share their final thoughts with one another. Additionally, this **event becomes a great opportunity to solicit alumni mentors to continue in this role.**

The Intended Outcomes

A mentoring program's intention needs to center around the sense of preparedness the collegiate brother feels at the end of the mentoring term. This sense of preparation will, and should, be heavily based on the relationship developed between the chapter member and his alumnus mentor. The intended outcomes for collegiate members may include, but are not limited to:

- A better understanding of what to expect in their first job/profession.
- A clearer view of how their position connects to and impacts others.
- Know what skills will be needed in their professional role.
- Received guidance and tips on how to be successful during the first year on the job.
- Provided opportunities to establish new professional relationships.
- Developed/Refined their career/professional goals.

There should also be intended outcomes for the chapter alumni involved in the program as mentors. Some examples may include:

- A stronger sense of connection to the collegiate chapter.
- A sense of gratification for their service to their assigned collegiate brother.
- Renewed excitement about their membership in the Fraternity.
- A desire to continue their involvement as a mentor.
- A clearer understanding of mentees' current adversities and appreciation for available tools and resources.

A Brothers Mentoring Brothers program is an opportunity to engage alumni in a meaningful way – something most alumni are interested in, doing something meaningful. Further, it is an opportunity for collegiate brothers to benefit from the knowledge and experience of alumni while building worthwhile relationships. It takes some work, but this program can be a perfect example of a win-win scenario.



**Sigma Nu
Fraternity**

**EXCELLING
WITH HONOR**

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