

Why Navigators

Much of the research around college graduate employment indicates there is a disconnect between what students think it will be like to work in their career field of choice and the realities of doing so. This misunderstanding is often the result of the pressures placed on students to determine their career path before they fully understand their own interests and passions.

The Navigators component of the Sigma Nu Mentor Network is an intentional effort to help collegiate brothers – particularly those between 19 and 21 years old, and those who have identified a desired career field – better understand their desired profession.

Helping Students

Navigators is designed to assist collegiate brothers from two sources:

1. Mentors who currently work, have worked, or have extensive knowledge in the same, or similar, career field of the collegiate brother(s). These mentors have extensive knowledge and experience, which they will share with the students as a part of the guided learning process.
2. A small peer group of collegiate brothers, desirous of the same or similar career field. Engaging brothers with similar career interests is an opportunity to build supportive relationships not just for the mentoring term, but also as a part of each other's future professional work.

From the experience and shared knowledge of the mentor(s), collegiate brothers will have a detailed understanding of the ongoing education required, or helpful, for their career field, as well as the process of obtaining said education. Further, mentors in, or connected to, the same fields as the collegiate brothers can provide:

- A real-world sense of the work that occurs.
- Perspective related to the life cycle that exist within that profession.
- A realistic view of the stresses and joys of the work.

Members of the peer group can be invaluable to one another, not just through this experience, but as future professionals. In this experience, collegiate brothers can learn from one another through individual interactions as well as the group interactions. This experience is an example of the benefit that comes from multiple points of view because not all group members will have the same approach or previous experiences; thereby, helping group member to develop a more well-rounded and informed perspective.

Program Goals

- Facilitate and support the student-mentor relationship as a component of the college education.
- Contribute to student development through a strategic opportunity for professional development.
- Provide a realistic expectation of what it is like to work in a career field of choice and the process of entry to the field.
- Create a sense of community and connection between collegiate brothers and alumni with similar career interests.
- Satisfy the desire of alumni to directly engage with, and provide value to, current collegiate brothers.

Program Components

- Develop professional knowledge and skills.
- Develop personal/career goals.
- Connecting and Relationship Building.



The Navigators peer group experience will be virtual.

The group is to establish its own meeting schedule that includes, at minimum, one meeting per month during the mentoring term (November through April).



The group's mentor(s) will manage the meeting platform and ensure participants have the

necessary information needed to join each meeting. Group members will have an opportunity to communicate, as they wish, in the time between meetings as well.

What You Do In Navigators

It starts with a simple question, "Do you know the career path you want to follow?" If your answer is, "Yes," then Navigators is for you.

The second consideration is, "Are you in 'good standing' with the General Fraternity?" For collegiate brothers, this typically means your Candidate Fee and Initiation Fee have been paid, and your chapter has reported your initiation. Again, if your answer is, "Yes," then NAVIGATORS is for you.

The next step is to **register for Navigators on the General Fraternity's website**. Think of your registration as if it is an information profile for a potential employer.

1. Provide your best contact information.
2. Be thoughtful about your responses to any narrative questions. They don't have to be long - in fact, conciseness is an important skill in most professional roles - but they do need to be clear and provide the reader some insight to you.

Your registration information will be provided to your mentor(s) prior to your first group meeting.

Be prepared to participate. The only real way you get value from Navigators is if you actively participate in the discussions and conversations that occur. Ask questions. Share your thoughts. Your peers, and you, have a chance to learn from brothers who can speak directly to what you want to do professionally. Experiences like this will help you be better prepared to 1) land the job you want, and 2) do the job because you have some knowledge of what to expect.

Expectations of Students

- Be in good standing with the Fraternity.
- Attend program specific events, workshops, and meetings - at least one hour per month, November-April.
- Maintain consistent connection with your mentor(s) and peer group.
- Represent Sigma Nu in a professional manner throughout the program.
- Maintain the confidentiality of all personal, and professional, contact information give to you about your mentor, or other program participants.
- Have identified a career field (e.g., attorney, doctor, teacher, engineer, etc.).
- Be prepared for all cohort/group meetings, and willing to engage in, and contribute to, the conversations of the group.
- Complete a mentor and program evaluation at the end of the mentoring term.

Navigators Timeline

August 15th: Registration Opens

September 30th: Registration Closes

Mid-Late October: Navigators Kick-off (virtual)

November-April: Mentoring Term (monthly group meetings)

April/May: Experience Evaluation

Topics and Questions for Discussion

The following is a list of the topics brothers may want to discuss with their peer groups and mentor(s). Each section – indicated by the gold header – is designed to serve as the launch point for its designated monthly cohort meeting. The questions and talking points in each section are suggestions to assist the collegiate brothers through the conversation.

Continuing Education Requirements and/or Benefits

Meeting #1: November

Lifelong learning is an important lesson to be learned and, at some level, it occurs whether it's intentional or not. There are several career fields and, more specifically, jobs that have ongoing education requirements. It is important for our collegiate brothers to understand these requirements or, if such requirements do not exist in a field, what benefits may come with continuing education.

- What is the standard, entry-level education requirement to get into this field – Bachelors, Masters, PhD, professional certificate, etc.?
- Are there any continuing education requirements for this field? If so, what are those requirements, generally?
- What are the professional benefits, in this field, to pursuing additional post-graduate education voluntarily?
 - Post-graduate education may include degrees, certifications, or specific coursework.
- From your experience, is there a beneficial timeframe to pursue a post-graduate degree in this field? (e.g., immediately, 1-3 years in, 5-7 years in, etc.)
- What are some of the challenges we need to be prepared for if we choose to pursue a post-graduate education and/or required continuing education:

Prior Work Experience

Meeting #2: December

Different fields apply different weights to the prior experience of new graduates. It is unlikely that students fully understand how important, or unimportant, their prior experience may be. It is important that our collegiate brothers recognize the benefit of their collegiate experience, as well as their prior work experience, and how these experiences can work for them as they look to enter a career field. It is also important for them to begin identifying what other skills and knowledge can be gained to aid their efforts to enter their career field of choice.

- What skills and experience are helpful/beneficial in this field?
- What prior work/development experience could be helpful to entering this field?
- What importance, if any, of internships for entry into this field.
- What should we, as students, be doing now to build credible skills and experience for entry into the field?
- How should I/we talk about the benefits of the knowledge/skills/experience I/we have gained, or will gain?

The Job Search

Meeting #3: January

Many students are aware that finding and landing a job is not a simple proposition. What they do not know, though, is what is involved in a successful job search, nor do they appreciate how long it can take. From the perspective of a specific career field, it is important that students grasp the reality of how to conduct a job search, when to begin that search, and how they can make themselves stand out from other applicants.

- What is a job search, beyond the obvious?
- How long can a job search take in this field?
- What resources are available to help me/us identify the employment opportunities in this field?
- How should I/we approach a potential employer?
- How do we best use our relationships/networks to help in a job search?
- How should we prepare for interviews?

What to Expect in the First Year

Meeting #4: February

The first year in a new job, especially for a new graduate, can set the tone for the remainder of the time they are with that employer. With their limited experience, students often don't know what they can/should be doing to set themselves up for success.

- What should we expect in our first year of work, in terms of the type of work an employer in this field might have us doing?
- How should we go about getting along with new co-workers?
- Are there any specific people in the office we should get to know better?
- What can we do to be successful in our first year on the job?

Joys and Stresses

Meeting #5: March

Every job has its pros and cons. Student will have their own vision of how great things will be. This vision is important because it builds and maintains excitement and interest. Unfortunately, this excitement can also block out the less exciting, real-life, daily grind. It is important for students to understand this reality, but also that it is within this reality that they, or their employer, make an impact.

- What do you feel you get from working in this field?
- What do you enjoy most about this work, and why?
- What do you enjoy least about this work, and why?
- What kinds of impact might a persona have in this field?

Next Steps

Meeting #6: April

There is a reasonable likelihood that most of the participating collegiate brothers will not be graduating at the end of the current mentoring term. It will be important, then, that these brothers are provided some guidance/direction to identify the next steps they need to take after the mentoring term concludes.

- What do we need to do next in preparing to enter this field?
- What strategic relationships should we be looking to build?