

Our mentorship program was designed to provide a little extra support for graduating seniors (and now juniors) as they navigate their transition from college. Our mentors are all CofC, political science alumni who have crossed the Cistern on their commencement day, as anxious and excited about the future as you are.

Mentors hold a wide-range of experience. Many have worked or are now working on political campaigns, have legislative expertise or are working for the U.S. government. Some are attorneys or paralegals, others own businesses or work in the finance sector. There are those in non-profits or NGOs, and some in academia, healthcare, and more. All are volunteering their time to help make an impact on your future.

Why should I have a mentor?

Sometimes in life you just need a little extra support and guidance and not everyone has people in their lives who have navigated post-graduate education, participated in internships or study abroad, sat for a bar exam, prepared a resume, etc. These alums understand your questions and concerns better than anyone because they have sat in your shoes and know what is keeping you up at night. When you don't know who to ask, ask your mentor! If they can't help, they'll at least point you in the right direction.

What is the first step in securing a mentor?

A list of available mentors is provided at the beginning of each semester. This list contains details about each mentor's current employment, along with a link to their resume and/or LinkedIn account. While it might be more expeditious to only review the list and judge each mentor based solely on their current position, going deeper into their resumes or profiles will give you a fuller picture and lead to important discussions later. Once you have done a thorough review of the information provided and have decided on at least two possible mentors (the one you prefer and a backup in the event your preferred mentor is already assigned), just send an email to me at andrewst@cofc.edu and I will confirm the mentor's availability.

What if none of the mentors are in the career field where I think I'm headed?

That's okay. Our volunteer mentors just want to lend a helping hand, so you really don't have to be an exact match. We're 99.9% sure that they have the desire and general knowledge you're seeking, and if they don't, you can always seek someone new.

What if I can't decide who to choose because I don't really know where I'm headed after graduation or there are just too many options?

We recommend you connect with your academic advisor and get some guidance.

Do you have to be a junior or senior to participate?

Yes, and seniors are given priority.

What types of issues can I discuss with my mentor?

The short answer is "anything." We find that students do best when they conduct a brief informational interview with their mentors from the start. These initial interviews often lead to questions you didn't even know you needed to ask! You'll want to discuss the pros and cons of the work that they're doing (or have done) in fields that interest you for sure, but mentors may also help you decide if post-graduate education is a good fit for you, or help you make important connections for your job search. They'll give honest opinions about your resume and maybe even do a mock interview or two with you to help you get your feet wet. Mostly, they'll guide and support you using their own practical experience.

Can mentors help answer questions and/or guide us in preparing for law school or graduate study?

Depending on their own trajectory, yes! You should most definitely ask what do they see as the pros and cons of going directly to graduate school, how did they choose their program, how did they secure their recommendations, etc. The same goes for law school: how did they decide where to apply? How long did it take to prepare for the LSAT? What are some of the pros and cons about the school they attended, etc. These same questions should be discussed with admired faculty and your academic advisors. Asking lots of questions of a variety of people will help you narrow your choices and help you make good decisions. If considering law school, be sure to connect with [Dr. Claire Wofford](#), our pre-law advisor: woffordcb@cofc.edu. Our department also has graduate school advisors: [Dr. Brian Fisher](#) and [Dr. Matt Nowlin](#), who are always here to help!

Can mentors write letters of recommendation for future jobs/internships/applications?

The short answer is yes, but the very best recommendations come from those who have known you the longest, like faculty or advisors who have seen you develop over the years. Be sure to develop strong relationships here at the College so you have some terrific resources for recommendations when you are ready to graduate. If you've only known a mentor for one short semester, they really aren't the best choice for such an important role.

Do mentors get trained to do this work?

No. Each mentor will have different levels of experience, but all are kind, generous and sincere about their desire to help. No training is given or required. If you ask them a question that they feel unqualified to answer, they'll most likely know who you should turn to at the College for help.

How long is my mentoring relationship?

That's up to you and your mentor. The assignment of a mentor is for one semester, but many choose to stay in touch beyond that.

If my mentor does not meet my expectations, can I secure another?

Yes, if at any point in your interactions you feel that the relationship is not working, just send an email to me at andrewst@cofc.edu and I will help you find someone else with whom to work.

Can I become a mentor after I graduate?

Yes! We welcome all alumni into our mentorship program. Most alumni have a couple of years of work experience under their belts already, but we accept all alumni who are passionate about helping others.

Feel free to contact Tracey Andrews at andrewst@cofc.edu if you have any additional questions or concerns.