DEAN’S WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear Mentors, alumni, students and friends of FASS,

We are delighted to launch our twelfth cycle of the FASS Mentorship Programme at the start of Academic Year 2017/18.

Since its inception in August 2006, more than 1,100 FASS students over and 165 alumni have been involved in the programme. This year, we see a new batch of 122 students and 71 mentors participating.

The FASS Mentorship Programme gives our students invaluable exposure to the soft and hard skills necessary to prepare them to contribute significantly to industries and society. This accords with FASS’s curricular innovations that bring classroom learning (domain expertise and critical thinking) together with experiential learning (through things like overseas exchanges and field trips, attachments for academic credit, volunteerism and of course mentorships).

At the same time, we see the FASS Mentorship Programme as a means of keeping us connected with our alumni, and leveraging on their crucial experience and insights in order to help us produce more effective and engaged FASS graduates.

Perhaps one of the most significant testimonies of the power of this mentorship programme is that some of the former student participants have benefitted so much from the programme that themselves have become our alumni mentors!

I am confident that both our mentors and students will bring the mentorship programme to even greater heights in this new cycle. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate each and every one of you who are involved in this meaningful programme, and may your experience be one that is both bright and illuminating.

Professor Robbie Goh  
Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
THE FASS MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

The FASS Mentorship Programme provides opportunities for students to learn about work and life outside the university from established alumni and friends of FASS. Students must have a strong interest in participating in order to learn from and engage with mentors. They are carefully matched with suitable mentors to a maximum of three per mentor.

Aims and Objectives

- To enable FASS students to learn about work and life beyond the classroom.
- To facilitate FASS students’ personal, career and leadership development.
- To connect FASS students with established alumni.
- To cultivate FASS alumni relations by engaging alumni as worthy role models for our students.
- To serve as a platform for FASS alumni to contribute to the development of the faculty.

Timeline

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Up to July 2017</td>
<td>Application and matching</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 August 2017</td>
<td>Mentee briefing</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 August 2016</td>
<td>Welcome Dinner (NUSS Kent Ridge Guild House)</td>
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<td>22 August 2016 – July 2017</td>
<td>Mentorship period (we recommend meeting four times in the year)</td>
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<td>Mid-August 2018</td>
<td>Thank you Dinner</td>
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RECOMMENDATIONS & GUIDELINES

Activities

• Four meetings in the year (e.g. quarterly).
• Average length of each meeting around one hour, or as the mentor sees fit.
• Meetings can also take the form of email exchanges, phone chats, tea/lunch chats, office or site visits, or even attendance at a company event or meeting as the mentor sees fit.
• Meetings to include advice on matters regarding the Mentor’s area of expertise, work and life outside the university, career path development, and matters relating to professional practices.

These are only recommendations, not requirements. They are formulated on the basis of the past experiences of Mentors and Mentees. We hope you will find them helpful.

Student Journal

Students are encouraged to keep a journal of the mentorship experience, to track their personal development as they move through the programme. You are also encouraged to seek help from the Deanery if problems are encountered at any point in the mentorship period. There is no need to submit any report at the end of the programme, although you will be invited to provide candid feedback on what you have learned and how you have developed at the end of the academic year.
Three-Party Commitments

The student agrees:
• To be fully committed to the mentor-student relationship.
• To be punctual and fully prepared for each meeting with the mentor.
• To adopt a positive attitude at all times towards learning from the mentor.

The mentor agrees:
• To meet four times with each of the student(s) mentored.
• To offer advice, share experience, and provide guidance.
• To give particular emphasis to student’s career development.

FASS agrees:
• To do its utmost to make the mentorship programme a positive experience for both mentors and students
• To conduct the programme in ways it judges to be appropriate and fair to both mentors and students

Privacy Issues

All parties agree to observe standard privacy requirements relating to the mentor-student relationship. For example, the mentors’ contact information should be kept confidential unless explicit permission has been given for it to be release to anyone outside the programme. Similarly, students’ particulars will also be duly protected unless authorized for release.
Conflict Resolution

There is an opt-out option for both students and mentors in the event that the relationship breaks down, or on account of unforeseen circumstances leading to the inability of either or both parties to commit to the programme. Any problems encountered by any party at any point will be referred to the FASS Deanery for mediation and resolution. Students who opt out of the programme can only re-enter via a new application the following year.

Indemnity

By participating in this programme, all parties agree to abide by the applicable rules and regulations as may be prescribed from time to time by the University and the relevant Faculties. They further agree that they will not hold the University, its officers, or any of its full time or part time staff (including student assistants) responsible or liable in any way for, and that no right of action shall arise from, any loss or damage (including, without limitation, personal injury to the participant or family member, or damage to their damage, caused by or sustained as a result of participation in the activities, whether through neglect on the part of the University, its officers, or any of its full time or part time staff (including student assistants) or otherwise.
STUDENT MENTEES’ EXPERIENCES

Jonathan WANG (Mentee in 2010/11)

“This journey transcended beyond that of a mentor-mentee relationship to one of strong friendship. I am indeed fortunate to be part of this programme, having known my mentor cum friend and learning so much more about the tourism industry from him.”

Muhammad Yusuf Bin OSMAN (Mentee in 2010/11)

“The mentorship experience has been very assuring for me. I feel assured in having a mentor who is very pro-active in engaging me throughout the progress of my career search. My mentor is very open and keen to learn more about the concerns I had as a job seeker and in most instances had emailed me with wise and learned advice as I related to him the apprehensions I had in certain job interviews. He helped me see the positive side of every
downside in job search and interviews. Through him, I learnt that one must always scout for the type of work one enjoys and stick through that instead of aimlessly applying for any type of jobs out there available in the market.”

Stephanie LIM (Mentee in 2010/11)

“I really want to thank you all for putting together this mentorship programme because it has really benefited me and given me more than I had expected. He has been such an inspiration to me, a figure I look up to with his constant efforts in giving back to the community, and his zest in making the most out of his life.”

Pearlyn ONG (Mentee in 2010/11)

“Besides dispensing practical advice about work in the media industry, my mentor has taught me many life lessons about tenacity and perseverance through numerous anecdotes from her career and travel experience. Such valuable nuggets of information cannot be learned from classes, or even from career talks and seminars. My mentor’s extensive experiences in the media industry coupled with her effervescent and nurturing personality definitely make her an outstanding mentor in every sense of the word.”
Riya De Los REYES (Mentee in 2010/11)

"I feel fortunate to have her as my mentor. She encouraged me to be more confident about my views and ideas. She acknowledged my idealism without being dismissive of it and enabled me to think of more realistic strategies to accomplish my goals. She inspired me to be more resolute about my ambitions. She told me to believe in myself and capabilities, as well as to work hard and to be consistent in my efforts. She has inspired me with her candid and sensible advice about the working world. I feel prepared and I hope to come close to being the successful woman that my mentor has become."

Rosie SIM (Mentee in 2010/11)

“It’s my pleasure to extend my gratitude to my mentor who has been guiding me throughout our mentorship period. I always enjoy the meet-ups with her, and keeping her updated on my post-graduation plans and pursuits. She provided constructive views on my sharing and broadened my frame of reference and perspective with her enriching experiences and knowledge. I truly appreciate her precious time in all the meetings and virtual correspondences despite her hectic work schedules and transition into Motherhood. My warm thanks to my mentor for her constant support, advice and encouragement in several aspects of my life, be it studies, work, or other personal matters."
Sarabjeet SINGH (Mentee in 2010/11)

“I was truly privileged in that my FASS mentorship experience was in many ways no less than an internship experience! My mentor provided opportunities for me to get “hands-on” experience and an insider’s perspective on the tourism sector. As a student with various other school commitments, I also benefited tremendously from the flexibility the program offered in terms of arranging meetings with my mentor. During these meetings, my mentor candidly related personal experiences for me to learn from and readily addressed the many questions I had for him. I am certain that the FASS mentorship experience will prove to be a crucial first step I took closer to graduation, and in preparation for embarking on my career path. It has also been memorable in that it accorded me an invaluable learning experience outside of NUS.”

Janice LUI (Mentee in 2008/09)

“From the time I first met my mentor and right up till the time I signed my appointment letter, he has been a great source of support. He encouraged me to keep my options open, taught me how to write an impressive resume and the necessary preparation skills for interviews. Even when I was contemplating my job offers, he took time out of his busy schedule to advise me on the factors I should consider.”
Juvy PANG (Mentee in 2011/12)

“Despite my mentor’s busy schedule, she was always prompt in replying emails and met with me over meals. She even offered me an internship opportunity at the Singapore Tourism Board. At the end of this mentorship, I gained more than just career guidance and personal development. Mentees should not go into this programme with the mindset of leveraging on their mentors solely but to establish a two-way relationship in order to benefit more from mentorship.”

Ervin PANG (Mentee in 2009/10)

“My mentorship experience has been really enjoyable and useful for my career development. My mentor generously shared his experiences and knowledge about working life and the service industry. Most importantly, he also enlightened me about the compromises, ups and downs if I choose to enter the service industry as a graduate.... I became clearer about what I want in a career and job after this one year of mentorship.”

Ervin has started work as a Feedback Officer in MINDEF.
Nigel LAUW (Mentee in 2009/10)

“My mentor very generously shared his experience with me. From our meetings, I have learnt how to manage my business better. From understanding how to motivate the design team to engaging marketers at a personal level, his guidance has helped me stay clear of numerous potholes in the advertising industry. The mentorship programme has been amazing; thank you for accepting me into the programme and connecting us. My mentor shared many valuable lessons about advertising and this has helped me engage my clients better. He even offered me an internship at his office in California, L.A., in conjunction with MDA's Hollywood Internship Programme.”

Nigel has started his own company ‘SuperSonic’ focusing on marketing, advertising and design.
AN ALUMNI MENTOR’S REFLECTIONS ON MENTORING FASS STUDENTS

Mr TANG Chi Lin (Mentor from 2007 – present)

As a mentor for the past 9 years, I’ve had the privilege to monitor students as they transit to working professionals.

I couldn’t help but notice that academic result (or lack of) is becoming less of a differentiating factor in career accomplishment. My sampling may not be very representative, but it seems that all benchmarks of professional achievement (pay, responsibility, organisational seniority) seem to converge after about 5 – 8 years, regardless of whether the person is average or over-achiever in school.

I think demand and supply mechanisms are at work here – with more students being able to access higher education, either locally or overseas or online, a “good” degree will matter less if there’s more supply than demand.

Having worked locally and overseas for last 15 years, I think employers are now looking for that X factor in the professional talent search. And this is no reality show, as lifelong careers are at stake.

I think the mentorship programme helps to groom this X factor in aspiring professionals, through personal life stories of those who have walked the path. Life stories that as a whole, more valuable than any book, motivational talk or professional career coach.

As we welcome the new cohort into the programme, I encourage them to work with mentors and build their X factor.

Mr Tang is with Swiss certification firm Société Générale de Surveillance and specialise in building government capabilities within third world countries.
ALUMNI MENTOR’S BEST PRACTICES: TWELVE WAYS TO A FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIP

We asked our FASS Mentors a simple question: “what did you do to engage our student mentees”? Many replied with wonderful ideas and so we gathered them here as ‘best practices’ distilled from past experience. We hope that this will prove beneficial for all mentors looking to find new ways to reach out to our students. Thank you for your faithful and spirited mentorship. 

*If you have other suggestions, please let us know. We will be delighted to share them with other mentors!*

(1) Listen, Listen, Listen… and Help

So far I’ve worked with my mentee on his resume, interview skills and generally, just listen a lot more than I advise, if at all! I find that the best approach to start!

Ms Ranji David, Xpand Group

(2) Listen, Accept and Guide

Four things to engage the mentees are: (i) know what the mentees want (advice, help on direction or sometimes contacts); (ii) willing to listen to them (no matter what); (iii) accept them as they are, not to change them to fit your 'mould'; (iv) guide them in their character development if possible for the future (working). Final note: though this might sound a little demanding to some, but as a mentor – you are like a teacher, not a lecturer.

Mr Danny Tan, Vearn Management
(3) To Be Friendly and To Be Open

I just treat the mentees like friends – talk about school etc. It helps that I'm not considered that much older. Other than that, to just be open to them and to initiate meeting-ups.

Ms Sarah See, Fitness First

(4) Keeping in Contact

Two ways to engage include: (i) taking the initiative to keep in contact or meet up with the mentee. Basically be a friend to him/her; (ii) taking interests in their hobbies and CCA, so that you can find out what is driving him/her in life and hence advice on what sort of career track will suit him/her.

Mr Tang Nee Kee, Standard Chartered Bank

(5) Meeting Regularly Over A Meal

A clockwork cycle of meal-meetings (once in two months or quarterly) so I can have quality time with them. They can call me in between if anything crops up.

Ms Juliana Lim, Singapore Pools

(6) Talking About Hobbies and General Skills

Aside from university work, engage with them on hobbies (eg. music) and general life skills (family management, etc).

Ms Juliana Lim, Singapore Pools

(7) Questions and Answers

The overall strategy should be to ‘provoke’ and encourage mentees to ask questions and seek advice from mentors. Only
students who frequently ask questions and advice, and communicate regularly, will get the most out of the mentorship. Unfortunately only 30%-50% of mentees fall into such category, the others mainly are either too shy to ask or lack the urgency until near graduation.

Mr Bob Chua, mentor from 2006-2011

(8) Mentors as Career Coaches and Motivators

Mentors can regularly share career articles, reports, success stories, and their career experiences with mentees - this will provoke some thoughts and questions. More than mentors, they can be career coaches - help with CVs, interview techniques, communications skills, networking skills, Internship opportunities, etc.

Mr Bob Chua, mentor from 2006-2011

(9) Office Visits and Involvement in Events I

Three things to engage mentees: (i) visit our office to understand what we do followed by lunch; (ii) attend our Public Relations events to observe how an event is managed; (iii) ask the students to do a project related to our work and the mentee’s area of interest.

Mr Yap Boh Tiong, Mileage Communications

(10) Office Visits and Involvement in Events II

I connect with mentees in the following ways: (i) invite them for a visit to the office for short self-introduction; (ii) attend meetings with business associates over the year; (iii) attend site visits with dialogue sessions; (iv) help answer questions and enjoy the interaction.

Mr Patrick Han, People’s Association
Multi-Pronged Involvement of Mentees

Some ideas to engage my mentees include: (i) involving mentees in actual site visits. As the cliché goes, experiential learning is one of the most effective forms of learning; (ii) maintaining a sense of “continuous action where possible” so that mentees can feel the pulse of the industry as well as the mentor’s keenness to mentor; (iii) involving mentees in talks where available, for example, career talk, company’s guest speaker talk/seminars; (iv) helping mentees to vet their resumes/CVs; (v) helping mentees to direct CV to actual industry contact. In the midst of current labour situation, this is much more effective than sending a cold resume application.

Mr Desmond Lim, Temasek Business School

Sharing of Industry Information and Networking

In order to let my mentees stay abreast of all the current issues and development in the finance world, I include them on bcc whenever I circulate noteworthy research articles or reports from the various houses. Other than that, I act as the conduit between them and my other buddies in various parts of the finance sector. For example, I linked up one of my mentee who was interested in equity research with a good friend who is an equity research analyst with one of the investment banks.

Mr Eric Chen, HSBC
AN ALUMNI MENTOR’S ADVICE TO MENTEES

Mr Bob CHUA (Mentor from 2006-2011)

Effectively Leveraging Your Alumni Mentor as a Career Advisor

One of the greatest benefits of being a Mentee in the NUS FASS Mentorship Program is your connection to many talented and experienced leaders in every profession. This Program is your way to leverage your Mentor’s connections for career success! (Your Alumni Mentor is your primary Mentor, but he/she is also a gateway to several other experienced professionals in his/her “circle” or community, who can also give you insights into a particular job or career. In this way, you are “connected” to a like-minded professional network).

I believe most Mentees aim to leverage this Program to find an experienced practitioner or coach to talk to about (and receive advice on) general career issues – such as what it’s like to work in a particular field, industry, firm, etc. In addition, there are other specific ways that your Mentor could help you too, for example:

- Are you looking for an internship or industrial attachment opportunity? Some Mentors offer these opportunities or work for firms that do. Even those who don't offer internships or job attachments can often suggest places to search for them (though their network of contacts in their profession or industry).
**Important note:** Mentors are **volunteers** who support the NUS FASS Alumni Mentorship Program by providing you (the Student Mentee) with career guidance and information and advice (their way of “giving back” to NUS). Although some may also indicate in their profiles that you may talk to them about job attachments or internship opportunities, they usually do not participate in this program to recruit new employees, nor are they obligated to help you find a job. Their role is **not to “spoon-feed”** you into your first job, but to provide **vital coaching and information** that will help you make the right decisions in your initial career initiatives.

**It is inappropriate for you to infer or expect that any Mentor has or should have a job opportunity for you. It is also inappropriate for you to leverage your Alumni Mentor for any purpose other than that for which it is intended, namely, the provision and receipt of career advice and guidance.**

Perhaps you are interviewing for an internship or even a part-time job and want to get a veteran’s perspective on what it’s like to work in this industry. In this respect, a Mentor may offer some valuable insights.

Leverage your Mentor also for the following:

- Practical advice on **career path/profession selection**
- Tips to **make the most of the internship** you have signed up for
- Related **industry/market directions** and professional news
- Various **tips** on teamwork, future management and leadership ideas
- Network of other **resources and experts** you can trust
- Important **career benefits** and **future growth prospects** etc.
Aligning Yourself with the “Right” Mentor
To maximize the Mentor-Mentee engagement, firstly align yourself to a Mentor, whose background and experience fits (as closely as possible) your future career aspirations. For example, if you are pursuing a career in Economics or Banking or in Financial Services, try to align yourself if possible to a Mentor in these professions. If you want to work in Public Sector, align yourself with a Government-sector leader. However, even if this perfect alignment is not possible, your Mentor is still a valuable career coach through his/her vast experience and wisdom, and also his/her circle or community of contacts.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!
Remember, after you receive your Alumni Mentor’s contact information, it is your responsibility to get in touch with him/her! Unless you proactively communicate with the Mentor, you are not fully leveraging his/her experience and wisdom. As I mentioned, they are very busy and active leaders in their community or industry, so you need to grab their attention.

It is the Mentee’s responsibility to seek the help you need. A lack of communication or feedback from the Mentee simply means to the Mentor that you are just fine and do not need any guidance. If you are a shy and introverted person, you need to get out of your “comfort zone” and overcome this, and train yourself to be communicative and assertive (these are basic corporate survival traits anyway in the working world).

For some guidance on making the most of your Mentor interaction, read some tips below about making an impression and communicating with your Mentor (whether by via phone, e-mail or one-on-one consultation interviews)
Making an Impression, and Communicating with your Mentor
The best mentor relationships start with good preparation. Following these guidelines will insure your success:

1. Before your Mentor-Mentee consultation or interview, **learn something about the Mentor and his/her career**. Take some interest in your Mentor’s career, and it will be reciprocated with a multiplier effect! The more you know about an area or an organisation, the more intelligent and productive your questions can be – plus your Mentor will be impressed by this knowledge and preparation on your part.

2. Make an **introductory phone call or send an introductory message** by letter or e-mail as your first method of contact (e-mail is the preferred form of contact usually, followed by personal meeting or phone contact). Enclose your **basic CV or Resume** with any correspondence. (At some point, your Mentor can provide advice and guidance in refining your CV/Resume when you start applying for jobs).

3. If calling by phone or requesting for a one-on-one meeting, do so only during appropriate business hours, or during times specified in the Mentor's profile, or after your first consultation. For e-mail, Mentors may be OK with you sending anytime, but may have different response times for reply (so, do not have unrealistic expectations such as same day replies). Allow for a few days for a reply, so never send your questions at the last minute, expecting a quick reply. This is disrespectful.

4. Be respectful of the Mentor's time. (They are busy people, with many responsibilities and duties as Executive Leaders and Change Agents of education institutes, global/regional
businesses, private MNC/SME corporations, GLCs, public enterprises, etc.). Hence, I suggest you:

- Arrange and agree to a convenient time for any future phone consultation or in-person consultation. This includes agreeing on the length of the consultation (for phone consultations, I would recommend if only when urgent or immediate advice is required; for personal meetings, I usually allocate 1-2 hours, every three months, with all questions well-prepared, but with the length of time up to the Mentor.)

- Before your meeting or consultation, plan open-ended questions that will stimulate discussion and enable both of you to learn about key job/career issues, concerns, experiences, etc. Plan ahead what you wish to communicate about yourself: skills, traits, goals. Think about ways to get these attributes across by means of the questions you ask and the way in which you engage in the meeting. (Some sample questions are provided below)

5. Focus on the Mentor's views, opinions, thoughts and feelings rather than cold hard data. Your Mentor is NOT your Research or Database tool! Your Mentor will enjoy the consultation more, and will feel more positive about you as a result, and want to help you more.

6. Be polite and enthusiastic. Don’t bring personal problems to the table.

7. After your consultation or meeting, thank the Mentor for meeting/speaking with you.
8. **Follow-up with a thank you note.** (See sample below)

**Sample Informational Interview Questions**

**Preparation:**
- What credentials or degrees are required for entry into this kind of work?
- What types of prior experiences are absolutely essential?
- How did you prepare yourself for this work?

**Present Job:**
- Describe how you occupy your time during a typical work week.
- What skills or talents are most essential for effective job performance in this job?
- What are the toughest problems you must deal with? Apart from external motivators such as salary or fringe benefits, what do you find most rewarding about your job?
- If you were to leave this kind of work, what factors would probably contribute to your decision?

**Lifestyle:**
- What obligations do your work place upon your personal time?
- How much flexibility do you have in terms of dress, hours of work, vacation schedule, place of residence?
- How often do people in your line of work change jobs?

**Career Future/Alternatives:**
- If things develop as you’d like, what sort of career goals do you see for yourself?
- How rapidly is your present career field growing?
- How would you describe or estimate future prospects?
• If the work you do was suddenly eliminated, what different types of work do you feel that you could do?
• What types of employers hire people with your background; what are some representative job titles?
• Which related fields are you exploring?

Job Hunting:
• How do people find out about these jobs? Are they advertised in the newspapers (which ones), by word-of-mouth (who spreads the word?), by the personnel department?
• How does one move from position to position? Do people normally move to another agency (company, division), or do they move up in the agency or company division)?
  1. Educational credentials
  2. Past work experience
  3. Specific skills, talents
  4. Applicant’s knowledge of your organisation, your department, your job
  5. Other ____________

Advice to me:
• How well suited is my background for this type of work?
• Can you suggest other related fields?
• What types of experiences, paid employment or otherwise, would you most strongly recommend?
• If you were a college student and had to do it over again, what would you do differently to prepare for the occupation?
Referral to Others:
- Based on our conversation today, can you suggest other people who may be able to provide additional information?
- Would you suggest a few of these people who might be willing to see me?
- May I have permission to use your name when I contact them?

SAMPLE THANK-YOU NOTE TO YOUR MENTOR

Thank you for taking the time on Wednesday to share with me your experiences in [some career field] and to provide insight concerning my pursuit of such a career. I enjoyed hearing about how you became interested in this field and how you got started with your first job.

I am learning quickly that in today’s job market it is likely that a person will change careers several times. It was helpful for me to hear that you experienced that same situation and how you still kept your goal of someday having your own consulting business. I especially enjoyed hearing about [something].

I am looking forward to speaking with the colleagues that you suggested. Hopefully I will learn as much from talking with them as I did in the time that we spent together!

Lastly, Good Luck and enjoy your participation as a Mentee in the NUS FASS Mentorship Program! It is now up to you to leverage it.

BOB CHUA
Alumni Mentor (2006-2011)
CONTACT FOR ENQUIRIES

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