

# MITCHELL HAMLINE MENTORS

## HANDBOOK 2017-2018

### **Welcome to the Mitchell Hamline Mentors program.**

The goals of Mitchell Hamline Mentors are to provide first-year students (1Ls) with the knowledge, support, and advice they need to successfully transition into life as law students, to start learning key concepts of professionalism, and to begin exploring ways to use their law degrees.

To accomplish this, we rely on two sources of wisdom: recent grads who still remember what it was like as a 1L, but who have also successfully transitioned into careers using their law degrees; and upper-class students who have recently completed their first year.

Each mentoring team includes:

Two alumni co-mentors, one upper-class peer advisor, and two or three first year students

To facilitate a successful mentoring experience for everyone, this Handbook provides:

- 1) Program Expectations for each member of the mentoring team, and
- 2) A Mentoring Program Calendar, outlining the program requirements.

We are here to support you and your mentoring group. To help keep you on track throughout the year, we'll be sending monthly emails. We'll also be checking in with you periodically to get your feedback and make sure your team is doing well. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time:

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### **Thanks to our mentors for their service to Mitchell Hamline.**

Without our volunteer mentors, this program wouldn't be possible. We appreciate the time, energy, and advice our mentors provide to help Mitchell Hamline's first-year students.

# EXPECTATIONS FOR GROUP MEMBERS (OR HOW TO HAVE A GREAT YEAR)

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## Expectations for All Members of the Mentoring Group:

### **Remember the goals of the Mitchell Hamline Mentors program.**

- The primary purposes are to support the 1Ls as they transition into law school and complete their first year, as they learn about professionalism, and as they start to identify career paths of interest.
- Students will benefit from meeting and building relationships with attorneys working in the community, but that there is NO expectation that a student will secure employment with an alumni mentor.

**Participate!** Not surprisingly, the groups that do well are those where every member of the mentoring group is engaged and responsive.

- All members are expected to attend the September Kick-off event, the January Thaw, the April career exploration event, and the other activities your group plans.
- All members should work together to complete the activities on the calendar.
- Connect once per month by email, phone or in person.

**Be respectful of everyone's time.** Respond promptly to emails and phone calls. If you are unable to attend a planned event or activity, contact the other members of your mentoring group as early as possible so they know you won't be there.

Because everyone's lives are busy, we've learned that **getting dates confirmed on your calendars as soon as possible** helps insure consistent connection.

**Use the group's resources to your advantage.** Split up the group to keep connecting and to complete your objectives (e.g., one mentor gets together with 2 1Ls, while the other connects with the peer advisor and the third 1L).

**Respect the confidentiality** of individual participants in any discussions or activities.

**Contact one of the coordinators** if you have any questions or concerns about the program, or if you are having difficulty reaching or meeting with your mentors. We also welcome suggestions.

## Expectations for Alumni Mentors:

**Be accessible!** Students can't learn from you if they can't reach you. Tell them your preferred means of contact, and when it's best to reach you. Respond to their emails and calls and attend planned activities.

It's perfectly fine to communicate and **schedule activities with individual students**. You and your co-mentor may want to divide the students up for specific events or opportunities.

**Include one or more of your students in events you're already planning to attend.** Have an extra place at your firm table at a bar event? Planning to attend a networking gathering with other attorneys? Consider inviting one or more of your students.

## **Expectations for 2L Peer Advisors:**

With your closer proximity to the 1Ls, you should **play a lead role in helping to schedule and coordinate activities**.

You are expected to **participate in group activities** along with the rest of the mentoring group.

**Make yourself available to the 1Ls** in case they need any help or advice. Remember, you have valuable information to offer them about your own 1L experiences. If you see your 1Ls around campus, **make an effort to say hello, check in with them, grab a coffee or have lunch**—little things go a long way.

**Model professionalism.** Respond promptly to emails. Don't cancel at the last minute.

## **Expectations for 1Ls:**

**Take the initiative** to get what you need from your mentors: contact your mentors, ask questions, and suggest activities that you are interested in.

If you don't hear back from one of your mentors after you've tried to contact them, don't be discouraged. Feel free to try again—**they are expecting you to reach out**. If problems persist, contact one of the program coordinators so they are aware of the issue and can try to resolve it.

Don't forget to **stay in touch with your peer advisor** as well—you can learn a lot from him or her. If you see your peer advisor on campus, stop for a chat.

**Follow advice** about best practices for communication, networking, and more.

# MENTORING PROGRAM CALENDAR

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## FALL TERM

### SEPTEMBER

#### **Orientation / Kick-Off Event - Required: Tuesday, Sept. 12**

**5:15 pm** - Students (1Ls and 2Ls) meet for orientation and training.

Dinner provided.

**5:30 pm** - Mentors meet for an orientation and short training. Dinner provided.

**6-7 pm** Mitchell Hamline Auditorium. Meet your mentoring group, bring your calendars to start scheduling, and discuss goals for the year. Dessert provided.

### OCTOBER – DECEMBER DISCUSSION TOPICS

#### **Finding Balance as a Law Student**

- How did you balance competing demands and make time for things besides studying?
- How did you manage personal relationships with family and friends while in law school?
- What resources and activities did you find most helpful to get through the first year?
- What would you have liked to have known as a first year student?

#### **Tips and Strategies for Academic Achievement in Law School**

- What tips do you have for preparing for class and outlining?
- What strategies were most helpful for you in preparing for mid-terms and finals?
- How can studying in groups be most effective?
- What suggestions do you have to get the most out of Lawyering (formerly WRAP)?

#### **Professionalism**

- What does professionalism mean as a legal professional?
- What does your firm or organization look for in new hires?
- What communication habits do supervisors and clients look for?
- Do you have any stories to share about professionalism do's / don'ts?

# SPRING TERM

## JANUARY

**January Thaw Event - Required:** Mitchell Hamline Auditorium – Tues., Jan. 23

*Kick off the spring semester with this MHSL gathering, and plan spring activities.*

5 – 5:30 pm: Teams gather to get caught up

5:30-6 pm: Creating a Strong Personal Brand presentation

6-7 pm: Continue team conversations and plan spring activities

**MARCH Career Exploration Event – Required for Students/Mentors Invited to Attend:**  
Date TBD

## FEBRUARY – APRIL DISCUSSION TOPICS / SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

### Networking

- Why is networking so important, and how can I do it successfully?
- What are the best ways to meet attorneys to find out what they do and how they like it?
- What advice do you have about how students should conduct informational interviews?
- Can you share any real-life stories on what not to do or what not to say while networking?
- Which bar and other professional associations do you belong to?
- How can students get involved in professional associations, sections or committees?
- Have your mentor introduce you to someone in a practice area of interest, OR
- Attend a professional association meeting with your mentor (through the state or county bar association, Minnesota Women Lawyers, or other association), OR
- Participate in a networking event through your mentor's employer.

### Visit Your Mentor's Workplace or Observe Something Related to Your Mentor's Work

- Tour one of your mentor's offices
- Visit a jail, juvenile detention center, or other facility
- Sit in on a court hearing, trial proceeding, mediation, or arbitration
- Observe a deposition, client meeting, or strategy session
- Attend a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) program together

### Tap into your Mentor's Expertise

- Get feedback from your mentor about your resume and cover letters
- Do a mock interview with your mentor and get feedback OR
- Discuss ways to get relevant legal experience in law school and beyond.

## The Value of Summer Clerkships, Internships, and Volunteer Opportunities

- What are the best ways to gain legal experience as a first year student?
- How did you spend your first summer, and how did you secure that opportunity?
- What types of unpaid internships and other volunteer positions did you have in law school?
- How did you decide what types of experiences to get, and what did you get out of them?
- What kinds of practical experiences and skills are employers looking for?

**Looking Ahead to the Rest of Law School and Beyond**

- What are the best ways to explore different practice areas, settings, and careers?
- What do you think employers look for when hiring?
- How do employers value work experience, Moot Court, Law Review, volunteering, grades?
- Were you involved in student organizations, and if so, what did you get out of them?
- What other law school experiences, like clinics, can make a student stand out?

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN MITCHELL HAMLIN MENTORS.  
WE HOPE YOU HAVE A GREAT YEAR!**