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Welcome to the Liberal Arts Alumni Mentor Program!

Thank you for your involvement with the Liberal Arts Alumni Mentor Program. Your support of Penn State and Liberal Arts students is appreciated by staff, faculty, and students. Students in the program benefit greatly from your commitment, knowledge, and encouragement.

As a mentor, you will help students navigate academic, professional, and extracurricular life at Penn State, as well as answer questions and provide guidance about internship and job searches, and life after graduation.

We are happy you are a part of the program and look forward to your continued involvement.

Who is a mentor? What is mentoring?

1. A wise and trusted counselor or teacher.¹
2. To serve as a trusted counselor or teacher.²

As a mentor, you can provide a student with knowledge, advice, counsel, support, and opportunities for the development of his/her academic and professional life. You can serve as a resource, provide guidance, and share your expertise to promote student success.

What is your role in the program?

Role of the Mentor

Undergraduate students are in a crucial time in their lives. Students are deciding who they will become and are making choices about their identity. They are looking for a clear sense of purpose in their lives and deciding what their role is.³ They have already established committed relationships with friends, family, and their community; as a mentor, you can be a part of their growth. Mentors provide undergraduate students with recognition, support, challenge, and inspiration. Your student will ask you questions, and you should raise questions as well. Challenge them! The purpose of each mentoring relationship is professional development. It takes time to establish an effective working relationship, and in spending that time with one another, you may want to talk about more than professional development (hobbies, sports, politics, family, etc.) We encourage this—but only if both parties want to. Enjoy getting to know a fellow Penn Stater and learn from each other while focusing on developing career plans and professional skills.

Mentors in the program:

- Serve as a resource, provide guidance, and share expertise to promote student success.
- Act as a sounding board, assist with internship and job searches, and encourage students to develop new skills.

³ (Evans, 2010)
• Talk to students about post-PSU life and their future plans.
• Remain connected to the College and University by working with students, attending on-campus events, and participating in other career development opportunities.
• Foster and support the next generation of Penn State Liberal Arts alumni.
• Leave a legacy, make an impact, and stay connected to their alma mater.

Expectations
Outstanding mentors are intentional about their mentoring role. They seek to make the match a good one, invest significant time and energy in getting to know their mentee, and deliberately and proactively offer the career guidance and emotional support most useful to their mentee. At times, mentors may have to challenge or “push” their mentee.

• Advise students on how to successfully navigate their way through Penn State by providing support and encouragement.
• Teach students about the importance of networking.
• Assist students in bridging the gap between college life and working life.
• Provide developmental feedback on strengths and challenges.
• Find the best mode of communication for you and your student (phone and video chats are recommended when in-person meetings are not possible).
• Maintain regular communication.
• Collaborate with your student about goals, interests, and expectations.
• Communicate with staff about successes and challenges.

Working with your Student

Getting Started
The best way to get to know your student is to talk! Asking questions is a great way to break the ice, dispel any awkwardness, and begin a strong mentor relationship. Ask your student about the beginning of his or her professional journey, who has been most influential and why, experience at Penn State, and hobbies and special skills. Ask questions that help you learn who he or she is as an individual. No matter who your student is, you will have one thing in common: Penn State!

Your student has been supplied with this list of conversation-starting questions:
• How did you choose Penn State?
• If you were a Penn State student again, what would you do differently?
• What is your greatest memory during your time at Penn State?
• Were you involved in any extracurricular activities at Penn State?
• What was your first job out of college and how did you get it?
• What is a typical work day for you?
• What do you like most or find most interesting about your work?
• What is the biggest challenge of your job?
• What education, skills, and experiences are needed to enter your profession?
• Do you have any suggestions for internships, part-time jobs, or campus and community activities that would enhance my ability to get a job like yours?
• What are your hobbies, outside interests, volunteer activities, etc.?
• What publications do you suggest reading to stay updated on industry news?
• Are there professional associations connected to your field that you recommend?
Managing Expectations

Students are reminded that many of their mentors are working professionals, who often take time from their work-day to talk with them. As such, students are expected to make clear their own responsibilities as well. As you know, there are a plethora of opportunities on campus for students to take advantage of.

Managing expectations is important, and setting them is the foundation for positive work. Clearly stating them will help avoid problems. Establish guidelines at the beginning and adjust them as your mentor relationship develops. It is emphasized to students that they should approach this program as a class or extra-curricular activity and give it the same amount and level of attention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meetings</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Commitments/Action Items</th>
<th>Networking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When will you have meetings and how long will they be?</td>
<td>What is your primary method of communication?</td>
<td>What are you accountable for and what is your student accountable for?</td>
<td>How will you and your student identify potential networking opportunities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is responsible for scheduling meetings?</td>
<td>When is the best time to communicate and what times/dates do not work?</td>
<td>How do you measure and monitor accountability?</td>
<td>Are you open to introducing your student to members of your network?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will an agenda be developed before the meeting?</td>
<td>How will you be in touch if you need to cancel a meeting?</td>
<td>Who will be responsible for managing and tracking actions items?</td>
<td>How should your student approach networking opportunities?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggested Activities
You will be able to share experiences related to careers and post-college life. In addition to talking, there are a number of activities that will enhance your effectiveness as a mentor and your experience working with your student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Academic/Co-curricular</strong></th>
<th><strong>Professional</strong></th>
<th><strong>Post-Graduation Preparation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review options for classes during upcoming semesters. Share your own class choices and relate curriculum to internship and job searches.</td>
<td>Provide a job shadowing opportunity for a day. Discuss best practices for professional workplace etiquette.</td>
<td>Encourage your student to complete skills assessment and career exploration tools (StrengthsFinder®, myplan, MyNextMove); discuss results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss possible major &amp; minor choices, and classes applicable to your student’s desired career.</td>
<td>Review your student’s résumé &amp; cover letter together and provide feedback.</td>
<td>Discuss internship and/or job offers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss global experience opportunities (study abroad, international internships, etc.).</td>
<td>Research summer jobs and internships, and identify places to apply.</td>
<td>If applicable, talk to your students about graduate school. Review programs and draft application essays together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Career Enrichment Network and Career Services resources and program offerings together and identify those which would be appropriate.</td>
<td>Encourage your student to attend career fairs, on-campus programming, and other career development events. Recap after each event &amp; discuss next steps.</td>
<td>Keep a mentor journal to record details of meetings, significant events, accomplishments, and insights. Reflect on and evaluate your experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about organizations on campus and national associations.</td>
<td>Practice interviewing. Conduct a mock interview and share constructive feedback.</td>
<td>Talk about post-graduation life and what to expect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professional Development Timeline
Your student received this timeline in his/her handbook. Students are encouraged to work with their mentor to develop a personalized timeline based on interests, goals, and progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk to your mentor about your interests and possible majors and minors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review your resume with your mentor &amp; update your resume and <a href="#">Network Symplicity</a> account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think about study abroad and/or internship options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to your mentor about <a href="#">Paterno Fellows</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore new clubs and organizations on campus; seek out leadership roles if you are interested!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review internship postings on Network Symplicity and discuss them with your mentor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make a <a href="#">LinkedIn</a> account to expand your network and make connections; talk to your mentor about ways to enhance your LinkedIn account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with CEN staff member to discuss your top internship and/or study abroad options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not studying abroad? Talk with your mentor about other ways to get a global experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend career fairs, information sessions, and other workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to your mentor about perfecting your “elevator pitch” at career fairs and networking events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider getting <a href="#">academic credit</a> for your internship experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to your mentor about the do’s and don’ts of networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for <a href="#">Enrichment Funding</a> for your experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Update resume &amp; <a href="#">Network Symplicity</a> account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with a Career Enrichment Network staff member to learn about resumes and cover letters and discuss future plans, internships, and study abroad options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search for internships on <a href="#">Network Symplicity</a>; talk with your mentor about your top choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review your experiences with your mentor and assess your progress and discuss ways to improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brush up on interview skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a mock interview and feedback session with your mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take the <a href="#">StrengthsFinder</a> assessment to learn more about your skills and strengths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="#">Interested in graduate school? Talk to your mentor about your options</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search for full-time jobs on the <a href="#">Nittany Lion Career Network</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="#">Shadow your mentor at work for a day</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with CEN staff member to discuss your options for post-graduation opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review your experiences with your mentor and assess your progress and discuss ways to improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss any job or interview offers with your mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about post-graduation life with your mentor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Month 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk to your mentor about developing your own work/life balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in becoming a mentor? Notify Heather Baruch-Bueter (<a href="mailto:hzb100@psu.edu">hzb100@psu.edu</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill out your Senior Survey before you graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for enrichment funding for your experience!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss any job or interview offers with your mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not doing an internship? Consider <a href="#">undergraduate research</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**StrengthsFinder®**
The StrengthsFinder® assessment can assist students with discovering and understanding their strengths and talents. Completing the assessment will provide them with a list of “top five” signature themes, which can help enhance the behaviors that lead to success. Students will be able to focus on their strengths and understand how they can translate into a career or post-graduate education plan.

The assessment is **free** to all students in the College. If your student has already completed StrengthsFinder® they are encouraged to review the results with you, look at resources on the StrengthsQuest website, and reach out to Heather Baruch-Bueter for more materials to help make the most of the assessment.

Students can request an access code to complete the assessment here [http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/strengthsfinder-r](http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/strengthsfinder-r). Alumni can complete the assessment through Alumni Career Services (814-865-5465).

**Navigating Common Issues**
No mentoring relationship is perfect and there could be bumps along the way. Based on experiences from current mentors, here are some possible issues that may arise during your work with your student, as well as suggestions for overcoming these hurdles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Mentor Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student is not responding to emails in a timely manner.</td>
<td>Ask your student how their academics are going; it’s possible he or she is feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities. Remind your student that they should respond to messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student has run out of questions beyond getting-to-know-you inquiries.</td>
<td>Ask your student questions about him or her. Encourage your student to prepare specific talking points about a certain topic (i.e. internship search, networking, grad school prep, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student is not sure what they would like to do after college.</td>
<td>Suggest that the student takes part in career exploration activities like StrengthsFinder®. Talk to the student about co-curricular activities he or she has enjoyed while at Penn State. If appropriate, introduce your student to people in your network; this may lead to post-graduation ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student is not prepared for meetings and does not complete agreed-upon assignments.</td>
<td>Relate your mentor relationship to post-graduation life: in the real world, your student will be expected to come to meetings prepared and complete assignments. Encourage them to treat the mentor program like a class or extra-curricular activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you would like more guidance or suggestions, please email a program staff member for more assistance (see Resources page for contact information).
The Internship/Job Search

Chances are your student will want your assistance and advice with his or her internship and/or job search. Students in the College of the Liberal Arts have access to Network Symplicity (see the Resources page for link), an online system that allows them to search for and apply to internships. While mentors do not have access to this database, you are encouraged to have your student do regular searches based on career goals and interests, and report back.

Students who are looking for full-time positions can start with the Nittany Lion Career Network (see the Resources page for link). This is an online database managed by Penn State Career Services. Alumni can create accounts in order to view the same positions students can, and offer feedback about postings that their student might find interesting.

Mentors are not expected to find jobs or internships for their students. You are there to consult and provide support and guidance.

Communicating with your Student

Finding the Best Mode of Communication

Effective communication is essential to any healthy relationship and a mentorship is no exception. It is important to find the best mode of communication for you and your student. It is encouraged that students gain professional email etiquette skills while working with their mentor, but if you prefer another mode of communication, please share that with your student. Finding a mode that is comfortable for both of you will help you establish a strong base for conversation.

Many students rely on texting when communicating. However, texting as a sole method of communicating makes it difficult to form a strong working relationship and achieve goals. Many mentors and students use phone calls and video chatting or in-person meetings as their primary modes of communication. Texting and emails are relied on for quick updates and check-ins. Whichever mode you agree upon, ensure that both parties are comfortable and feel that goals can be accomplished using it.

Emails

Proper email etiquette is important and is a vital tool to help students master before they enter post-graduation life. These guidelines are shared with students:

- E-mails will be acknowledged within 24 hours.
- Response to content will be provided within 2-3 days.
- In instances when other obligations impact availability or plans, mentors and mentees will notify each other.

Other Communication Resources

If face-to-face meetings are not possible because of distance, video chatting is a great way to communicate. There are a number of tools to help you achieve success when working with your student:

- Skype (http://www.skype.com/en/)
- Google Hangouts (https://www.google.com/+learnmore/hangouts/)
- Oovoo (http://www.oovoo.com/)
- Students are able to rent computers and tablets from the Library on campus in order to use these video chatting platforms.
Guidelines and Recommendations Regarding Internships and Job Placement Assistance

General Guidelines: Internships and Job Placement opportunities are NOT expected to be a regular part of the mentor program. However, if opportunities do arise for a mentor to assist a student in obtaining an internship or job placement, the following guidelines should be observed.

For the Student:
- Recognize that internship and job placement assistance is often a very personal and always a highly professional matter.
- Typically referrals are only given where a long term prior relationship exists, thus, referrals and job assistance are quite rare in the mentor program.
- While it is acceptable to ask for and/or to seek advice in connection with obtaining an internship or job referral, remember that you are using the good name and resources of your mentor to obtain the introduction and perhaps gain an interview in a very competitive position.
- If such assistance is offered, close communication with the mentor is critical.
- Recognize that your actions in pursuing the opportunity will often reflect on the mentor.
- If you are offered an internship/job, you MUST, in all circumstances, report back to the mentor regarding your course of action, PARTICULARLY, if you decide to reject the offer, once you receive it.
- If you decide to reject the offer, discuss this thoroughly with the mentor, PRIOR to informing the company where the position was offered.
- If you decide to take the internship or job, recognize that your employer will most likely report back to your mentor on your experience with the company.
- Be appreciative and respectful of the opportunity that has been offered to you.

For the Mentor:
- Be mindful of the above advice given to students.
- Recognize that it is a big commitment to help a student obtain an internship or job during the mentor program.
- If you do decide to try to open an opportunity, thoroughly discuss the steps that you intend to take on behalf of the student.
- Ask for regular communication regarding résumés, interviews and offers, prior to starting the process.
- Recognize that the student may ultimately reject the internship or job you assisted in obtaining and talk through the ramifications of this with the student, prior to going down the path.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Do Other Mentors Say?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “Acting as a mentor has allowed me to fulfill my desire to contribute to another’s well-being while also maintaining my own balance. As a mentor, I’ve gained a broader knowledge about the current concerns (personal and career) that today’s Penn State students grapple with. It has led me to feel more deeply connected, not just to my mentee but to Penn State and for that, I am grateful.”  
-Natalie D. |
| “Getting to know someone new who has common interests and is involved in current campus life is fun. Helping one sift and winnow through options and opportunities that lie ahead is both a humbling task and important responsibility. By becoming a mentor you become someone in a person’s life that just may help shape their future in a significant way.”  
-Phil M. |
| “I am grateful for the opportunity to give back to the university that has given me so much and shaped me into the woman that I am. Through the Mentor Program, I’m able to share valuable life lessons that I’ve learned both professionally and personally. I hope that in some small way, I can help positively shape the outlook and demeanor of the student I am mentoring.”  
-Jackie P. |
| “Being a part of this program has been incredibly rewarding. The students I have the pleasure of working with are sharp, motivated, and focused. Their determination has an inspiration for me to take a closer look at how I spend my time and how I contribute to the communities I am a part of. The Mentor Program isn’t just about helping current students with interview prep, grad school essays, and networking. It’s about creating lasting ties with Happy Valley, giving young Penn Staters the friendly ‘nudge’ they need in the right direction, and opening yourself up to a friendly ‘nudge’ yourself.”  
-Lily M. |
| “I’m reminded of one of my favorite quotes by Pericles: ‘What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments but what is woven into the lives of others.’ I think participants in the Mentor Program can weave information, direction, and practical advice into the lives of students that supplements their academic programs. Most alumni aren’t in the positions to give major donations to the University – but we can invest our time and expertise into the lives of undergraduate students.”  
-Jean M. |
| “I am always looking for ways to give back to the College of the Liberal Arts. This was a perfect way for me to stay connected on a long-term basis and directly with someone who seems to be following a similar academic path that I did. I am able to offer first-hand examples of how I handled certain situations. She seems to feel at ease just hearing that someone else has gone through situations that she is experiencing. It really has made me reflect on my time at Penn State and what I value most in education and the college experience.”  
-Juliana V. |
Resources

There are a variety of resources available to you and your student.

**Important Penn State Websites:**
Career Enrichment Network: [http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/current-students/cen](http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/current-students/cen)
Mentor Program: [http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/mentoring](http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/mentoring)
Penn State Career Services: [http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/](http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/)
Alumni Career Services: [http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/alumni/](http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/alumni/)

Career Enrichment Network Resources:
Enrichment Funding: [http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/funding](http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/funding)
Global Experience: [http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/global-experience](http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/global-experience)
Internships: [http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/internships](http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/internships)
StrengthsFinder®: [http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/strengthsfinder-r](http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/strengthsfinder-r)
Network Symplicity: [http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/about-network-sypmlicity](http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/cen/about-network-sypmlicity)

**Professional Development Resources:**
LinkedIn College Alumni Group: Penn State Liberal Arts Alumni Network
LinkedIn Mentor Program Group: Liberal Arts Alumni Mentor Program Network

**College of the Liberal Arts Social Media:**
@AdvisingLAatPSU
@PSULAvocies
@PSULAJobs
@LAEnvoy
@PSULAU

**Program Contacts:**
**Heather Baruch-Bueter**
Career Enrichment Network
101 Sparks Building
814.865.1070
hzb100@psu.edu

**Christopher Gamble**
Alumni Relations
138 Sparks Building
814.863.2398
cvg4@psu.edu
Getting to Know Each Other: Outlining Expectations and Goals
Students are given this worksheet in their handbook.

The goal of the Alumni Mentor Program is three-fold: To learn about the wide variety of career paths available to liberal arts majors; to network with professionals in your field(s) of interest and the 90,000+ liberal arts alumni; and to connect your academics, extracurricular experiences, and study abroad with your career development.

To get your mentor relationship off on the right tone, this sheet will help you outline a few important matters between you and your mentor. You can fill this out on your own or with your mentor, but be sure to share it with your mentor soon after being introduced.

What are your expectations for this mentor program?

How do you best respond to mentoring and receiving guidance, feedback, and advice?

What are a couple of goals you’d like to focus on with your mentor?
Alumni Mentor Program Compact
Students are given this worksheet in their handbook.

This compact will be helpful to outline goals and expectations. Feel free to share it with Program staff. This should be completed with your mentor during your first or second meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Mentor Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Phone:</td>
<td>Preferred Phone:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who is responsible for scheduling meetings? ________________________________________________
When will we meet? ____________________________
How frequently will we meet? ______________________
When is our next meeting (date/time)? ______________________________________________________
What is our primary method of communication? _____________________________________________

Outlining goals
The value of your mentorship will increase significantly if you set and seek to achieve specific goals. It is helpful to outline goals and set deadlines to meet those goals.

Goal #1 (Academic goal): _________________________________________________________________
Action step(s): _______________________________________________________________________
Target complete date(s): ___________________________________________________________________
What resources/advice/guidance do I need to accomplish this goal? ________________________________________________________________________

Goal #2 (Extracurricular goal): ___________________________________________________________
Action step(s): _______________________________________________________________________
Target complete date(s): ___________________________________________________________________
What resources/advice/guidance do I need to accomplish this goal? ________________________________________________________________________

Goal #3 (Career development goal): _________________________________________________________
Action step(s): _______________________________________________________________________
Target complete date(s): ___________________________________________________________________
What resources/advice/guidance do I need to accomplish this goal? ________________________________________________________________________

Goal #4: _____________________________________________________________________________
Action step(s): _______________________________________________________________________
Target complete date(s): ___________________________________________________________________
What resources/advice/guidance do I need to accomplish this goal? ________________________________________________________________________

Sample goals include: researching classes for next semester, choosing one club/organization to join this semester, researching companies for internships/full-time positions.
Sample Meeting Agenda
Students are given this sample agenda in their handbook.

Meeting Date:
Meeting Time:
Meeting Location (if applicable):

What are three things I want to discuss during this meeting?
1.
2.
3.

What are three questions I have for my mentor?
1.
2.
3.

What are three goals I want to work towards?
1.
2.
3.

What are three action steps I will take after this meeting to help me work towards my goals?
1.
2.
3.

What will I include in a follow-up email?

When is our next meeting?
Meeting Date:
Meeting Time:
Meeting Location (if applicable):