



*The First Friends Program
Handbook*

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TheChicagoSchool[®]

of Professional Psychology

Dear First Friend Mentors,

Thank you for volunteering your time and energy to serve as a First Friend to an incoming international student this semester. International Programs and Services greatly appreciates your commitment to enhancing The Chicago School's campus community by assisting new international students' in their geographic, academic, and personal transition to higher education in United States.

The purpose of the First Friends Program is to ease international students with their process of transitioning into United States, providing new students with adequate social and academic resources for a satisfying experience living abroad. Not only does the program allow for current students to impart their knowledge about The Chicago School and enhance their mentoring and leadership skills, it also allows current students to form new connections with other students studying abroad, expanding the presence of the international student community at The Chicago School.

This handbook has been created to serve as a resource for you to reference regarding your interaction with your mentee. In no way is the handbook to serve as a guideline as each mentor/mentee relationship will be different depending on diverse circumstances. Our hope is that you will utilize this handbook to inspire your interaction with your mentee and refer to it when you are in need of support or guidance. If you have specific questions regarding the program or The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, please contact International Programs and Services at international@thechicagoschool.edu.

Thank you again for being a part of the First Friends Program and helping enhance the international student community, making this a rewarding experience for both you and your mentee.

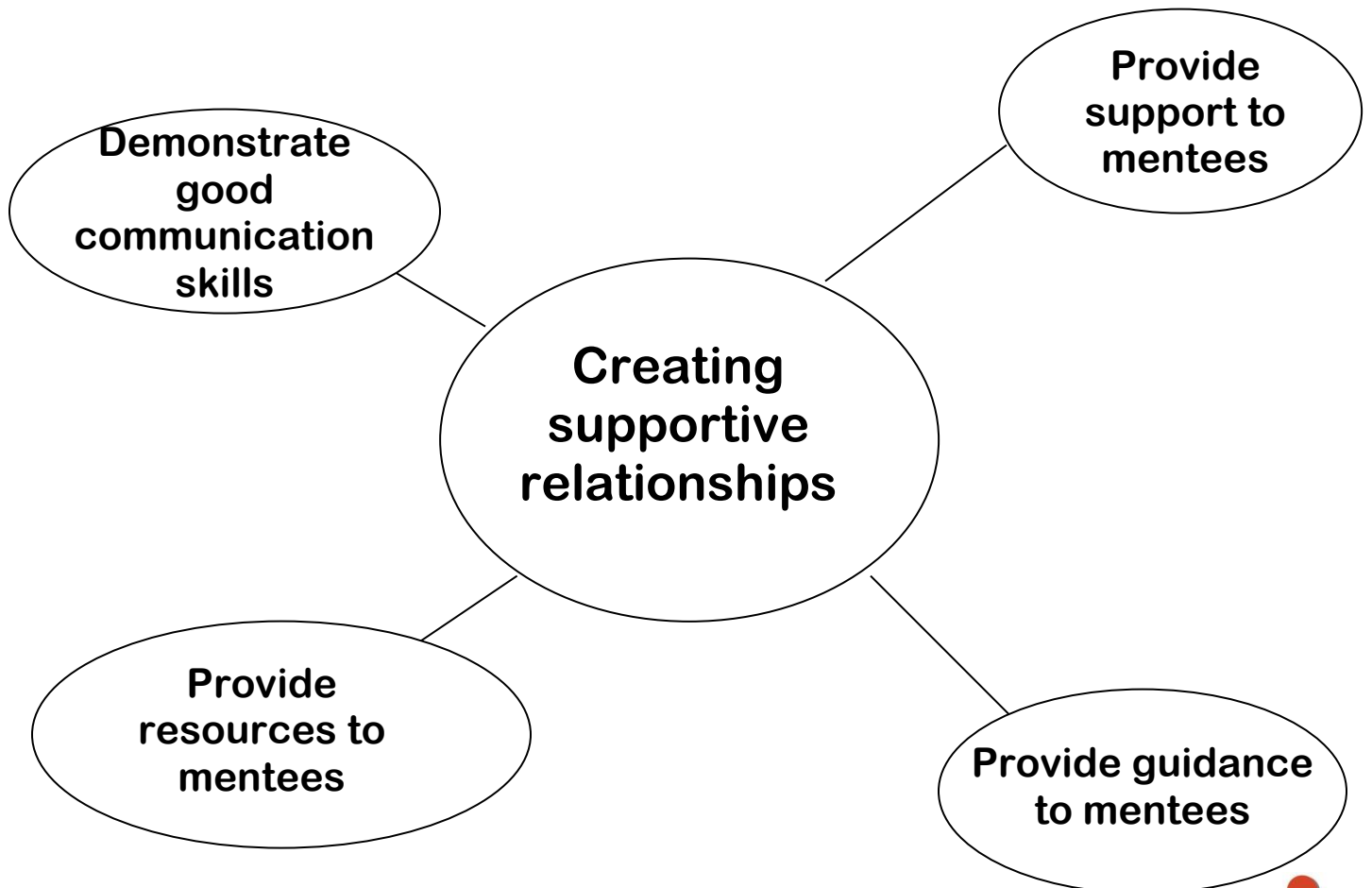
Sincerely,

International Programs and Services
E:international@thechicagoschool.edu

Expectations...

As a First Friend you are expected to...

- Respond to any questions your First Friend may have via email, telephone, or whatever means of communication the two of you decide on
- Create and nurture a relationship with your First Friend
- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Notify The Office of Student Affairs of any issues during your time as a mentor
- Provide feedback about your experience in The First Friend Program
- Upon the new international student's arrival, we strongly encourage you to set up one initial meeting- on campus, at a coffee-shop, etc. but is not required. After this initial meeting, your responsibility is over and you can feel free to continue your relationship going forward.



What makes a good First Friend?

A First Friend is not someone who knows everything, but can help advise their mentee in the right direction or support them during their journey.

Tips to being a great First Friend

- Be available to your First Friend via whatever means of communication you establish
- Practice your communication skills: active listening
- Have an open mind, be approachable and flexible
- Utilize your resources and ask questions when needed
- Have fun!

Ultimately your role as a First Friend is to

- Help students transition into United States as they navigate their way through The Chicago School
- Refer students to appropriate services
- Support your First Friends' academic and personal goals with cultural competence

Skills for effective First Friends

Active Listening

Active listening is defined as not only hearing those you are communicating with, but understanding them and their situation. Sometimes when people are listening to others they are thinking about how they are going to respond or other things on their mind and end up missing an important aspect of the conversation. To ensure you are actively listening you can respond to your First Friend by saying “what I hear you saying is that you feel _____”. Is that correct?

Active listening involves:

- Paying attention
- Reflecting
- Clarifying
- Summarizing
- Sharing



Communication

People communicate with each other to share thoughts, views, feelings, needs, and preferences. Active listening and communication complement each other, because if someone is not actively listening then there will be a break in communication. It is important to understand that communication can be both verbal and non-verbal

Active communication involves:

- Observing: being aware of how you and your mentees are presenting messages through body language or how tone of voice changes based on the subject
- Body language: understand that how you present yourself affects your interaction with others. For example, if your arms are crossed that may seem like you are not interested in the conversation.
- Asking questions: Ask your mentee open ended questions (what, when, how, who) to gain more insight into the subject you are talking about

Housing and Transportation

One of the biggest issues your mentee may face on top of feeling overwhelmed by moving to a new city is finding housing and appropriate transportation. Below you will find some helpful resources to facilitate your discussion with your First Friend, as well feel free to share your personal experiences and tips.

Moving to a new City: <https://my.thechicagoschool.edu/NewStudent/Pages/Moving.aspx>



Ethical Considerations

As a First Friend you may be exposed to information that is confidential in regards to the students' academic and personal situation. The expectation is that you will keep the information shared between you and your mentee private, unless you feel you have a duty to report important information to an appropriate party.

Below are some guiding principles to consider when interacting with your First Friend

- Ensure that you are acting in a way that benefits the students
- First Friends will avoid acting beyond the scope of their service and not attempt to offer professional services requiring more extensive qualifications and training
- Consult the Office of Student Affairs if you face a situation that makes you uncomfortable or when you experience a conflict or dilemma

Common Issues

There are different academic, personal, physical, and vocational challenges that students face when adjusting to a new environment and way of life. Some students may be coming straight out of undergrad while others may have not been in school for the past ten years. Not all students will face these issues, but it is good to be aware of common occurrences with incoming students

Academic Challenges

- Managing course requirements and schedules
- Transitioning to academic writing, researching, reading, etc.
- Determining effective ways to study for class
- Feeling anxious about tests
- Registering for classes
- Communicating with professors and classmates
- Utilizing new technology: online courses, Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, Word, etc.
- Balancing academics, work, and a personal life
- English proficiency challenges



Personal Challenges

- Relocating to a new environment
- Meeting new people
- Juggling different demands...family, friends, work, social life
- Managing relationships
- Adapting to a new culture
- Financial burdens and hefty fees for overseas study

Physical Challenges

- Creating positive wellness habits
- Eating healthy and well balanced meals
- Maintaining appropriate weight
- Managing stressful situations
- Becoming involved with hobbies and activities
- Living alone for the first time

Vocational Challenges

- Deciding on practicum or internship opportunities
- Unsure about what area within the field to focus on
- Creating American-style résumés and cover letters
- Understanding job opportunities once program is complete
- Finding appropriate work at school with limited options
- Maintaining legal immigration status during and after program is complete



The below information will outline important resources and contact information that will aid you in helping support your First Friend through their journey at The Chicago School. If you have any questions regarding these resources please contact International Programs and Services at international@thechicagoschool.edu

Contact Information

International Programs and Services Contact Information

Courtney Bilbrey
ACCESS Coordinator, DSO/ARO (Chicago Campus)
E: cbilbrey@thechicagoschool.edu
P: 312.467.2549

Daniel Esquivel
Student Service Specialist, DSO/ARO (California Campuses)
E: desquivel@thechicagoschool.edu
P: 213.283.4268

Cindie Zhou
Coordinator, International Programs and Services, PDSO/RO (National)
E: czhou@thechicagoschool.edu
P: 949.769.7784

Monisola Fakiyesi
Assistant Registrar, DSO/ARO (DC Campus)
E: mfakiyesi@thechicagoschool.edu
P: 202.706.5111



Other Important Contact Information

Student Accounts

E: studentaccounts@thechicagoschool.edu

P: 1.800.684.2890

IT Help Desk

E: helpdesk@tcsedsystem.edu

P: 312.467.8600

Chicago Campus

P: 312-329-6600

F: 312-644-3333

Washington D.C. Campus

P: 202-706-5052

LA Campus

P: 213-315-7200

F: 213-615-7274

Irvine Campus

P: 949-769-7700



The Chicago School's Policies and Procedures

Student Handbook and Academic Catalog

If your mentee has any questions regarding The Chicago School's academic policies and procedures, please reference The Student Handbook and Academic Catalog

<http://catalog.thechicagoschool.edu/>

Academic Calendar

This link provides you a calendar of important academic and holiday dates

<https://my.thechicagoschool.edu/community/studentresources/studentaffairs/Pages/Office-of-Registrar.aspx>



Registration

Registering for Courses

Utilizing my.thechicagoschool.edu

Use the Student ePortal to...

- Register for courses on a system that is more stable than ever before
- View and edit your personal student calendar
- Check your holds at a glance
- Adjust your financial aid award letter online
- See your outstanding balance in real time, including right after registration

To register for courses:

1. Go to the **My Courses** tab on the left hand side of the page
2. Look down the list for the **Register for Courses** tab (4th from the bottom)
3. Click on the tab, and it will take you to the page where you can register for classes.



National Center for Graduate Teaching and Learning

The National Center for Graduate Teaching and Learning contacts all new students by email with an invitation to begin Foundations. Foundations is designed to help students enter graduate school with the professional writing skills needed to be successful

Foundations for Scholarship and Practice:

Foundations consist of three elements and is designed to assess each student's writing skills, provide skill-building and help students adjust to academics at The Chicago School. All new students must complete the Foundations process.

The three elements of the program are:

1. **Writing Assessment Process** – Students write a short paper on a subject assigned by the National Center for Graduate Teaching and Learning and will submit it by email for evaluation. Information on the process can be found on the Writing Assessment Process and Academic Writing seminar Website: <https://my.thechicagoschool.edu/community/academicresource/asp/Pages/Writing-Assessment.aspx>
2. **Academic Focus** – Academic Focus is a series of self-paced tutorials that help prepare students for the rigors of your first semester. The program covers APA style, provides information on conducting research at The Chicago School's library, academic writing tips, and more. Due TBD
3. **Academic Writing Course** – If a student's Writing Assessment Process essay shows that their writing skills need assistance, the student will be referred to, and required to complete, the online Academic Writing Course. The ten-week course is designed for psychology graduate students and is offered online for convenience.

Completion of Foundations is required of all new students. The Foundations for Scholarship and Practice is covered by a one-time fee assessed to all students during their first term.

Please contact the National Center for Graduate Teaching and Learning anytime with questions via email at academicsuccess@thechicagoschool.edu or by calling 312.467.8607.



Career Services

Career Services provides students and alumni at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology with the resources and tools necessary to enter into and thrive in their chosen areas of employment. Outlined below are services that students can access through the Career Services department at The Chicago School

Career Hub

Career Hub is the newest career resource available to students and alumni at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology! Career Services offers you this online tool to help manage your career development. Career Services will use this system to send you notices of job opportunities, on-campus employment, Community Partnership positions, Post-doctoral fellowships, and upcoming events.

<https://my.thechicagoschool.edu/community/studentresources/careerservices/Pages/default.aspx>

Interview Stream

Unsure about your interviewing techniques? Then use the Interview Stream, available online through The Chicago School's website. Interview Stream provides feedback and tips of non-verbal behavior and communication missteps, plus it's very helpful for objective Counselor assessment

<https://thechicagoschool.interviewstream.com/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2f>

Webshops

Career Services offers multiple webshops to assist you with preparing and tackling the job search process. Students can access these webshops at their own convenience by going to the Career Services webpage. The webshops available are:

- Searching Outside the Job Boards
- Branding Yourself
- Building Your Digital Toolkit
- Landing the Job You Love
- Constructing an Effective curriculum vitae (CV)
- Constructing a Master's Level Resume
- The Cover Letter
- Mastering the Interview

Click here for Career Services:

<https://my.thechicagoschool.edu/community/studentresources/careerservices/Pages/default.aspx>



Career Counseling and Advising

The Office of Career Services provides students and alumni with individual counseling and advising to discuss where you are in your career planning and management. Through scheduled appointments, we look forward to offering career feedback, strategies, and support with a “neutral ear.”

Services include:

- Review of resumes, curriculum vitae (CV) or cover letters
- Help with building effective job search plans
- Preparing for interviews
- Negotiating offers
- Exploring career advancement opportunities

To make an appointment or ask a quick question, please email careerservices@thechicagoschool.edu



Student Health & Wellness

Student Solutions

The Chicago School of Professional Psychology is proud to debut **Student Solutions**, a new free, confidential, around-the-clock counseling service. **Student Solutions** is a partnership between TCSPP and ComPsych, one of the world's largest providers of student assistance program. **Student Solutions** replaces the Student Therapy Referral Network.

855-460-6688

24 hr. a day, 7 days a week, toll-free

guidanceresources.com

Company Web ID: TCSPP

Utilize the new Student Solutions resource for:

- “ **Counseling Services:** 3 free counseling Sessions!
- “ **Legal Support:** Attorneys on-call and online handling concerns like divorce, custody, adoption, real estate, debt and bankruptcy, landlord/tenant issues, civil and criminal actions and more.
- “ **Financial Support and Online Resources:** Financial planners and other online resources through informational articles regarding health and wellness, relationships, work and education, financial, legal, lifestyle, and home and auto.

Wellness Site

The Wellness Site offers articles, newsletters, and tutorials regarding wellness and academic support resources. Student can sign up utilizing their email account.

<https://my.thechicagoschool.edu/NewStudent/Pages/Student-Health-Insurance.aspx>



New Student Website

If your mentee has questions regarding beginning their journey at The Chicago School that you are not aware of, please direct them to the New Student Website.

Chicago campus:

<https://my.thechicagoschool.edu/NewStudent/Pages/Moving/Chicago.aspx>

LA campus:

<https://my.thechicagoschool.edu/NewStudent/Pages/Moving/Southern-California.aspx>

DC campus:

<https://my.thechicagoschool.edu/NewStudent/Pages/Moving/Washington-DC.aspx>

Admitted International Student:

<https://my.thechicagoschool.edu/community/studentresources/ie/Pages/International-Students.aspx>



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Ender, S. & Newton, F. (2000). *Students helping students*. Jossey and Bass Publishers.

HCQA. (2005). *Peer mentor manual*. Unpublished manuscript, Unpublished manuscript, Home Care Washington State.

Hope, M.H.(2006). *Active listening: Improving your ability to listen and lead*. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

Learning Communities. (2007). *Peer mentor handbook*. Unpublished manuscript, Iowa State University.

Thomas, M. (2010). *Handbook for peer mentors*. Unpublished manuscript, Deakin University.

