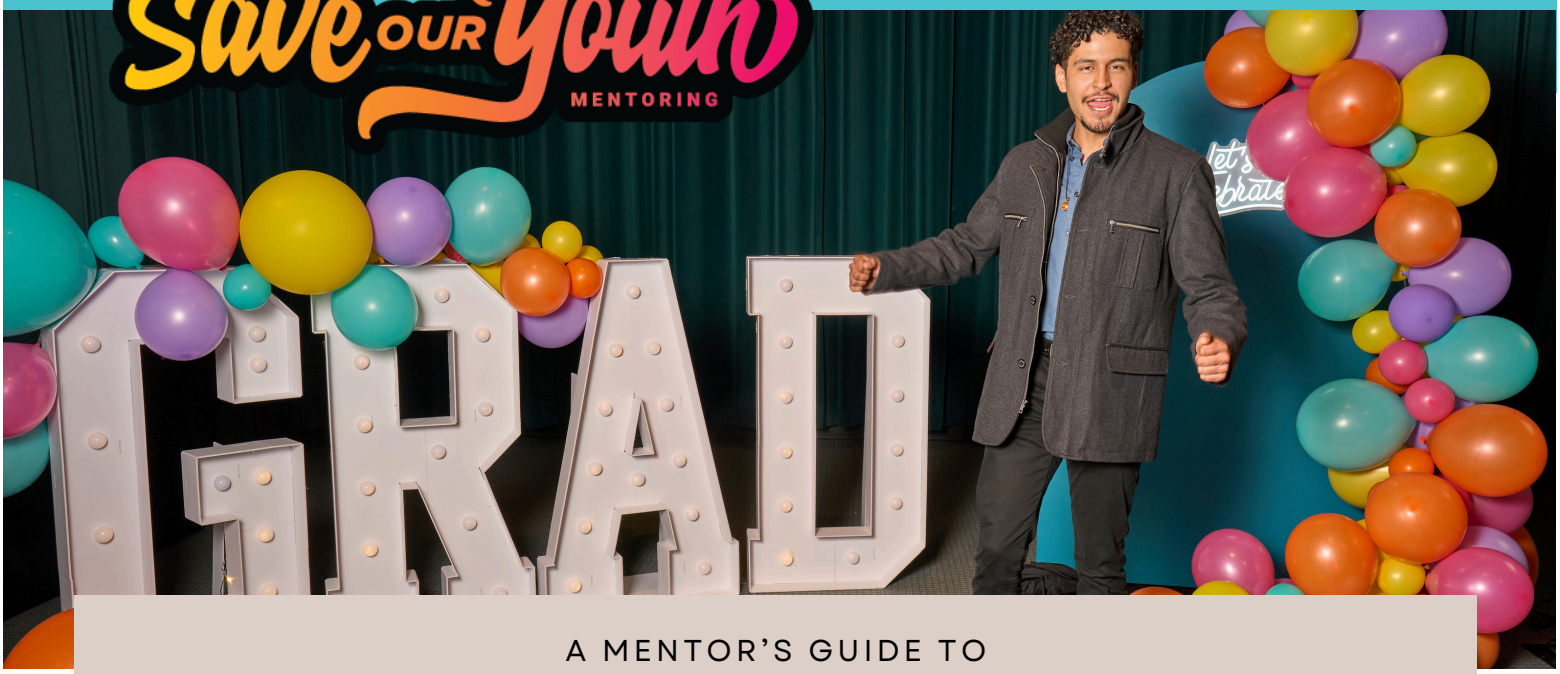
Save OUR Youth MENTORING



A MENTOR'S GUIDE TO

COLLEGE SUPPORT

Your College Mentee Needs You!



First-generation students face unique challenges that can impact their academic journey and overall well-being - here's why they need your continued support:

- Higher Dropout Rates - only 27% of first generation students graduate within four years.
- First generation students are less likely to seek help or advocate for themselves.
- Financial Challenges - 64% of first-generation students work while enrolled in school. They likely experience difficulty balancing financial responsibilities.
- Sense of Belonging - first-generation students can experience imposter syndrome and report feeling left out or out of place on campus. This can lead to withdrawal and lower academic performance.

Please reach out to me with any questions as they come up!



Angela Maher

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SUPPORT SCHEDULE

GENERAL TIPS

Your role is a steady source of encouragement and support. Small, consistent check-ins can make all the difference!

- Normalize struggles and encourage resilience; setbacks don't define them.
- Remind them of campus resources: Often free supports are available for students, from academic to mental health resources.
- Be a listening ear—they're more likely to open up if they know you're genuinely interested and there for them.
- We ask that you attempt to check in at least three times a semester.
- The following log and easy script has been designed for you!





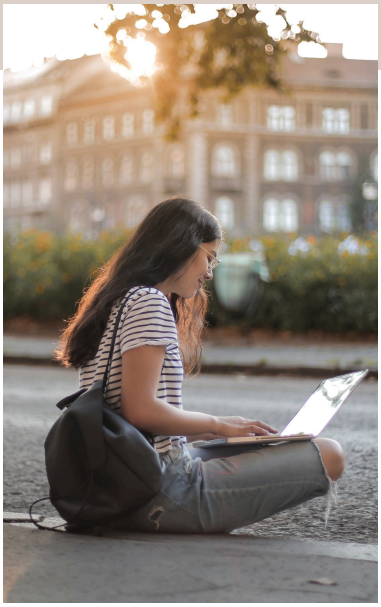




	Personal Check In	Academic Check In	Financial Check In
Pre-Semester July/Jan			
Mid-Semester Oct/March			
End-Semester Dec/May			

PRE-SEMESTER CHECK-IN

Make sure mentee is set up for success



PERSONAL

- **Open-Ended Questions:**
  - How are you doing?
  - How are you feeling about the start of this semester?
  - How is your family doing?
  - How are relationships going for you?
  - Any other stressors in your life currently?
  - How's your mental health?
  - What are you looking forward to this semester?
- **Systems:** Discuss any systems or routines they have in place for organization, assignment tracking, and self-care. College is a lot less lenient on accepting late work.
- **Offer Support:** What is helpful from me as a mentor during this season? How can I be praying for you?

ACADEMICS

- **Class Registration:** Confirm class enrollment. If needed, help set up a meeting with an academic advisor.
- **Drop Deadline:** Find the course drop deadline and make sure student understands if they drop before that deadline, no negative repercussions. But if they drop or fail a class after this deadline, they will still be responsible for costs and it will count against their "Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)". So after that drop deadline, they need to do their best to pass the class.
- **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Requirements:** Review the school's SAP policy (minimum GPA and completion rate) to make sure student understands if they fall below they will get put on academic probation, and if it doesn't get raised the following semester, they'll lose financial aid.
- **Degree Progress:** Do a class audit/degree progress check (tool on school's website) to make sure every class they're enrolled in is "counting" towards a degree.

FINANCES

- **Financial Aid & Costs:**
  - Review their financial aid package. Amounts listed are typically for full-time students and will be adjusted if attending part-time.
  - Go through the billing portal together. Ensure student understands which costs are billed by the school and which are estimates (ex. tuition vs. books and transportation).
  - Check for any alerts or action steps listed on their account.
- **Colorado Opportunity Fund**: Confirm COF funds have been authorized.
- **Health Insurance:** Make sure there is not a charge for health insurance (if student has their own, fill out a waiver form so they aren't paying for it through the school).
- **Remaining balance:** Discuss how any remaining balance will be covered. Are they accepting loans or work study (steps to do so need to be completed on student portal), any scholarships they've received that aren't showing up on their account, do they need to set up a payment plan through the school?

MID-SEMESTER CHECK-IN

Use this check-in to assess the semester's progress and adjust support as needed.

PERSONAL

- **Open-Ended Questions:**
  - How are you?
  - What would help you to be doing better?
  - How are you balancing your coursework with any work or family responsibilities?
  - Do you feel like you have enough time for yourself?
  - What does a typical day or week look like for you? Is there anything you wish you could adjust in your schedule?
- **Resources:** Any resources that would be helpful? Schools often have mental health supports, basic needs resources, etc for students if they are willing to reach out.
- **Normalize:** Reassure them that struggling is normal. Make sure they know they are not dumb, failures, or imposters if things are hard. Encourage brainstorming for solutions and emphasize that it won't always be this difficult.

ACADEMICS

- **Helpful Questions:**
  - How are your classes going so far this semester? Are there any subjects that you find particularly challenging?
  - What strategies are you using to manage your coursework and stay organized? Are there any that you feel aren't working as well as you'd like?
  - Have you been able to connect with your professors or teaching assistants when you need help? What has that experience been like?
  - Are you feeling overwhelmed by any deadlines or assignments coming up? How can I help you plan for them?
- **Grade Check:** Log into portal and check how grades are going. Discuss which classes are enjoyable and which are challenging.
- **If Struggling:** Explore helpful strategies such as better organization, talking to professors, or accessing tutoring resources on campus (most colleges have a student resource center which is a great place to start). Review SAP considerations in section above.

FINANCES

- **Account Review:** Make sure all financial aid and bills are reconciled; sometimes small charges remain unpaid and can get sent to collections.
- **Financial Support:** Do you have the financial support and resources you need for the semester (e.g., textbooks, supplies, living expenses)?
- **Scholarship Opportunities:** Scholarships are often open now for the following school year. Are there any the student wants to apply for if this semester was not fully paid for by financial aid? Most schools have a webpage dedicated to scholarships connected to the school.



END-SEMESTER CHECK-IN

Reflect on the past semester and prepare for the next.



PERSONAL

- **Open-Ended Questions:**
  - How are you?
  - Rank your stress level currently and how did that ebb and flow through this last semester?
  - Anything new going on at home or life outside of school you want to talk about?
  - Looking back on this semester, what are you most proud of achieving, academically or personally?
  - What were the biggest challenges you faced this semester, and how did you handle them?
  - Is there a specific class, project, or experience that you learned the most from? Why?
  - What would you say was the most surprising thing you encountered this semester?
- **Recharge:**
  - What is one thing you can do before the start of the next semester that will help you relax, recharge, and take care of yourself?



ACADEMICS

- **Reflection:** Talk about what went well and what they'd like to adjust next time
  - How do you feel about your grades and overall academic performance this semester?
  - Did any feedback from your professors or assignments stand out to you, either positively or constructively?
  - What study habits or academic strategies worked best for you this semester? Are there any you'd like to change or improve for next semester?
- **Registration:** Confirm class registration for the next semester or assist in setting up a meeting with their academic advisor.



FINANCES

- **Review:** Discuss whether financial needs were met and if the current financial situation is sustainable. Explore working during the break as an option.
- **Thinking Ahead:** Have you been able to explore or apply for any scholarships or financial aid options? Would you like any assistance with that?
- **Resources:** Does student know how to save/budget, or would working on that together be helpful? SOY has managing finances resources if helpful.



BEING CONFIDENT OF THIS, THAT HE WHO BEGAN A GOOD WORK IN YOU WILL CARRY IT ON TO COMPLETION UNTIL THE DAY OF CHRIST JESUS.
PHILIPPIANS 1:6