

Table of Contents

About this booklet	.....	2
Semester Overview	.....	3
Timeline	.....	5
Meetings Guide	.....	9
Troubleshooter		
Academic issues	.....	17
Personal issue	.....	20
Financial issues	.....	28
	.....	57

About this booklet

This booklet was written to help you successfully mentor your student(s) through two semesters of college. It was developed and compiled by a group of successful and experienced College Initiative students in collaboration with facilitators and experts in a number of fields related to reentry, education, service design and mentoring. To see how the Toolkit and training curriculum were developed, please take the time to watch the DVD included in the box.

Along with the other parts of the Toolkit, this book contains many of the resources you will need to accomplish your task. These include:

- A **timeline** of the semester and the meetings you and your student(s) will have;
- A **guide to these meetings** including topics you will need to cover, questions you will need to ask and information you will need to report;
- A **troubleshooting guide** that covers common problems, obstacles and questions that will come up during the semester and suggestions on how to deal with them.

Semester overview

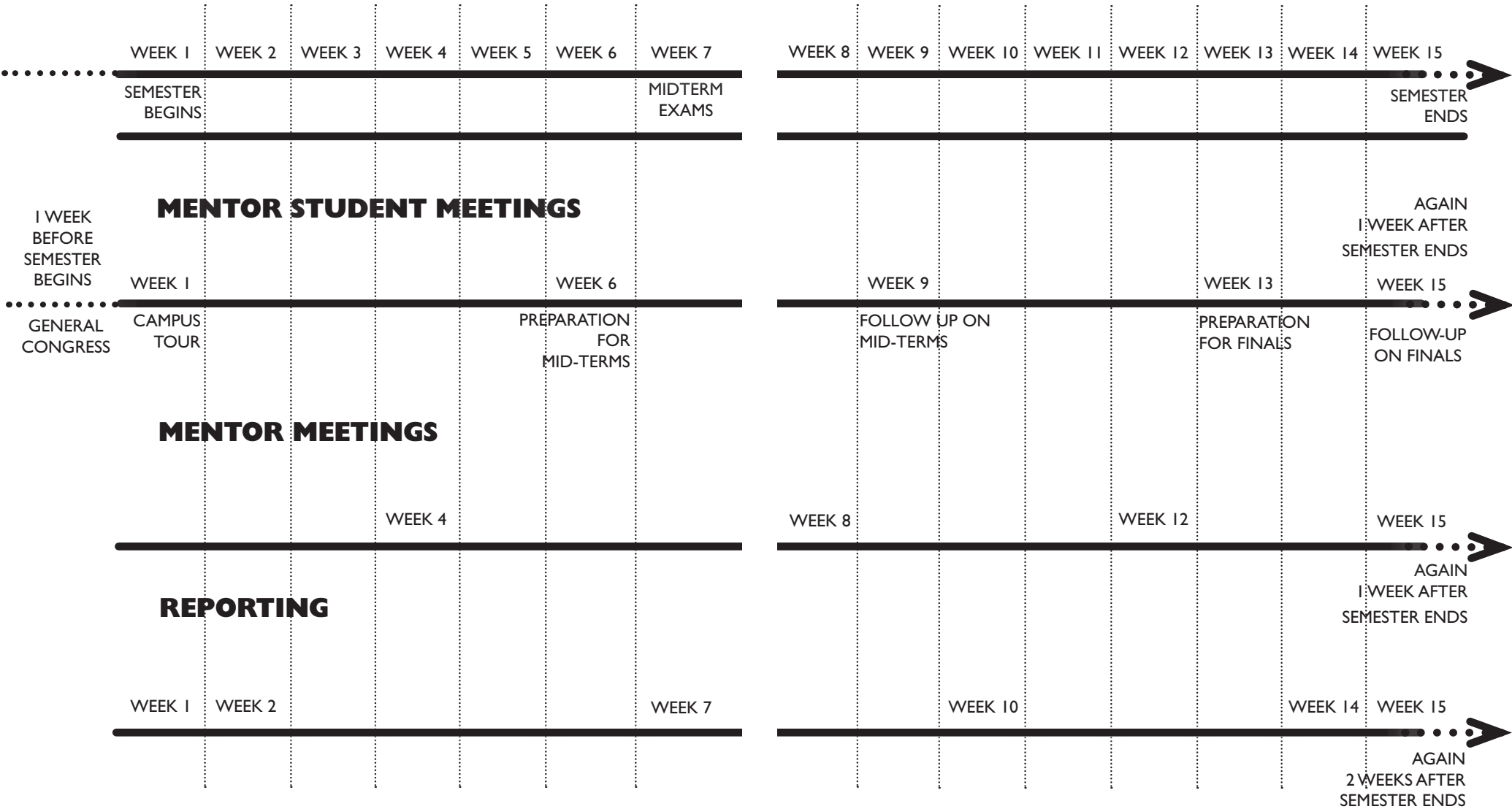
The Timeline and Meetings Guide are designed to help you and your student navigate your way through a successful semester.

The Timeline will give you an overview of mandatory meetings, (both one-on-one and group), mentor meetings (when you will meet with other CI Mentors for professional development and support workshops), suggested meetings and other activities. It will also tell you when you need to report to the Mentor Coordinator.

The Meetings Guide includes topics you will need to cover with your student during the mandatory meetings, questions you will need to ask and information you will need to report.

Timeline

MENTOR'S CALENDAR



Meetings Guide



> Meetings Guide: Meeting 1

GENERAL CONGRESS

What should we talk about?

Review the Contract and explain the reason for each point.

Review the Timeline and set precise dates for the meetings.

Establish satisfactory methods of communication and exchange contact and emergency contact details.

Invite the students to the campus tour.

Have the students met with a CI Academic Counselor and discussed enrollment, financial aid, class requirements and schedule?

Do the students have clearly defined goals and an effective strategy in place for the semester?

When:

Before semester starts

How:

Group meeting



> Meetings Guide: Meeting 2

CAMPUS TOUR

What parts of the campus should I take the students to?

Counseling office

Bursar's office

Scholarship office

One Stop office / Information office

Registrar

COPE office

Financial Aid Office

Academic Advisor

Computer Lab

Library

Bookstore

Health resources

When:

First week of the semester.

Actual date:



How:

Group meeting



PREP FOR MID-TERMS

What should we talk about?

Has the student missed two or more classes?

What is the student's grade average?

Is the student adequately prepared for mid-term exams?

Does the student need a tutor?


What is the student's level of confidence?

Does the student have clearly defined goals and an effective strategy in place for the rest of the semester?


Use the Troubleshooter, if necessary.

When:

One or two weeks before the mid-term exams

Actual date:.....

How:

One-on-one meeting 

FOLLOW-UP ON MID-TERMS

What should we talk about?

What were the student's mid-term results?

Has the student missed two or more classes?

Does the student need a tutor?


What is the student's level of confidence?

Does the student have clearly defined goals and an effective strategy in place for the rest of the semester?


Use the Troubleshooter, if necessary.

When:

One or two weeks after the mid-term exams

Actual date:.....

How:

One-on-one meeting 

PREP FOR FINALS

What should we talk about?

Has the student missed two or more classes?

What is the student's grade average?

Is the student adequately prepared for final exams?

Does the student need a tutor?


What is the student's level of confidence?

Does the student have clearly defined goals and an effective strategy in place for the rest of the semester?


Use the Troubleshooter, if necessary.

When:

One or two weeks before the final exams

Actual date:.....

How:

One-on-one meeting 

FOLLOW-UP ON FINALS

What should we talk about?

What were the student's final results?

Has the student met his/her goals for the semester?

Does the student need a tutor for next semester?

Is the student aware of curriculum requirements for the next semester?

What is the student's level of confidence?

Does the student have clearly defined academic goals and an effective strategy in place for the next semester?

Does the student have clearly defined financial goals and an effective strategy in place for the next semester?


Use the Troubleshooter, if necessary.

When:

One or two weeks after the final exams

Actual date:

How:

One-on-one meeting 

Trouble- shooter



This Troubleshooter was compiled from workshops that gathered the experiences of CI students and identified the most common problems they faced when beginning college and continuing their education. It includes some of the solutions they found to their own problems and some of their suggestions on how you might handle different situations.

We plan for each class of trainee mentors to add to the list. In this way, each of you will shape the program with your own experience and resourcefulness.

This Troubleshooter is organized in the following three categories:

Academic

Academic problems can often be traced to a lack of confidence and a feeling of being overwhelmed. When faced with the pressures of college work, students will sometimes lose focus on their goals. Changing personal circumstances can also create distractions. It is important that you remind the student of the academic goals he or she has. This will often put things in perspective.

Personal

Personal challenges are an inevitable part of a new student's life. They must balance their academic goals with family and financial demands as well as dealing with the pressures of the reentry process. As a mentor, you are living proof that what sometimes looks impossible is really attainable. Often, using your own experiences to support and encourage the student is the most effective approach.

Financial

Financial problems are the most common obstacles to college success for formerly incarcerated people. While almost all students are eligible for full Financial Aid in the early part of their college careers, long-term planning is needed to finance the completion of a degree. You can best help the student with information and encouragement to develop and implement such a plan.

>Troubleshooter: Academic Issues

Situation: The student is failing a course

Possible actions:

Refer them to a CI or campus tutor.

Set up a study group of students to help each other.

If all else fails:

Contact a CI Academic Counselor.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

>Troubleshooter: Academic Issues

Situation: The student is missing classes

Possible actions:

Make clear to the student the possible outcomes of missing classes.

Refocus their attention on their goals.

If all else fails:

Contact a CI Academic Counselor.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Academic Issues

Situation: The student is not doing the work

Possible actions:

Make clear to the student the possible outcomes of not completing their work.

Refocus their attention on their goals.

If all else fails:

Inform them of withdrawal procedures so that they preserve their financial aid and academic record.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Academic Issues

Situation: The student has a learning disability

Possible actions:

Help them contact the Office of Student Disabilities.

Help them get an up-to-date assessment/gather documentation.

Help them obtain a tutor or utilize learning centers (i.e. writing and math).

If all else fails:

Contact CI Mentor Coordinator.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Academic Issues

Situation: The student has had poor academic advisement

Possible actions:

Review course catalog with student.

Request change in advisor.

Help them speak to Department Chair or Dean.

If all else fails:

Contact CI Academic Counselor.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Academic Is-

Situation: The student needs assistance with basic academic skills

Possible actions:

Advise the student to take remedial courses.

Help them to obtain a tutor or utilize learning centers (i.e. writing and math).

If all else fails:

Contact CI Mentor Coordinator.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Academic Issues

Situation: The student has difficulty using a computer

Possible actions:

Help them sign up for college computer training or take free courses at public library.

If all else fails:

Contact CI Mentor Coordinator.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Academic Issues

Situation: The student has difficulty with research assignments

Possible actions:

Help them take research courses at school and/or at the public library.

Help them obtain a tutor.

Refer them to books and websites on research.

If all else fails:

Contact CI Mentor Coordinator.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has trouble balancing the demands of a job with those of school

Possible actions:

Focus the student on what is sustainable financially and achievable academically. This can mean scheduling evening classes, taking fewer classes, working different hours or speaking with a work supervisor about academic goals.

Help the student consider all of the available options.

If all else fails:

Contact a CI Academic Counselor.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has parole issues

Possible actions:

Encourage the student to establish a good rapport with their Parole Officer.

Help the student get their Parole Officer involved in the college process so that they become supportive.

Advise the student not to take courses on dates scheduled with their Parole Officer.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has trouble managing time

Possible actions:

Refer the student to on-campus time management and study skills programs. These are usually provided by an office of academic counseling.

Provide the student with a notebook, day planner and calendar.

Create reminders (use cell phone, email).

Create peer reminder group.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has no personal space to study

Possible actions:

Refer the student to the library on campus.

Refer them to a public space (library, coffee shop, bookstore).

Encourage them to join a study group.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has difficulty setting goals (i.e. major, graduating)

Possible actions:

Help them create a goal sheet

Help the student seek advisement (peer and college advisor).

If all else fails:

Contact CI Mentor Coordinator.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has difficulty prioritizing (i.e. registration, assignments)

Possible actions:

Assist the student with creating a calendar, assignment deadline and checklist.

Create reminders (use cell phone, email).

Create a peer reminder group.

If all else fails:

Contact CI Mentor Coordinator.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has housing issues

Possible actions:

Depending on the situation, refer the student to transitional housing providers (see Resources Map), on-campus housing services and lists or the New York City Housing Authority.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has medical issues

Possible actions:

Depending on the situation, refer the student to the New York State Department of Health for Medicaid or on-campus medical or health centers.

Inform the student of their withdrawal options if they are unable to continue at college.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student is using or facing a relapse of substance abuse

Possible actions:

Contact CI Mentor Coordinator.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student resides in an area with easy access to drugs/alcohol

Possible actions:

Encourage them to seek counseling.

Encourage a buddy system.

Encourage them to engage in extracurricular activities/social groups.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has transportation issues (i.e. distance, time)

Possible actions:

Refer them to the COPE office.

Encourage alternative methods of transportation (bike riding, car pooling).

Help them reconsider their school choice.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student is losing motivation

Possible actions:

Focus the student on their academic goals.

Help the student set achievable short- and mid-term length goals.

Involve the student in group activities whenever possible. If you are working with one or more students on your campus, enable the group to support each other.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student is fearful

Possible actions:

- Encourage the student to seek counseling.
- Disclose with the purpose of forming a bond.
- Remind them of their supports.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has low self esteem

Possible actions:

- Encourage them to seek counseling.
- Acknowledge their small successes.
- Encourage them to engage in extracurricular activities/social groups.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has trouble dealing with change

Possible actions:

Encourage them to seek counseling.

Disclose with the purpose of forming a bond.

Encourage them to engage in extracurricular activities/social groups.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has trouble dealing with feelings in relationships

Possible actions:

Encourage them to seek counseling.

Encourage a journal.

Encourage them to engage in extracurricular activities/social groups.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has trouble dealing with feelings around family obligations

Possible actions:

Encourage them to seek counseling.

Help them research agencies for family services.

Disclose with the purpose of forming a bond.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student lacks access to child care

Possible actions:

Refer the student to school resources.

Help them research agencies (i.e. 311).



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student is under stress

Possible actions:

Encourage them to seek counseling.

Encourage them to practice meditation and relaxation techniques and/or exercise.

If all else fails:

Contact CI Mentor Coordinator.



> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has trouble asking for help

Possible actions:

Let the student know they can make mistakes and still succeed.

Focus on the student's self-empowerment, providing the necessary resources for them to advocate on their own behalf.

Encourage the student and remind them that just being in school is already an achievement. Let them know they are doing the right thing.

Serve as an advocate for the student.

Work with them on communication skills.



> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has trouble dealing with others making sacrifices for them

Possible actions:

Encourage them to seek counseling.

Disclose with the purpose of forming a bond.

Encourage them to engage in extracurricular activities/social groups.



.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has trouble dealing with making sacrifices

Possible actions:

Encourage them to seek counseling.

Disclose with the purpose of forming a bond.

Encourage them to engage in extracurricular activities/social groups.



.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student is unaware of his or her strengths and weaknesses

Possible actions:

Research activities to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Encourage them to seek counseling.

Encourage them to diversify their electives.

If all else fails:

Contact CI Mentor Coordinator.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student needs a job or a change of job

Possible actions:

Encourage volunteer work in the field the student is studying to gain experience and build relationships in those circles.

Refer the student to the CI Newsletter for job postings.

Refer the student to their department head to find out about internships.

Find out if the student qualifies for Work-study.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has trouble socially in a college environment

Possible actions:

Refocus the student on their academic goals.

Help the student clarify their motivation for going to college and put their social anxieties in perspective.

Encourage the student's involvement in group activities.

Find ways to accompany the student on campus.

Encourage them to talk to a college counselor.

Encourage them to talk with someone in their support network (i.e. sponsor, family, sibling, spouse).



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has an aggressive attitude towards professors/colleagues

Possible actions:

Encourage the student's involvement in group activities.

Remind the student of their goals for being in school and make them aware that they are here to learn from their professors and colleagues.

Encourage them to participate in soft-skills training.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student is battling peer pressure

Possible actions:

Encourage them to seek counseling.

Disclose with the purpose of forming a bond.

Encourage them to engage in extracurricular activities/social groups.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has trouble dealing with stereotypes

Possible actions:

Role playing.

Encourage them to seek counseling.

Disclose with the purpose of forming a bond.

Encourage them to engage in extracurricular activities/social groups.

Remind them of their support network.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Personal Issues

Situation: The student has trouble dealing with institutional ignorance

Possible actions:

Encourage communication with the appropriate person (i.e. school staff).

Serve as an intermediary.

If all else fails:

Contact CI Mentor Coordinator.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Financial Issues

Situation: The student is not eligible for full Financial Aid

Possible actions:

Refer the student to scholarship resources both on campus and online. Databases such as Fastweb can be very useful and most campuses hold scholarship workshops early in each semester.

Refer the student to student loan resources on campus, explaining that these loans will need to be paid back.

Make the student aware of the need to save money, plan, and financially prepare for following semesters.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Financial Issues

Situation: The student is unable to pay for the cost of tuition, books and supplies

Possible actions:

Help them research available funding sources (i.e. scholarships, stipends, paid internships, Work-study)

Help them search internet options for cheap books.

Help them seek employment.

Refer them to the COPE office.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

> Troubleshooter: Financial Issues

Situation: The student is unable to afford meals

Possible actions:

Help them research soup kitchens/pantries.

Encourage the student to prepare meals in advance.

See if student qualifies for food stamps.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....