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**2022-2023**  
**Mentee Story Book**

**NYU Alumni**  
**Executive**  
**Mentor Program**

“I’m stuck in the dark but you’re my flashlight  
You’re getting me through the night”

--Flashlight

## Foreword

2022-2023 marks the 9th year of the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program, an annual flagship program of alumni-student mentorship hosted by the NYU Global Alumni Programs and NYU Shanghai Center for Career Development (CCD). Since 2014, the program has built a vibrant community that recognizes our alumni's remarkable achievements while helping our current NYU Shanghai undergraduates receive real-world information, experience, and perspectives as well as professional guidance on navigating future careers.

At the end of this year's program, we are now proudly publishing our annual mentee storybook featuring learnings and reflections from the aspiring 2022-2023 cohort. In the past year, we had the opportunity to connect 37 bright NYU Shanghai sophomores who proved themselves through rigorous selection to 39 esteemed NYU alumni mentors from various industries and sectors. This newly published storybook stands as a testament to their close interactions, inspiring dialogues, and invaluable mentorship experiences that transpired. The pages comprise our mentees' individual narratives and thoughtful reflections encapsulating their journey in the past year while also casting a hopeful gaze toward the future continuation of mentorship and friendship.

As the 2022-2023 program draws to a successful close, we extend our heartfelt appreciation and deepest gratitude to our esteemed alumni mentors. Their unwavering commitment, service-oriented mindset, and genuine concern for the development of emerging NYU-educated professionals have been truly commendable. We would also like to extend our equal gratitude to the dedicated organizers of the program, the NYU Global Alumni Programs and the NYU Shanghai Center for Career Development, for their consistent support, exemplary work ethics, and sincere concern for student development. We are also deeply appreciative of the school leadership, without whose instrumental support the program would not have been possible. At last, we would like to recognize our student volunteers' great service and fellow mentees' outstanding performances.

With best wishes, looking forward to future reunions!

Sincerely,  
Kevin Daokai Liu  
Mentee Student Leader



## Foreword

Precisely one year ago, as a sophomore at NYU Shanghai, not only was I selected to be paired with my first-choice mentor for the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program but was also bestowed with being one of the program's student leaders. It is all thanks to the program, that I fortunately had the honor of meeting my mentor, Joshua Fu. I soon realized he was someone whose interests, experiences, personality, career path, and manner of thinking quite aligned and resembled my own. Imagine having a future version of yourself in an alternative dimension, except that you are friends with them, and can communicate with them. I looked up to him, admired him, learnt a lot from him and consulted him in the deep, shallows hurdles of my journey. And he was always there to appreciate, guide, instruct and advise me.

For NYU Shanghai students the sophomore year truly is an essential and tough period requiring mature decision-making: from deciding your major, to planning out your study away, to searching for internships. For me personally, it was even more so, in the virtue of the fact that after covid it was my first semester in-person, and my first time away from home. Joshua supported me through my thick and thin, not just morally or intellectually, but also emotionally and spiritually.

And so, owing to my personal experience as a mentee, and I am sure there exist many more successful mentee stories around me, I think the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program is a wonderful opportunity for students to connect with experienced alumni, where the alumni also get a chance to give back to the community. The tradition facilitates much-needed growth in students and allows them to access resources, network, and lay out a clearly planned path for themselves.

Sincerely,  
Muhammad Saffi Ullah  
Mentee Student Leader



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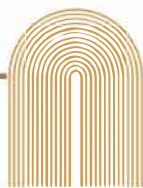
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## Mentee: Loki(Yao) Ye Mentor: Wayne Lee



### 1. How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

Isaac Newton once famously said, "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." This quote has always resonated with me, especially after working with my mentor Wayne Lee, a seasoned professional in the global investment banking sector for over a decade. Two meetings with Wayne were enough to make me feel like I was standing on the shoulders of a giant, as he possesses a wealth of knowledge and experience in the industry.

Wayne is not only a mentor to me, but he has become a trusted friend with whom I can discuss matters of importance. He is always willing to share his knowledge and insights, and his constructive feedback on my academic and career planning has helped me orient my interests and strengths. He has an exceptional ability to communicate and listen; he takes the time to understand my situation and concerns.

Wayne's insights and judgment on social development and the international arena are as valuable as his experience in the finance industry. His comprehensive and profound understanding of the business world has helped me broaden my perspectives on various aspects of the industry. Wayne's guidance has been instrumental in shaping my professional and personal growth, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have him as my mentor and friend.

### 2. What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

**Having a global perspective is crucial in today's interconnected world, and this is one of the most valuable lessons that my mentor Wayne has taught me.**

Wayne emphasized the importance of understanding and maneuvering different cultures, markets, and political landscapes to succeed in any industry. He has encouraged me to develop a broad worldview by keeping up with current trends and seizing opportunities to study as well as work abroad so as to derive a better self-assessment.



**Moreover, Wayne has also highlighted the significance of cultivating fundamental knowledge and methodology during undergraduate studies.**

He stresses the value of having a solid financial accounting and law foundation, as they are critical in any business career. While legal education grants a better understanding of government policies, industry regulations, and market trends, which can help me form legal boundaries and enhance market valuation, knowledge of statistics and accounting can enable me to read financial statements accurately and identify business issues with ease and precision.

Additionally, Wayne has stressed the value of cumulating diverse experiences, such as internships and professional training opportunities. He has encouraged me to welcome new challenges and therefore develop a wide range of skills and competencies. Wayne has also elaborated on the importance of networking and relationship-building within the industry, which can lead to new opportunities and professional potential.

### 3. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

Before joining this program, I believed that continuing my education by advancing to a graduate program was the best practical path going forward. However, conversations with my mentor Wayne caused me to reevaluate this perspective. Wayne strongly emphasized the alternative of gaining industry experience before pursuing any higher education. **He explained that while undergraduate studies provided a foundational knowledge base and methodological skills, the industry tends to demand a different set of skills, such as the ability to achieve an objective that maintains sufficient flexibility.** Thus, Wayne recommended that I gain work experience after graduation, which may be more valuable to my career ambitions than immediately pursuing a graduate program. Through Wayne's guidance, I also discovered the potential value of an MBA program. While he recommended that I think twice before immediately pursuing a graduate program, he did suggest that I consider an MBA after gaining work experience if running a business is of career interest. The MBA program could provide me with managerial capabilities while fostering peer connections.

My perspective on what steps to take after graduation has significantly changed. Rather than prioritizing further academic pursuits, I realized the importance of obtaining practical experience and establishing a solid foundation in the industry before pursuing additional academic programs. Thanks to Wayne's mentorship, I feel more confident in navigating my career path and am excited about the possibilities ahead.



**Mentee: Mu Zhong**  
**Mentor: Felicia Li**

**1. What were your goals of taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?**

My goal was to get life advice – not just industry knowledge and how to find an internship, but to go deep into “who I am” and how to find lifelong passion.

I’m really thankful to Felicia, as she helps me know myself, and gives me inspiration into what I can do in the long run to live a life that brings the most joy (for me, the answer now is to live a life that allows me to do what I truly believe). My goals are all achieved!



**2. What advice did you take from your mentor and put into practice since your first meeting? How did it go? What changes did you see in yourself by taking the advice?**

**My biggest takeaway is to pay more attention to things that are important but not that urgent.** For me, the urgent things include the exams and homework in my academic life, while the important thing (in terms of career) is finding an internship and thinking about my career path. We are often fully occupied by urgent things and procrastinate doing things that are important.

**The biggest change in me is I’ve stopped procrastinating and started doing things that are truly important immediately.** Through this process, I gradually know more about myself and see what’s hidden under my procrastination. Dealing with academic papers and exams is what I’ve been practicing for the past 19 years, but I’m still a newbie in internship and career – I’m fear of this unfamiliarity and uncertainty, so I keep putting it off. The solution is then simple: dispel fear by facing it. You just need to practice more often.

**3. How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?**

From my perspective, my mentor Felicia is a decisive and insightful person.

“Decisive” means my mentor makes decisions quickly, and has great execution ability. **Don’t over-hesitate on the thinking process – once you have a goal in mind, just go for it.** You can adjust your goal after you make some trials and errors, but don’t spend too much time overthinking before you make any actions.

“Insightful” focuses on my mentor’s ability to see through a person (“识人”). When talking to her, I always felt I am fully understood by her. She knows me not from the surface, but deep underneath – she knows my “soul” and recognizes me as a full person. I really cherish this “spiritual” connection.

Thank you Felicia!

**Mentee: Yunhe Zhang**  
**Mentor: Danny Bao**



**1. Why did you choose to study MBA instead of continuing your high-salary job?**

At that time, I was indeed doing a good job. But my mentor at that time told me that if I want to pursue something higher, I should gain more knowledge. So, she encouraged me to study MBA. Besides, as for me, I think we should learn new things as much as we can when we are young. Now looking back on my life, I regret that I didn't get a PhD when I was young. And now it's too late for me to do that and it's worthless now. **I also want to encourage you to study as much as possible at your study age.**

**2. How was your MBA life at that time?**

Actually, at that time I was poor, and the tuition was very expensive for me. I insisted on studying, while I was still working after class. But I still learned a lot from that experience. And it was at that time I wanted to start up my own entrepreneurship. **You will come up with many new ideas when you are in a new environment. So, I encourage you to expose yourself to a new environment.** Nowadays, I am learning Chinese I Ching. I Ching belongs to Eastern science. It actually is a record of the regularity of nature, and it can indeed explain a lot of things. I originally learned Math and in MBA I learned Finance. This is not a coincidence.

**3. I also want to land a job in Finance. But nowadays it is very “卷”. Do you have any suggestions for us students who are studying Finance?**

Yes. I agree that it is far more competitive than when I was looking for a job. Nowadays almost everybody wants to join IBD or the top companies, but the fact is that most of them don't know what they really want. They just follow each other's path. However, you should bear in mind that everyone is unique, you must find your own uniqueness and even make a little change so that you can stand out from others. Now most students have a graduate degree, which makes it less worthwhile. **My suggestion is you can consider pursuing a PhD. The first reason is that you can get an abundant scholarship which makes it a costless choice. Secondly, you can have more choices of your career paths.** For example, you can choose to go to university and be a professor. The biggest benefit is that you can have lots of free time under your own control. Thirdly, after graduation, you can more easily get a high position and a faster promotion.







**Mentee: Zijin Su**  
**Mentor: Tony (Ang) Zhu**

**1. What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?**

**From my mentor, I learned the importance of taking ownership of my professional growth and being proactive in seeking out opportunities.**

This is a valuable lesson that I believe other students can benefit from hearing as well. Rather than waiting for opportunities to come their way, students should actively seek mentorship, engage in networking, and pursue additional learning experiences.

Taking ownership of one's growth involves setting ambitious goals, seeking feedback, and continuously pushing oneself outside of their comfort zone. By demonstrating a commitment to personal and professional development, students can stand out in a competitive job market and position themselves for success in the financial industry.



**2. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?**

**One perspective that I reevaluated and changed over the course of the program is the importance of building a strong network and seeking support from peers in the same industry.**

Initially, I was solely focused on my own journey and career aspirations, believing that success in the financial industry was primarily an individual pursuit. However, through interactions with my mentor and fellow interns, I realized the power of collaboration and the mutual benefits of supporting each other.

Witnessing the career development and academic achievements of my peers in the financial industry left a deep impression on me. It made me realize that we are not competitors but rather allies who can learn from and uplift each other. Instead of solely viewing my peers as potential rivals, I began to cultivate relationships and engage in meaningful discussions with them. This shift in perspective allowed me to tap into a collective pool of knowledge, insights, and experiences that greatly enriched my understanding of the industry.

**3. What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?**

**One key takeaway that is easily actionable and has had a significant impact on me is the importance of embracing continuous learning.**

My mentor emphasized the need to stay updated with industry trends, regulations, and technological advancements. I realized that the financial industry is ever-evolving, and to thrive in this dynamic environment, I must commit to lifelong learning.

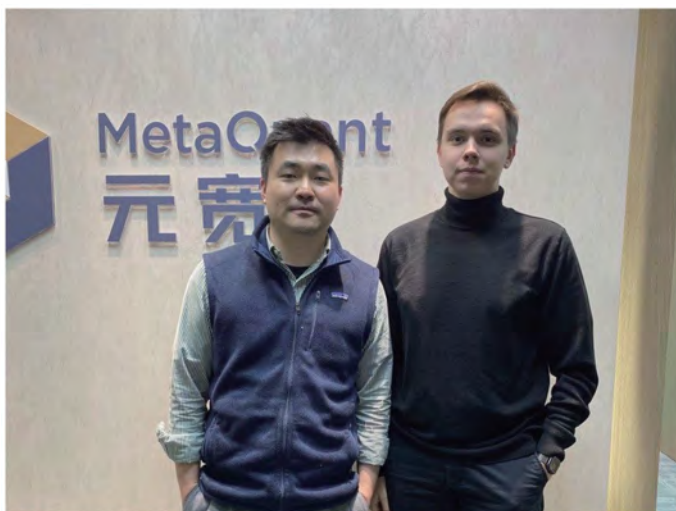
The actionable step I took was to dedicate regular time to read financial publications, research reports, and industry blogs. This commitment to ongoing education has not only expanded my knowledge but has also allowed me to engage in meaningful conversations and contribute more effectively to my work. It has empowered me to stay informed about market changes, identify emerging opportunities, and make informed decisions.



**Mentee: Yan Konichshev**  
**Mentor: Guoyao Wu**

**1. How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?**

My mentor, Mr. Wu, is an exceptional individual who is an epitome of diligence and commitment. Witnessing his tireless efforts to build and sustain his own business amidst the backdrop of a global economic crisis has instilled in me a profound admiration. In our recent sessions, I discovered that he often remains the last person in his office, making immense sacrifices in his pursuit of improving his lifelong venture. I hold the utmost respect for Mr. Wu and draw inspiration from his dedication, especially during moments of personal uncertainty.



**2. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?**

I always thought that it is excessively easy for companies in the financial industry to make money these days. Through my conversations with my mentor, Mr. Wu, I understood that even though it might be the case, **normally it takes a lot of time and effort to start making something out of the knowledge and skills one learned throughout their education.** In addition to that, I believe that Mr. Wu helped me to reevaluate my perspective on jobs in this industry. Some people need to witness the impact of their job, and it is crucial for them to do so. However, in the financial industry, and especially in quantitative trading it might not be the case, as companies in the industry are mainly competing with each other, and the market itself, which makes personal input of the specific individual almost negligible. **Understanding this fundamental aspect before embarking on a journey toward success is paramount, as life satisfaction is inherently linked to overall performance.**

**3. What were your goals of taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?**

At the beginning of the academic year, I was incredibly lost. I didn't really know what exactly I wanted to do after graduation. After completing this program, I can confidently say that all that uncertainty I had is now gone. My conversations with my mentor helped to shape a great understanding of what the fintech industry is all about. Thus, I am now hoping and doing my best to get myself into companies related to financial technology. I believe that my main goals were to explore and understand how do the jobs in the fintech industry look like, and what are the expectations from the potential workers in those companies.



**Mentee: Ziqi Tang**  
**Mentor: Lei Yao**

**1. I applied to several financial industry companies but struggled during the interview process and got passed over. How can I navigate the challenges of seeking internships at top companies, such as a lack of confidence? How can I build my confidence when applying to top companies?**

It's common to feel intimidated when applying to internships at top companies, especially when you lack experience. It's normal to face challenges while applying to these companies. Do not give up and continue to apply. Furthermore, do not underestimate yourself and try to focus on building your confidence.

**One way to build confidence is to practice mock interviews with friends or career advisors.** The more you practice, the more comfortable you become in interviews. You can also work on developing your skills through relevant courses and certifications. There are many free online courses and certifications that you can take to improve your knowledge and skills.

**2. How can I gain knowledge about the finance industry?**

As a student interested in the finance industry, it's crucial to have a strong foundation of knowledge about the industry. I suggest you attend industry events and information sessions to gain knowledge. However, it's also important to focus on what interests you.



that you have an interest in will help you learn more about the industry and potentially find a path that you're passionate about. Moreover, gaining knowledge about the industry doesn't have to be limited to formal learning opportunities. You can also read books, watch documentaries, and follow industry leaders on social media to stay up-to-date with the latest trends.

**3. How long should I intern for and how can I make the most of the internship experience?**

The duration of an internship is not as important as the quality of the experience. You should focus on finding an internship that aligns with your interests and provides valuable experience. According to our mentor, the length of the internship should not be a primary concern.

If you're looking to maximize your learning experience, consider interning for an extended period. Interning for more than one semester can give you a chance to take on more significant responsibilities and learn more about the industry. However, if you're unable to intern for an extended period, you can still make the most of your time by being proactive and seeking out new opportunities to learn and grow. Additionally, my mentor emphasizes the importance of pursuing a career in a field that aligns with my interests and strengths rather than solely focusing on a high-paying job. A fulfilling career is not just about earning a high income, but also about making a positive impact in the industry and achieving personal growth.

**In conclusion, seeking internships can be a challenging experience, but with the right mindset and approach, I can overcome these challenges.** Building my confidence, gaining knowledge, and focusing on the quality of your internship experience are all key components of a successful internship journey. I appreciate the opportunity to get insights from such a smart and elegant lady, hope we can keep in touch in the future!

**Mentee: Junyi Tu**  
**Mentor: Theodore (Teddy) Low**



**1. As a sophomore student, what do you suggest I do or focus on currently in college?**

**The first I would suggest you do is explore your interest.** You can take part in a variety of school activities and join some clubs. You can take multiple classes to explore different fields of knowledge. The second thing is to enjoy yourself. College is one of the most beautiful periods in your life. **Studying aside, try learning something new, and even traveling-study abroad exchange around the world.**

**2. I find it hard to choose a major, whether studying Mathematics or Business and Finance.**

You should follow your own interests. For example, if you really prefer Mathematics to Business and Finance, you should definitely study Math.

The consideration of salary and employment prospects is still far away from you. If these two majors seem equally interesting to you, I would recommend you study Math to get some analytical skills. Math is more basic and practical and useful in all fields.



**3. I find some of my friends are studying FRM. Is it necessary for college students to get some certifications like FRM?**

Unless you have a strong interest in FRM, I don't think it is of top priority.

Most of my friends in the finance industry do not have this FRM certification except for those whose job is specifically financial risk control. I would suggest you use the time doing more internships to find your own interests and gain some real-life experiences. Other meaningful more well rounded certifications are CPA, CFA.

**4. I am always wondering which one is better, finding a job and working for several years after graduation or going to graduate school immediately?**

**I would suggest you work for several years after graduation and gain some real-life experience.** From grade school till college graduation – you would have been studying in school for about 20 years.

Most of the knowledge you would have obtained is from books which is a great foundation, but would not be fully reflective of real life/skills you need to have a successful career.

I would recommend you first choose an industry that you are interested in, and then gain a basic understanding of it as well as how companies in that industry operate.

While you should be curious in selecting industries, do keep in mind that there are sunrise industries like new energy and renewables and sunset traditional industries e.g. tobacco etc.

After having some real-life experiences, I think you can then return to graduate school to further your knowledge.



## Mentee: Vraig De Leon Mentor: Alfred Wong



I had the honor to become a mentee of Mr. Alfred Wong, NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program co-chair and Stern MBA '94, and met him twice. We first met virtually while I was in Shanghai and he was in Hong Kong. We then met in person in Manila and had a get-together drink during the winter break.

Mr. Wong is the president of Chaico Development (HK) Ltd. and thoroughly understands the financial and other industries. Same as me, he also has deep ties with the Philippines as he spent his undergraduate in Manila and can speak Tagalog. We talked about career opportunities, the mistakes of young professionals, the economy of the Philippines, and love.



### 1. What led up to your current career in this industry?

I tried different careers and changed when I think it doesn't fit me well. Specifically, I started with three different jobs before working in Finance. I realized that I wanted to transition my career into the financial industry when I was working in marketing and attended Stern MBA. **I also think that it is worth considering that you should identify the pond or the environment you are in and determine if it is a small pond or a big pond. For me, I think that being a big fish in a small pond is way better than being a small fish in a big pond.**

### 2. How did you excel in your job and have a successful career?

I work hard and build up on my strengths. I don't think there is someone that doesn't work hard and succeed. It is always necessary to work hard to achieve your goals. It is also much easier to succeed if you're the first in certain aspects. In my generation, there are not many students graduating from college, and having a bachelor's degree alone would give you an edge. If you're one of the first people who got a bachelor's degree in my generation, you will get a huge advantage. However, even having a master's degree these days is becoming an entry requirement to some extent. So, becoming first and having a step ahead of other people will give you a tremendous advantage.

### 3. (After talking about trusting people and making decisions on personal relationships, my mentor and I talked about love.) Given your hectic schedule and professional responsibility, how did you know it is time to marry and settle with your current wife? How did you know that she is the one?

When I and my current wife were still dating, I realized that my current wife is the one that I would like to take care of for the rest of my life. I felt that she is more important than my self-interests. I realized that I am ready to put her on top of my priorities instead of myself. I met a lot of women but my current wife only made me experience those feelings. I'm grateful that I met her.

### Mentee: Ella Goh Mentor: Crystal Gao



For this year's NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program, I had the privilege of being mentored by Crystal Gao, Stern' 00. I had the opportunity to visit Crystal's office and had a coffee chat over some Christmas cookies. Crystal is currently the Chief Financial Officer of Lightspeed China Partners, a leading Chinese venture capital firm focusing on early-stage investments. Previously, she spent 19 years in McKinsey & Company, and was the Finance Director for the Greater China region. As a student who aspires to walk the same path as her in the future, I managed to gain new perspectives and insights into the industry. Here were some of the questions I asked during our first meeting :

#### 1. What type of candidates stand out during the interview process for entering management consulting roles?

I've often wondered if there were any other applicants that didn't match the stereotype of a consultant in an interview setting—not having a great GPA or an impressive portfolio. How exactly does one stand out? Crystal noted that those who stood out always had a compelling narrative. They demonstrated persistence and perseverance in their day-to-day actions, whether it was purposefully forsaking their GPA in order to launch a business or recover from an illness. Thinking of the kind of colleagues you'd want while competing in a case competition—someone with a strong sense of duty, passion, and desire to stick by you through the project's highs and lows—was a really helpful analogy for me.

#### 2. What are the types of people who last in the consulting industry for the long-run?

Crystal mentioned that there are two common motivations of people who enter the consulting industry. Firstly, there are those that enter because they aren't sure which industry to go into and want to explore. Secondly, those who are attracted by the industry's reputation and the financial rewards.

**The people who eventually stay in the industry till the most senior positions are people who are truly passionate about the subject matter and enjoy the intellectual stimulation from this line of work.** They must have the mental and physical fortitude to keep up with the rigorous demands of every single project that is entrusted to them.

#### 3. How did your years in management consulting help you when switching to the venture capital industry?

Crystal shared that management consultants are good at problem-solving, helping clients to define issues well and to find the right solutions. The venture capital sector differs in that you are personally accountable for your client's funds and are responsible for selecting the "projects" yourself. You need to be able to assess a person's character in the venture capital industry, finding the best entrepreneurs for the dream project, as your results depend on your judgment. Therefore, her years of consulting expertise working with clients of all shapes and sizes helped her refine her abilities to assess a person's character.



## Mentee: Yiling Cao Mentor: Adam Xu



As part of this year's NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program, I had the honor of having Adam Xu, Stern' 05, as my mentor. Due to the covid and busy schedule of both of us, Adam and I had an online meeting as our first meeting. And we plan to have our second meeting in person in the upcoming spring. Adam Xu is a Venture Leader for McKinsey Greater China's business development acceleration practice. He led the Omni channel transformation service line. Professionally he has focused on helping clients to grow in China via developing growth roadmap and undertaking sales and channel growth transformation both online and offline. Before McKinsey, he spent 12 years at Booz Allen Hamilton which was acquired by PwC and became Strategy&. His last role at Strategy& was leading its consumer and retail practice. The kickoff session with the other NYU alumni also provided a great learning environment for me to get perspectives other than Adam's on the topics we discussed. Here were some of the Q&A we covered during our first meeting:

**1. Currently, I am a sophomore double majoring mathematics and data science and want to pursue a job in the field of finance. But lots of my friends choose to major in business and finance as their undergraduate major. So, I feel kind of lost about my future career path. Would you please share some insights with you as an example since I do not have a clear mind map of a good career path?**



**You need to be confident of your own choice because every road leads to Rome.** I can share my own experience with you as a reference. My undergraduate degree is international finance at Fudan University, and my first job was working in a merchant bank in the Netherlands as a credit analyst. As a venture leader of McKinsey, I currently provide management consulting. After four years of employment, I took the MBA program at NYU Stern and started working in the management consulting field. I continued because I adore the management consulting industry and I am a perfect fit for it. So a very key point for you to pay attention to is that, never be strongly affected by others' choice since everyone is different. Once you make up your mind, just do it, and stick to it!

**2. I am curious about the daily routine of consulting. I've heard that the work in the field of consulting is very tough. What has sustained you in this field for a long time and has kept you going so far?**

As a consultant, my days are spent working on client projects. McKinsey is very busy and the daily conference calls don't end until 10-11pm. Although the day is busy and there are many challenging issues such as: how to solve the client's problems, how to attract the most competent team and how to develop future clients, what I enjoy most about management consulting is the sense of achievement I get from facing new problems with new clients and solving problems for them, which has motivated me to keep going until now. My previous professional experience has helped me most in this role: the value of customer service, curiosity for knowledge and problem solving, and good study work life balance habits. **One thing I would like to tell you before entering this field is that Curiosity is the original source of power to keep you going in consulting - do what you like.**



### Mentee: Jerry Tao Mentor: Alan Li

As a participant in this year's NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program, I am honored to have Alan Li as my mentor.

Alan is a 2006 graduate of NYU Stern. He is currently based in Hong Kong and is the Vice-President of the NYU Alumni Club in Hong Kong. He has extensive experience in both Investor Relations and Financial Communications. Alan currently works as the Head of Investor Relations for The Bank of East Asia (BEA).

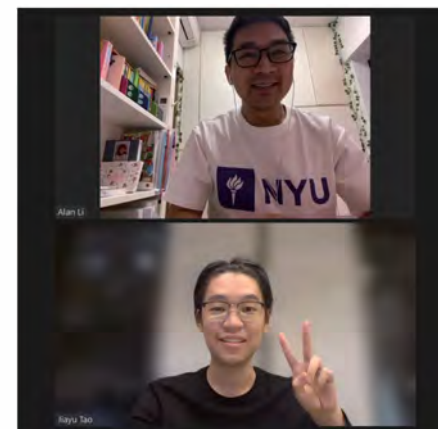
My meeting with Alan was done through zoom. Although I was not able to meet him offline, Alan was still very welcoming and I learned a lot from the chat. I hope to have the opportunity to talk with Alan offline next year.

#### 1. Why did you choose to go to NYU? How was your experience at NYU? What were your memorable experiences at NYU?

I didn't go to NYU for my MBA as soon as I graduated from UW-Madison. I had an opportunity to work at Illinois at the time. The company there offered a better salary as well. But I decided I wanted to explore the big city of New York to learn more. I worked in the business technology consulting industry in New York for 5 years first. Naturally, I wanted to go to NYU to further my studies. Part of the reason was because my girlfriend was in New York at that time. When I was studying at NYU, I felt more free. Most of the time, my classmates went to school and had internships at the same time. NYU provides a social circle and the alumni system is very strong, just like we met through this program. I've been in this program for many years. I also really enjoy the opportunity to interact with NYU Shanghai students.

#### 2. What previous experiences have helped you most in your career?

I think the most important thing is two things. First I would say Passive income is really important. For example, I gave up the opportunity to work at Illinois, but at the same time the experience of working in a big city has opened my eyes more. **My whole career has been one of constant exploration. I've changed jobs quite a few times and I've continued to make myself better. So I think we just keep buying experiences with short-term unknowns.** These experiences have the potential to give us greater passive income in the future, but of course, we need to have the habit of saving money to support our choices. **The cost of making choices will be greater as we get older.** I recently chose to jump from Li & Fung to BEA because I wanted to combine the skills I had developed from my previous experiences. It also required my savings to act as a safety net, giving me the possibility to weigh the long-term benefits of the jobs.





**Mentee: Kaiwen Hu**  
**Mentor: Zhen Ji**



**1. What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?**

**Keep asking yourself what your dream lifestyle is and what career you like.**

It is not a difficult task, but the most difficult part is to maintain such consciousness every day or even moment because it won't affect your life immediately; Actually, you may not see any influence on you for years or decades. Just like one day you decide to go on a diet, it's pretty easy to do it for several days or weeks, but once your passion is down or you face some harsh things in life, it's hard to keep yourself conscious about your goal. It is the same thing as staying conscious about your life goal. I'm struggling with it as expected, but I will keep reminding myself about it.

**2. How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?**

Mr. Ji Zhen, my mentor, is a helpful gentleman with intelligence and concentration. After meeting with him and chatting with him several times, I find that he is always conscious about what he is doing, what's his goal for today and what's his goal for the future. I learned a lot from him, including what the current finance industry and economic status are, what may be the future trend, as well as the way to see things happen to us and how to deal with them. I always feel that it's too good to be true that I can sit opposite a person like him and ask him abstract or even foolish questions to him. I appreciate the time and support from Mr. Ji Zhen and also the opportunity offered by the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program!



**3. Is there something you did not expect before taking part in this program, but actually benefited you or left a deep impression on you?**

Yes. I didn't expect that I can learn so much from Mr. Ji Zhen. His words changed my mindset. During our third meeting, I shared my confusion about my future career planning, especially about going to graduate school or getting a job after graduation. Instead of answering me, Mr. Ji asks this question back to me because it depends on what I want to do and what I want to become in the future.

Suddenly I find that although I have been pursuing the answer to this question for years and asked many people about it, I didn't make it clear what's my future goal. In this case, Mr. Ji said that it's pretty normal that college students do not dig deep into this question, but you have to start thinking about it. He told me that I am no longer a middle school student whose only task is to study.

As a sophomore, I have only two years left to make the final decision, so this should be a priority for me. I have to ask myself this question every day until I find the right answer. Of course, it is not to say that I can leave my academic life alone and only focus on finding my dream job or career. I have to maintain good academic standing to make sure that I'm eligible for most of the possible paths.

I raised the concern that it's hard to be conscious every day. In most situations, I'm either trapped in academic pressure or just don't want to do anything except play. Mr. Ji replied that it is the reason why only a few people are happy with their job. Some people even don't get a desirable job in their forties or fifties. But those who can find it would be much happier than those who do not. **His words change my definition of "happiness". It's not defined by the money you have or the status you're in, but by whether you are doing what you like every day.** Therefore, I start to tell myself that I should pay more attention to everything I see in my daily life, trying to know more about them to see whether I'm interested in it. It seems to be useless work, but it is worth the effort.

**Mentee: Aijia Li**  
**Mentor: Eddie Chen**



**1. What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?**

I had been a little worried about my upcoming semester of study in Madrid, as it would be the first time in my life living and immersing myself in a completely different culture and language, so I asked Eddie for advice. I was surprised by his optimistic attitude. He emphasized that it is important to have the confidence to learn and communicate using the ways you are familiar with. Be confident in expressing your ideas and thinking, making observations, and then taking action. Also, be aware of differences in etiquette, but not overly anxious. **The purpose of studying away is to learn and understand a new language, way of thinking and way of life.** Don't just scratch the surface of remembering manners, but try to go deeper into the culture.

**2. What advice did you take from your mentor and put into practice since your first meeting? How did it go? What changes did you see in yourself by taking the advice?**

After learning about my interest in public service, Eddie suggested that I make good use of my remaining six vacation days by doing internships in related fields, such as international organizations and nonprofits, to find out where my true interests lay. Although I later decided to shift my focus from social work to economics, the idea of exploring different industries stayed with me. During my winter break, I did an internship at a securities firm, in the private equity sub-sector. As a student who had not taken many economics courses, I did not have the opportunity to participate in the core work of the department, but I still learned a lot about the main work content, work environment and atmosphere. This summer I plan to further explore the field of economics, focusing on Internet companies and their products.

In addition to this, I have become more determined about my goals and less anxious about the future. I was impressed by Eddie's career experience, which is a vivid example to me of how people can do anything. Crossing industries and fields is possible as long as you can pursue your goals with determination and are willing to learn.

**3. Is there something you did not expect before taking part in this program, but actually benefited you or left a deep impression on you?**

My goal in participating in this program was to hear more about the career stories of our distinguished alumni and got valuable advice from them based on their professional experience. I did achieve those goals and learned even more. The one-on-one meetings with my mentor allowed me to ask specific questions about personal confusion.

One of the impressive pieces of advice I got was about my life choices after graduation - to enter graduate school or to start working. Hearing my concerns, Eddie said that it should be a case-by-case analysis. When most students apply to graduate school, they should not be pressured to follow the "social clock." He breaks the issue down into specific situations. If the master's degree is a credential requirement for your career, or you believe it makes it easier for you to find a job, then go for it. However, if a master's degree is not a must and finding a nice job is not a difficult thing to do, working seems to be a better option, and you can also pursue a graduate degree while working. **Eddie always stresses the importance of a case-by-case approach. Nothing really works for everyone, and you need to determine what is the best option for you based on your situation.**



**Mentee: Raven Yuqian Cao**  
**Mentor: Jie Zhu**



**1. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?**

At first, I was skeptical about getting into business because I thought it was responsible for a lot of social problems, so I wanted to focus on research instead. But Mr. Zhu encouraged me to try new things and convinced me of the value of business in my personal life and society. He also introduced me to the tedious side of research life, leaving me uncertain about whether research is the right career for me. So I got an internship in consulting. **During my internship, I realized that I enjoy working in a business environment where I can see my contributions and be part of a team. This made me more certain about my career goals going forward.** Based on updated interest, he also described the daily life of a lawyer, a law student and an investment banker to me, and introduced to me the deferred MBA program, which I will likely consider pursuing in the future. His continuous patience and guidance provided me with the knowledge and bravery I needed to venture forward.

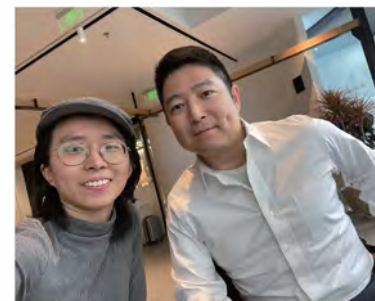
**2. What were your goals of taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?**

My goal for joining the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program was to gain insights and advice from experienced professionals on how to navigate my career path and make informed decisions. So far, I have met with my mentor, Mr. Zhu Jie, and have had very productive discussions on career paths, life choices, and other topics related to the legal industry. Initially, I was an enthusiastic teenager who found all aspects of life to be fascinating and believed that success could be achieved in any field, such as social science, design, history, and so on. This made it exceedingly difficult to pinpoint a specific area to focus my attention and efforts on. However, after a year of searching and guidance from Mr. Zhu, I have discovered my true calling and am determined to pursue it while also keeping my options open for other opportunities that may arise in life.

**3. What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?**

One perspective that was changed as a result of the program is the importance of networking and building relationships. Before joining the program, I had thought that my skills and qualifications would speak for themselves, and that I could progress in my career based solely on merit. **However, through discussions with my mentor, I have come to appreciate the importance of building and maintaining relationships in order to succeed in any field.** And the experience and knowledge I learned in my internship can have the possibility of extending far beyond three months. For example, through my internship, I have learned the qualities of producing high-quality work which is appreciated by my leaders. This will help me stand out and create a positive first impression in my next job. As we all know, first impressions are critical to the leader's perception of your capabilities and the work they assign you. By being considered capable by my boss, I will have more opportunities and a quicker path to career growth. My conversations with Mr. Zhu regarding my choices and skills have allowed me to view my career goals from a long-term perspective, ensuring my endeavors will have a lasting impact on my future.

I would like to express my gratitude to my mentor, Mr. Zhu. Through him, I have learned the importance of being curious about life and organizing it with purpose, while also cultivating meaningful relationships. Mr. Zhu's kindness and generosity have been truly inspiring. Additionally, I had the privilege of participating in various networking events and dinners that provided me with a glimpse into the respected and fulfilling life that we can aspire to achieve. I want to thank all the mentors and organizers involved in the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program for their contributions.



**Mentee: Marco Li**  
**Mentor: Michael Mi**



**1. Is there something you did not expect before taking part in this program that actually benefited you or left a deep impression on you?**

Participating in this NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program has exceeded my expectations in various ways. **One aspect that left a deep impression on me is the power of mentorship circles. Engaging in group sessions and workshops with fellow mentees provided a supportive community.** The shared and not shared experiences, diverse perspectives, and collective wisdom within the mentorship circle have been invaluable. Not only have I built meaningful connections, but I have also been inspired and motivated by the accomplishments and journeys of my mentors and my peers. The unexpected benefit of this community has enriched my mentorship experience and provided a network of support.

**2. What advice did you take from your mentor and put into practice since your first meeting? How did it go? What changes did you see in yourself by taking the advice?**

During our initial meeting, I shared my keen interest in both IT and finance with Michael, and **he promptly advised me to delve deeper into these subjects, taking into account current trends and my personal inclinations,** so I eagerly embraced the opportunity to immerse myself in the realm of finance. Through extensive research and engaging conversations with industry professionals, I embarked on a journey to unravel the intricacies of this field. Michael's guidance was instrumental as he recommended two books and provided me with a range of resources to acquaint myself with the world of finance. I have completed the first book and am currently engrossed in the second, while also exploring various avenues to gain further insights into the field. By following his advice, my career outlook has undergone significant transformations. **I have developed a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges presented by finance, equipping me with the ability to make more informed decisions about my future path.**

**3. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?**

**My primary goal in participating in this program was to gain guidance and insights from an experienced professional who could provide clarity on my career direction and give advice.** As a Computer Science major, what working in the finance industry means was never something I really understand. Starting with the basic terms and concepts, I've gathered some facile knowledge about the financial market, but such information was unstructured and didn't bring me a real understanding of this industry. With Michael's support, I started by learning from true stories whether written in a book or spoken from other people's mouths.

I've also connected them by traveling through the lifespan of a company, seeing where different roles step in. This has successfully given me a big-picture view of the finance industry and helped me seek a path that aligned best with my skills and aspirations.

Moreover, Michael's own experience and advice have encouraged me to become more aggressive in pursuing a career that I want, which gives me the courage I need, and I think it's a piece of really suitable advice for me.

In general, **Michael's wisdom and expertise have equipped me with the methodology to explore the industry and make informed decisions about my career, enabling me to navigate the crossroads with confidence.**







### Mentee: Bruce Zhang Mentor: William Hsieh

#### 1. What were your goals of taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

My personal goals for participating in this program were to develop a clearer career plan for both the short-term and long-term. Additionally, I hoped to find a supportive mentor who could also become a good friend. I am delighted to share that I have achieved both of these objectives. Throughout the duration of this program, I have gained the clarity I needed and made a firm decision to pursue Business and Finance as my major, while also embracing IMA as a minor. This combination allows me to engage in innovation, stay active, nurture creativity, and lead a vibrant life – all of which I thoroughly enjoy.

Moreover, Will has taught me valuable lessons. I now understand the importance of avoiding harsh self-imposed pressure or peer pressure and rushing through tasks. Instead, I have learned the value of dedication and maintaining a balanced approach to work and life. **This realization has given me a sense of contentment and satisfaction, as I find that being relaxed and devoted at the same time is the ideal state for personal growth.**

#### 2. What advice did you take from your mentor and put into practice since your first meeting? How did it go? What changes did you see in yourself by taking the advice?

**One of the key pieces of advice that I've put into practice since our first meeting is the principle of "随缘尽份," which means seeking a balance between work and personal life.** The idea is that once you've done your best to complete a task, there's no need to focus on the outcome excessively; instead, the emphasis should be on personal growth and the fulfillment derived from the entire process of completing the task. Over the course of nearly a year of applying this concept, the results have been quite positive. Personally, I found that I developed a more profound concentration on the process itself rather than fixating solely on achieving a perfect outcome. Although striving for excellence is desirable, it no longer consumes me as a constant concern.

During our second meeting, which was our first in-person encounter, William provided me with even better advice and an updated concept, which I totally agree with. He emphasized that our areas of interest may not always align with legit career opportunities, but pursuing work in a field we are passionate about can be immensely fulfilling. As a solution, William suggested finding a job that offers a good income while pursuing my primary interests as a minor course of action. This way, I can strike a balance between financial stability and personal fulfillment.

#### 3. How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

In short, I really like my mentor. It is always my luck to be his mentee. Although because of COVID-related issues, he has to stick with his family in Taiwan or LA, thus we have most of our conversations online virtually. However, talking to Will is always an enjoyable experience he is super easygoing and accommodating (随和). I can feel his passion for things and his thoughts on life. However, conversing with Will is always an enjoyable experience as he is super easy-going and accommodating (随和). I can feel his genuine passion for various subjects and his insightful perspectives on life. Our discussions cover a wide range of ideas, such as his views on Buddhism and the importance of investments, among other things. Engaging with Will goes beyond just career-related conversations; he serves as a reliable friend and a wise advisor, always ready to provide practical solutions when faced with challenges. His vibrant and insightful nature makes him a truly remarkable individual to interact with.

It will always be my pleasure to meet William and hope we always keep in touch.



## Mentee: Eliza Dai Mentor: Gloria Song



### 1. How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

With her long rooting experience in the financial industry and the experience to run her own business, Gloria is a proficient precursor and great mentor. Despite her modesty regarding her accomplishments, in my opinion, Gloria is a hardworking and successful woman entrepreneur who is also enjoying life between work. Gloria is busy; unlike students who live a constant life day by day repeatedly. Gloria is always traveling and running around for her business. In an exaggerated comparison, sometimes, her weekly traveling agenda might be more packed in comparison with my seasonal traveling plan. But she never appears to be exhausted. I remember how we talked about her industry working experiences. Our conversation later proceeded to the specifics, where Gloria told me some stories about her tenure working in investment banking. I was intrigued. And from her words, I could tell that Gloria immerses herself in her work and she loves what she is doing.

### 2. What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

Despite Gloria's stories, which broadened my knowledge of the industry, the most valuable aspect of the meeting was learning her great insights.

Momentum is a word that consistently recurs to me after our meeting.

**Momentum, according to Gloria, is an unseeable force. It co-exists with the changing world, individuals living in the world, etc.**

There are many ways to understand it. Gloria exemplifies that when she was my age in college, the world's momentum created a norm among the people which made them believe that the best jobs are those that are considered to be stable: teachers and government agencies for example. Thus, when Gloria decided to major in economics, there were many complaints from her parents and friends who also wanted to convince her out of it. This is because her parents' definition of succession is "stability", while Gloria, on the other hand, has an alternative definition.

The second instance is the momentum she sees within the financial industry. Many of them working in the industry worked their life to outcompete others to get promotions—either aiming to be the CEO or higher pay. But Gloria sees her exception in "succession" differently. Thus, she started her own business as she seeks changes.

**Momentum is important because it reveals the minimal expectation of where an individual will end if they don't make a change.** And it is thus this expectation that makes an individual think whether that "destination" is the one he/she is looking for. People ultimately make decisions based on their underlying desire. And this is why it is important for us to learn about ourselves and find our own true wants/goals for life.

### 3. Any other things that you would like to share?

There will be many people who want to tell you what you should do for the benefit of yours. But at the same time, you should be aware of your own goals in life; find your motivations and find things that drive you. Be more open to outside options, and be open to changes. One thing that I find noteworthy was Gloria's suggestion to "find your own success."

There exists a tendency in human nature to compare with another. It's shameful to admit, but I used to also have anxiety when I see others with more outstanding performances than I do. I have the desire to compete, such that I am staying as the best. But soon I realized it was a heavy burden. I am not perfect, I couldn't outcompete every one of my peers. The mindset to "compete" is harmful in the sense that it only gives one pain and uncertainty. Because when you compete with others, you compete over their goals, not your own. However, true motivation is different, it is a tenacious internal drive. **True motivations give you passion, and this passion makes you work hard towards your own goals. Ultimately, when you persist in your passion, good things will naturally come to you.**



## Mentee: Yingjia Xu Mentor: Andy Xia



### 1. What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

My mentor, Andy, is very patient and thoughtful and also very professional within the investment and private equity industry. He is always open to communication and willing to answer my questions. I not only learn financial industry knowledge from Andy but also inspires me to think more and get to know more about the financial industry beyond the program. I'm very grateful and appreciative of being Andy's mentee and getting to know him.

**I would like to summarize what I learned from Andy from our meetings into three parts regardless of time order, financial industry-related, study and development-related, and some inspiring thoughts.**

Firstly, for the financial industry-related part, I learned about what PE does and what kind of skills are needed. The primary working process of a Private Equity firm can be summarised as “fundraising”, “investment”, “portfolio management” and “exit”. Therefore, in general, a job in PE requires lots of research and insight into industries and markets. Since field visits and discussions with people from their customer firms, good communication skills and negotiation skills are also needed. Andy also highlights whether someone has strong learning ability and competitiveness are also important aspects to consider for figuring out whether someone is suitable to work in PE.

Secondly, for the study and development-related part, Andy suggests I think about what I hope to learn and whether this may fulfill my goal before taking action when I asked about his opinion on participating in business competitions. Therefore, I chose to not attend the L'Oreal competition as it's more related to marketing, instead, I tried consulting case competition in order to learn more about consulting industry as one of my future directions. Andy also encourages me to study away in Abu Dhabi to learn more about the world, and he also considers it as a potential market for business and finance.

Lastly, for the inspiring thoughts, as I just mentioned, **thinking before action instead of following the trends is one of the thoughtful points I learned from Andy.** He also tells me that with enough desire for accomplishment and enthusiasm for doing something, one would always find a way to fulfill their goal, but it needs to be carefully considered.

### 2. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

Before entering the program, communication and networking was not my primary goal. However, I gradually realised that networking is actually an important and valuable skill that requires practising. During the kick-off event, I was nervous and didn't know how to bring up topics properly, so most of the time I just listened to what mentors and other mentees said without real interaction. This experience inspired me that **interactive communication requires not only a sense of comfort and confidence but also the ability to change the subject.** Preparation of possible topics is also helpful.

After I realised my lack of practice in communicating and networking with senior roles, in and out of the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program, I tried to talk with the seniors more by attending some panel talk events that the school held. During this process, I further learned the importance of such communication—since the seniors were once in our positions, they understood our feelings more, and their reasons for making a certain choice were of great reference value to us. Meanwhile, I felt that I knew how to describe my questions or ideas better, such as providing possible explanations and my own thoughts at the same time. I also attended the mentorship dinner, which I really appreciated for this opportunity. I was able to communicate with more than one mentor and join a group discussion between mentors and mentees. And I realized that I was more relaxed and confident compared to the kick-off event, being able to naturally introduce myself, raise questions and share fun facts. The improvement in my networking and communication skills is definitely one of my greatest gains from the program. And I will keep practising such skills, perhaps focusing on communicating with peers next time!

### 3. Any other things that you would like to share?

As the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor program is approaching its end, I recall my development in and beyond the program. I highly value the chance to learn industry-related knowledge from an expert in this certain industry and communicate with mentors and mentees to share opinions. What's more, I realised that one of the most valuable things the program brings to me specifically is that it serves as a chance and impetus for me to change my thoughts on how I see myself, how I see others and how I see the industry. Besides, it also provides me with a sense of eagerness to figure out how to learn more and what to do next in the future. **In short, it encourages me to develop initiative beyond hearing from others.**



## Mentee: Scarlett Xing Mentor: Sixin Zhang



### 1. How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

When I first learned that my mentor was a professor specialized in Data Science, while I was a sociology major student, I couldn't help but feel a sense of apprehension. How would we connect? Would our differences in academic disciplines create a barrier between us? To make things "worse", we can only meet online since he lives in Paris. However, my worries soon proved to be unfounded, as I discovered that my mentor was an incredible individual who transcended the boundaries of our divergent fields.

From our very first meeting, it was evident that my mentor possessed a genuine passion for helping others succeed. I would say he is an 'ineloquent' person while I seemed to be talking throughout our meeting but soon I found out that his wisdom and kindness were sparkling between lines. Despite our dissimilar backgrounds, he approached our mentorship with an open mind and an eagerness to understand my unique interests and aspirations. He recognized that while our fields may differ, there were still valuable insights and lessons to be shared.

Beyond his expertise and guidance, my mentor was an exceptional listener and empathetic advisor. He patiently listened to my concerns, celebrated my successes, and provided a safe space for me to express my doubts and fears. His ability to empathize and understand the complexities of my academic journey fostered a trusting and collaborative relationship.

### 2. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

The reason I chose my mentor was primarily due to his identity as a professor in France, which perfectly aligned with my aspirations for my future career and ideal destiny. In my mind, academia held an almost idyllic allure, and I had painted a romanticized picture of what it would be like. However, **through this NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program, I gained a perspective that stripped away the filters and allowed me to see the reality of pursuing my dream.**

Under the guidance of my mentor, I was exposed to the unfiltered truth about the academic world. I learned about the hardships and difficulties one faces in order to "survive" in academia.

The immense burden and pressure that accompany the pursuit of one's goals became evident to me. My mentor shared his own experiences, painting a

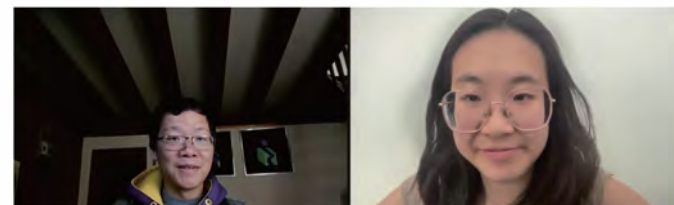
realistic picture of the sacrifices and challenges such as the imbalance between lecturing and research or the peer pressure when your mates and friends all had a decent life but you are still "studying".

Through these honest conversations, I gained a newfound appreciation for the resilience and perseverance required to thrive in academia. I realized that achieving my dream career would not come without sacrifices and dedication. Rather than discouraging me, it motivated me to reevaluate my goals and develop a more realistic and grounded approach to pursuing my dream. **I understood that success in academia is not guaranteed, but with perseverance, a strong work ethic, and a passion for knowledge, it can be attained.**

I am incredibly grateful to my mentor for providing me with this unfiltered perspective. His transparency and willingness to share his experiences have given me a solid foundation to navigate the challenges that lie ahead. I now have a clearer understanding of the path I have chosen and am better prepared to face the obstacles that may arise.

### 3. What were your goals of taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

Looking back on my sophomore year, I can confidently say that the mentor program was an invaluable experience that transformed my outlook on my future. At a time when I felt utterly lost and uncertain about my path ahead, this program emerged as a beacon of hope, guiding me towards a clearer understanding of my goals and aspirations. During that pivotal year, it seemed as though everyone around me had already charted their course for the future, leaving me feeling isolated and directionless. **However, the mentor program presented itself as a lifeline, offering me the guidance and support I desperately needed.** From the moment I joined, I was matched with a mentor who possessed a wealth of knowledge and experience in academia which is one area where I want to pursue. Through regular meetings and open conversations with my mentor, I gained a newfound sense of clarity and purpose. He patiently listened to my concerns, fears, and dreams, offering insightful advice and practical strategies to help me navigate the maze of career choices. His wisdom and encouragement instilled in me a belief in my own abilities and the confidence to pursue my passions.





**Mentee: Yiru Zhou**  
**Mentor: Jialei Wang**



**1. How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?**

In general, Jialei is an atypical technical talent. Not only is he technically excellent and experienced, but he is also easy to get along with and comfortable to talk to. When sharing his technical experiences, workplace anecdotes, and project methodologies, he often uses a humorous tone to list a variety of interesting and concrete examples and stories, so that I can understand his advice clearly and remember those suggestions by heart.

Also, he is always willing to offer help. I remember once, when I was worried about my course choices, I asked him a tiny question. He answered me immediately and made a call with me to analyze the course content with me, from which I benefited a lot. Another time, I asked him for advice about my DURF project. He patiently had a long and detailed phone call with me, analyzing my project objectives, project processes, how to think about problems, possible difficulties and so on. With his own practical experiences, I was able to have a better control over my project and became more confident of myself.

**2. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?**

One of the perspectives that changed over the course of this program was the broad scope of technology. What Jialei shared about himself and the various applicable fields he has known have opened my eyes and made me more interested in data-related work.

He once noted that because data work is often combined with other fields, there is a lot of prior knowledge required for other fields. I asked him if he had any advice for undergraduates on the choice of depth and breadth of knowledge. His answer is that breadth is more important.

College is a precious learning time where we can commit ourselves purely to studying, and it is also the most convenient time to get familiarized with all kinds of knowledge. In this period, if you can get involved in other fields and explore your interests without any restrictions, it will be very helpful for the future. His sharing had a profound impact on my study plan in college.

**3. What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?**

From discussions with Jialei, what I learned is that I should not be confined to my previous achievements, but to constantly broaden myself, rationally evaluate everything around me, maintain the motivation and attitude of studying, and keep moving forward. Jialei worked in Alibaba for a long time, and recently stepped into a new and niche field. After years of experience in a large company with a complete and clear system, he accumulated great experience not limited to technologies and skills but also communication, planning, and so on, and now, he took his own step, joining a small startup company. He did not repeat the work of predecessors, but tried to make his own innovation and realize his own ideas.

I think his career story builds up a great example for all of us. We first need to understand the successful rules and processes of those leading companies in the industry, so that we can form a systematic and rational way of thinking, and then on this basis, we need to find our own innovative ideas and aims and continuously work on them, which leads to our own success.





**Mentee: Jiarui Shi**  
**Mentor: Mark Yang**

**1. What advice did you take from your mentor and put into practice since your first meeting? How did it go? What changes did you see in yourself by taking the advice?**

There are not many required courses for the Computer Science major at NYU Shanghai, and most of my friends are planning to double major in Computer Science and Data Science, but I'm not interested in Data Science that much. So for a long time, I had concerns that only majoring in CS would make me less competitive. Mr. Yang gave me insightful suggestions: **He considered that DS is less demanding in math and more demanding in statistics compared to CS.** He believed Math would be important if I was inclined to apply to engineering schools, especially to theoretical CS graduate programs. **Mr. Yang recommended taking more advanced math classes, preferably with a math major, which will be very helpful when applying to graduate programs.** Therefore, I decided to take Linear Algebra and Multivariable Calculus in the Spring semester. I'm glad I made this choice to take these two math classes. Although the CS major does not require these two classes, when I started planning my course selection for my junior year in New York, I found out that many courses (CS and math) in New York will require these two courses as prerequisites. I avoided the anxiety and panic caused by the lack of prerequisite courses, and through taking these two basic math classes, I also discovered my interest in math and am ready to pursue a math major.

**2. What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?**

Regarding course selection, our CS major doesn't require those introductory physics courses or math courses like Linear Algebra. **But advanced math courses and advanced (at least calculus-based) physics courses are quite necessary.** Not only will it be useful in the long run for applying to graduate programs, but it will also be beneficial in the short term for course selection.

I had previously struggled with what I should do for the summer of my sophomore year. After discussing with Mr. Yang, I decided to do research instead of pursuing an internship, because research experience will be more useful to my career according to my major direction. I applied for research and got some interview opportunities, but I was very unconfident for a while. I thought I didn't have the ability to do research because I didn't take enough major courses. However, Mr. Yang suggested that I should try more, because there is always a need for undergraduate students to do the most basic work in the research team, and starting from the basic work can also be potentially exposed to the core tasks.

**About how to leave a great impression on the interviewer and pass the interview among all the inexperienced candidates, Mr. Yang believed that 'Curiosity' and 'Commitment' are two very important points.** Reading previous articles published by this research group several times, summarizing some of the main arguments and questions you are wondering about, could reflect your curiosity. When being interviewed, don't just answer the questions, but also let the interviewers know that you are curious about the research by asking questions. At the same time, you can demonstrate your commitment to this research by emphasizing the time and effort you are able to put into it. These suggestions allowed me to prepare for the interview confidently, which led to some research opportunities.

**3. What were your goals of taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?**

I don't really want to enter the industry at an early stage, instead, I would prefer to learn more about the academic field and apply for graduate school first after graduation. Therefore, since the first meeting, my mentor and I mainly discussed the topics of detailed major direction and course selection for further study. As I was surrounded by peers and didn't know any related senior students or experienced alumni, my goal for this program was to gain a different perspective on the CS major, which has been accomplished.



## Mentee: Ziyun Yu Mentor: Yang Xia



### 1. How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

My mentor, Mr. Xia, is a friendly and helpful entrepreneur who is always willing to share his life experiences with us students. He has a laid-back and approachable personality, making it easy for me to approach him with any questions or seek guidance. Mr. Xia genuinely cares about my growth and offers valuable advice from the heart. He patiently addresses my concerns and encourages open discussions. What sets him apart is his ability to connect with me through personal stories and real-life examples, which make his advice engaging and relatable. Additionally, I appreciate Mr. Xia's positive and calm outlook on life. When I feel overwhelmed by the pressures of studying, he encourages me to relax and not be constrained by others' expectations. **Instead, he emphasizes the importance of pursuing my own interests and finding fulfillment in my unique journey.**

### 2. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

Throughout the program, one perspective that I have reevaluated and changed is the idea of following a conventional life path. Previously, I believed that pursuing a master's degree immediately after graduation was the only way to ensure a successful future. However, Mr. Xia's mentorship and his personal story have challenged this notion. He shared how he deviated from the expected path of pursuing a master's degree in electronic engineering and instead took an opportunity to work on Wall Street, where his technical skills were in demand. This unconventional decision led to his remarkable success. Learning from his experience, I have come to realize that success and happiness are not confined to a predetermined path. **It is important to think outside the box, embrace uncertainty, and seize opportunities that may lead to unexpected achievements. I now understand that exploring alternative paths can lead to unique and fulfilling lives.**

### 3. What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

**A valuable lesson that I learned from Mr. Xia is the significance of building a strong social network, which can provide immense support and unexpected benefits.** He highlighted the value of connecting with the NYU community, including fellow alumni, who can offer valuable guidance and assistance in making career choices. These individuals have diverse life experiences that they are willing to share. Actively participating in various programs, attending networking events, and engaging in conversations with alumni can be a fruitful way to build these connections. Mr. Xia also emphasized the importance of cultivating relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds. He shared how being invited to a Thanksgiving dinner by a colleague exposed him to new customs and perspectives. This inspired me to step out of my comfort zone, interact with a wide range of people, and embrace diverse relationships. By doing so, I can expand my horizons, gain fresh insights, and foster personal growth and development.

In conclusion, Mr. Xia's mentorship has had a profound impact on me. His approachable and relatable nature, coupled with his personal experiences and advice, has guided me to view life from a different perspective. I have learned to embrace my own journey, think outside the box, and explore unconventional paths. Additionally, his emphasis on building a strong social network and embracing diversity has opened my eyes to the importance of connections and cultural experiences. With Mr. Xia's guidance, I feel equipped to navigate the complexities of life, pursue my passions, and forge meaningful relationships.



## Mentee: Jiayi Xu Mentor: Jack Huang



### 1. What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

One thing that my mentor Jack inspired me about is the idea of **"drawing inspiration from the success of celebrities"**. He did not directly name it, but I summed it up from the career advice that he gave me during our conversations. **Specifically, it means that when faced with a goal but unsure of how to proceed or where to start to approach this goal, it's advisable to search for and study the experiences of those celebrities who have walked the path we aspire to tread.** By analyzing their accomplishments, we will have an idea of what those successful men did before they got there as well as how they grew up at my stage. From the common patterns of their experiences, we can figure out the essential prerequisites of reaching our own goals, and some other valuable lessons.

I found Jack's idea reasonable because by comparing the commonalities of the experience of each of the successful individuals, we can effectively recognize that to reach a concrete personal goal, in what direction the efforts or achievement are necessary, in what direction they are a valuable bonus, and in what direction they are simply icing on the cake, and use these observations as my reference and guidance. This approach saves time while empowering us to make informed choices and chart our paths to achievement.

**More importantly, this idea of "drawing inspiration from successful celebrities" can be applied beyond goal-oriented situations. It can be extended to many other situations and has strong compatibility.** For example, during my first lunch with Jack, I raised the concern that under my chosen major, I have no idea which specific track to take in the future when I get into the industry, and I'm not sure which direction would be right for me. At that time, Jack encouraged me to search for the collection of celebrities' biographies online, screen out those people who share similar characteristics with me, and take a deeper look at what they did to set the stage for their success. If their experience shows a similar direction, then this direction may be the one that suits me well. Otherwise, I can further sift through the celebrities I've selected to find the ones that most closely match my personality traits. By examining their career paths and decisions, I can identify potential directions to pursue. Compared with the goal-oriented situations mentioned before, the difference here is that the goal is blurred while the known conditions are my characters and background information. However, the principle of "drawing inspiration from successful celebrities" still works.

### 2. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated or changed over the course of the program?

Throughout my participation in the program, one perspective that I have reevaluated and changed is the understanding of the advantages of studying at a Chinese-American joint university, as well as the advantages of studying abroad. Nowadays, it's often said from various sources of information that students studying abroad are not as popular as before in terms of employment. Thus, for a long time, I was once unconfident about the significance of studying at such a school and found myself overly concerned about whether I had advantages over others in terms of employment. At that time, I placed excessive emphasis on academic performance and coursework, believing that they were the sole indicators of the advantage in employment. Furthermore, we had topics about whether any particular subjects would much impact further career opportunities such as ordinary math and physical. Obviously, we both agreed that logical thinking and creativity are the most essential capabilities to support your entire career path. These discussions made me fully aware of the importance of basic subjects. However, my conversations with Jack challenged this perspective by highlighting international students' unique strengths and values.

**Jack shared the insight that the greatest advantage and value of international students lies in their distinct ways of thinking and approaching challenges, which are difficult to replicate.** He mentioned that there was research supporting that students with study abroad experiences possess enhanced long-term learning abilities. Over time, they are more inclined to seek high-level academic research opportunities, such as pursuing Ph.D. programs at top-tier institutions. This has a profound impact on their continuous learning and professional growth. And that's a significant advantage for us.

Jack also reminded me that in rapidly evolving fields like artificial intelligence, where the content taught in our classes quickly becomes outdated, fixating solely on the technical aspects of the present can be limiting. Inspired by his perspective,

**I have come to recognize that a person's long-term learning abilities and self-drive are of greater importance than being confined to a specific current technical detail.**

As a result, **I have shifted my focus towards nurturing my ability to learn and adapt over time.** Instead of being overly concerned with the minutiae of a particular technology at the present moment, I now prioritize cultivating my long-term learning capabilities and self-motivation. This broader perspective allows me to embrace the ever-changing nature of my field and empowers me to seek out new opportunities for growth and development.





## Mentee: Tanruizhi Liu Mentor: Frank Ye



I'm Tanruizhi Liu (Travis) from NYUSH class of 2025. It seems like time has passed without me realizing that it has been almost 8 months since I joined the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program. Since I first applied to the program, I have been looking forward to it with great enthusiasm and anticipation to learn from the outstanding NYU alumni and obtain some reference for my career path. The progress I have made in these 8 months has been incredible. I have clarified my career direction, completed two internships at Nike and L'Oreal, and learned countless skills from my mentor that I will use throughout my career. I am very grateful to the NYU Shanghai Center for Career Development for this opportunity and would like to thank my Mentor Frank Ye for all his mentorship!

### 1. What were your goals for taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

My goals for taking part in this program were to gain insight and advice from an experienced professional in my field, expand my network, and learn new skills that could help me in my career. So far, I have been able to achieve all of these goals. Through my mentor, I have gained valuable insights into the venture capital industry and learned new leadership and strategic thinking skills. Additionally, I have expanded my network by meeting other mentors and mentees in the program and attending networking events.



### 2. What advice did you take from your mentor and put into practice since your first meeting? How did it go? What changes did you see in yourself by taking the advice?

**One of the most valuable pieces of advice that I took from my mentor, Frank Ye, was to dare to try different areas and face challenges, and boldly explore my possibilities.** I have always been a person who likes to stay within my comfort zone and not take risks. But after hearing Frank's advice, I decided to take on new challenges, such as applying for internships in different industries and positions that are different from my former experiences. I realized that by taking these risks and stepping out of my comfort zone, I could gain new skills and experiences I would not have had otherwise.

### 3. Is there something you did not expect before taking part in this program but actually benefited you or left a deep impression on you?

One thing that I did not expect before participating in this program was how much I would learn from my peers. I had assumed that most of my learning would come from my mentor, but I was pleasantly surprised to find that I could know just as much from my fellow mentees. Through group discussions and networking events, I gained new insights and perspectives on various topics in my field.

### 4. What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

**One key takeaway that I learned from my mentor, Frank Ye, was the importance of thinking with the end in mind.** Instead of just seeing the surface of things, I learned to explore the reasons and logic behind them actively. This has helped me approach problems and challenges more strategically and has allowed me to make better decisions in both my personal and professional life.

**Mentee: Jelena Xu**  
**Mentor: Carol Zhou**



**1. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?**

I was debating **whether to go to grad school or find a job** right after my graduation, and I discussed the key factors to consider with Carol, which helped a lot in my decision-making process. Carol recommended I think of the benefit and sunk costs of both options and figure out what I need in the following years: the time and money spent on a degree instead of hands-on experience, the opportunity I may lose as a working person instead of a student, etc. From her own experience, especially in the marketing industry, a huge gap exists between textbook theory and real business cases.

**2. What advice did you take from your mentor and put into practice since your first meeting? How did it go? What changes did you see in yourself by taking the advice?**

**One of the most valuable pieces of advice Carol gave me is to focus on developing my skills rather than solely concentrating on crafting my resume.** This is because every job often requires more than just experience in a specific field; it demands a set of universal personal skills such as communication, analysis, and creativity. By adopting this mindset, I have become more open to exploring different opportunities. During projects, I no longer limit myself to trying activities and internships related to FMCG Marketing but have ventured into fields such as consulting and technology. This has presented me with new challenges and expanded my skill set. As a result, I have gained more confidence in my abilities and can better adapt to various professional environments.

**3. What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?**

Be open to opportunities. One important mindset that has helped Carol a lot in her career is to think broadly about any possible career possibilities and go boldly when having an idea. Of course, to ensure that we can securely seize the opportunities when we meet them, we will need to prepare ourselves for them in normal times. Carol gave me a new perspective that we may try to view my career as a jungle gym, which means I'll be exposed to different new problems and situations and will get the chance to explore other areas, connect with different people and combine all my skills and talents. We may always remind ourselves to think long-term when making any career-related decisions.

Carol also suggested I try to build my skills instead of my resume. When we are faced with a career change, no matter whether it is a change in the industry, the position, or a job, the key factor that determines if you're going to succeed in your new career is whether you have the right competencies and skill for the job, not whether you have any related experience. Talking about the key factors when facing a potential career change, **Carol expressed that being flexible and resilient are two of the most important traits to succeed.** Being flexible in both managing and being managed will turn you into an open and adaptable person, which will help you get prepared when swinging toward opportunities. Being resilient will equip you with the courage to start over when met with obstacles and failures. With all these above, all you need to do is to believe in yourself, follow your heart and enthusiasm, and go for it.



## Mentee: Younian Liu Mentor: Lisa Chang



### 1. What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

Lisa is constantly trying new things and **not being limited by the track chosen before**. Lisa studied Engineering at first, but after she interned at a TV station, she found her true passion for marketing. So, she turned to study International Business & Marketing at NYU Stern. After graduation, she worked for a few 4A agencies. Later, she moved from the US to Shanghai and founded Angle Communications. She was also into cultural campaigns, including films and exhibitions. Previously, she taught Marketing at NYUSH School of Professional Studies. And now, she is exploring the education industry, and planning to co-establish a navigation school. So, making a choice right now doesn't mean you have to stick to it for your whole life. There are many more opportunities and fun out there to explore.

### 2. What advice did you take from your mentor and put into practice since your first meeting? How did it go? What changes did you see in yourself by taking the advice?

The most important issue I wanted to resolve through this program is the choice of majors. Lisa's advice is:

**First, you have to try all kinds of things when you have the chance before it's too late. After you try, it's important you keep a record of what you did, what you think you like, and what you think you don't like.**

For example, if you take Business and Finance courses, after you finish the course, think about what specific elements attracted you to keep on learning and what specific things you don't like that much. Maybe it's the logical thinking that you like and it's the purpose of learning the knowledge that is not exciting. Then after some time, look back on the record, and summarize the characteristics of those specific things you like. Try to see what kind of major or job can satisfy most of the things you like or can avoid the things you don't like. When you find your true passion, you will know at that moment. You will feel that it's without any doubt that this is going to be the thing you will be doing in the future.

### 3. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

I took the advice and now I am clearer about the specific things I enjoy in tentative majors so that I can have a more determined choice when it comes to gaining experience for the majors. Lisa's suggestions and life experiences provided me with a pathway for approaching the result and more confidence to pursue the things I like.

Through the conversation with Lisa, I have reevaluated my perspective on the marketing industry. Previously, I was a bit confused by the criticism of the marketing industry as a consumerism trap that tricks people into spending more money on things they don't need. While this is how Lisa responded to my doubt:

**"Everything is marketing."** You see doctors, schools, arts, charity organizations, governments, and many more all need marketing. I take it as neutral. It can be either good or bad depending on how you use it and the purpose of using it. If you don't want to be influenced by it, learn the logic behind marketing and try not to be brainwashed instead of blaming marketing. As long as there is selling and buying in the world, it is always needed. And selling and buying will not vanish since this is how human societies function."

Lisa also shared her thoughts on the **change of job roles** in the marketing industry in a world that is heavily influenced by AI, which helps me think more reasonably on this issue. Lisa thinks AI won't replace humans in the marketing industry because what AI can do is analyze the data from the past and combine them into a mixed result. There is **no originality or creativity involved**. It is mere data estimation. However, human characteristics are constantly changing, which is unpredictable in some sense, so only humans can instinctively know future needs and have creative ideas to meet these needs. But of course, AI would replace some basic research work.



## Mentee: Rachel Duan Mentor: Leon Junliang Huang



### 1. What were your goals of taking part in this program? Is there something you did not expect before taking part in this program, but actually benefited you or left a deep impression on you?

To be honest, the accomplishments I've mentioned above have exceeded my expectations. Initially, my goal in participating in this program was driven by my anxieties about the future as a rising sophomore. I was uncertain about the next steps for both my college journey and my life as a whole. However, through my participation in this program and my interactions with my mentor, I not only received valuable guidance for the next phase of my life, but I also gained a newfound sense of confidence and relaxation.

**During my conversations with Leon, I gradually came to realize that everyone has their own unique path and pace in life. This realization has allowed me to shift my focus to my own journey, embrace the present moment, and remain authentic to myself.** While these insights may seem obvious, hearing them from a senior figure whom I trusted and believed in made a profound impact on me. It provided me with the courage to face the future with a renewed mindset, letting go of unnecessary anxieties and approaching the next chapter of my life with a sense of peace and tranquility. This, to me, is the most significant achievement I've gained from this program.

### 2. How do you see your mentor? What is he like?

To me, Leon Junliang Huang is an exemplary and exceptional mentor. From the beginning of the program, when I was hesitant to approach someone older and more experienced, he consistently encouraged me to ask any questions I had, assuring me that he would patiently provide detailed answers.



His unwavering support and guidance motivated me to actively participate in the program. Leon would proactively reach out to check on my progress in both my studies and personal life, offering timely advice whenever needed. What sets Leon apart is not just his sense of responsibility, but the fact that his advice is always insightful and meaningful. When I ask a question, he goes beyond simply answering it, engaging me in a broader conversation that reminds me of the larger context in which the question arises. His guidance has helped me develop a sense of the bigger picture, and this is why I consider Leon a responsible and brilliant mentor.

In addition to his mentorship role, Leon is also a person who is “real and chill”, as he often describes himself. When our conversations extend beyond academics, he is always open to sharing his perspectives on various topics, and I greatly value these discussions. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to engage in conversations about global events and issues with someone who possesses a wealth of life experience, maturity, and a successful career.

### 3. What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

As I already mentioned in the first article, there was a particularly important point that resonated with me and left a lasting impact: **“Be true to yourself so that you could have a good sleep at night.”** This statement has given me the motivation and courage to actively pursue the things that genuinely align with my interests and values. It serves as a reminder to always prioritize my own well-being and happiness. Moving forward, whenever I am faced with significant decisions, I will ask myself, “Will this choice allow me to have a peaceful sleep?” This introspective approach will guide me toward making decisions that are true to myself.

**Furthermore, another valuable lesson I learned was the significance of carefully considering major life decisions while also leaving room for unexpected opportunities and experiences.** Making important decisions thoughtfully ensures that I am on a path that is, at the very least, not fundamentally misguided. By allowing space for exploration and spontaneity, I can embrace a more relaxed and open-minded attitude toward life. This advice holds relevance not only for my college years but also for the entirety of my life. It serves as a reminder to strike a balance between careful planning and embracing the freedom to explore, leading to a more fulfilling and enriching journey.



## Mentee: Elodie Xu Mentor: Wei Gu



### 1. Is there something you did not expect before taking part in this program that actually benefited you or left a deep impression on you?

When I initially applied for this year's NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program, my expectations were quite simple. I just wanted to be exposed: be exposed to the world of admiring mentors and ambitious peers, as well as the professional world to see what it looks like. Now as this year's program draws to a close, I can confidently say that these above expectations have not only been met but exceeded. **I've heard many inspiring success stories, been motivated by my exceptional peers, and gained valuable exposure to the professional world.**

However, I would say my harvests are far beyond the above. I felt that besides all the above "outside world" I have seen, much more importantly, due to this NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program, I have also been forced to think and reflect on my inner self. Through mentee preparation training, face-to-face discussions with mentors, and post-meeting reflection, I have been given the chance to fully contemplate my past, my goal, my aspirations, and my future. This process has given me a better understanding of myself, making me more confident and more determined about many things and paths I have been devoting to and would like to continue to pursue in the future.

**For me, this mentorship experience has been like a "window", providing me with a broad and impressive view of the world while also allowing me to take a step back from my work to reflect on my origins and future aspirations.**

### 2. What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

Suggestions for Course Selection - After struggling a lot with course selection for the upcoming semester in New York, I turned to my mentor Wei Gu for advice.



Drawing from her own experience as a prior student at NYU Stern and her professional experience working globally, she generously provided me with many constructive suggestions that turn out to be inspiring and effective, which I would like to take this chance to share with you all.

When considering course selection, Wei suggested, we can approach it from three different perspectives. Firstly, it is important for us to take full advantage of the key strengths and identities of our university. For NYU, this probably means global perspectives. Therefore, in addition to fulfilling major requirements, it is essential to take some global liberal arts courses to grasp a better understanding of the dynamic global situations and challenge us to become global citizens with broad horizons. Secondly, the professor is also important. It is always good to conduct background research, maybe we would be lucky enough to get the chance to interact with famous professors, especially in New York.

Lastly, don't forget to balance the workload. By considering these three perspectives, we can make informed decisions about our course selections and maximize our university experience.

### 3. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

I feel extremely honored and fortunate to have been grouped with a mentor who shares similar career interests with me in the field of PR (Public Relations). Throughout this program, my mentor Wei Gu has generously shared a lot of in-depth industry insights that have completely reshaped my understanding and inspired my interests.

Before this program, I had always viewed PR as a fundamental task for gathering, transforming, and communicating information. However, my mentor Wei Gu has offered me another rather interesting perspective based on her professional experience. As a PR professional, Wei shared, you would be responsible for telling attractive stories to shape the image of brands in front of the masses. Telling PR stories is like taking photographs, where the first and the most fundamental principle is to "stay true". Only in this condition could we then think about how to make the "person" in the photograph look better naturally. **These interesting insights have refreshed my biased perspectives and stimulated my interest a lot in firmly continuing my pursuit of this desirable future career path.**



**Mentee: Kevin Liu**  
**Mentor: Sydney Lai**

**1. What advice did you take from your mentor and put into practice since your first meeting? How did it go? What changes did you see in yourself by taking the advice?**

From my mentor, I learned the importance of building a strong interpersonal network early on in my career. We are living in a modern society where information and skills have been increasingly accessible and attainable, and it is the ability to build connections and reach a wide pool of professionals that makes employees less replaceable in the workplace. I took the advice and invested more in deepening my relationships with my peers, seniors, mentors, and alumni professionally and personally. From these relationships, **I got to access more insights into industry knowledge, career development, and personal life which I believe would have a life-long positive impact on me.**



**2. Is there something you did not expect before taking part in this program, but actually benefited you or left a deep impression on you?**

In the program, I have been impressed and inspired by the mentors' passion for what they do and their visible dedication to their careers. I can clearly see how they are good at what they do, and beyond their tangible accomplishments, how they take joy from work which they make an essential part of their lives. Through interacting with them, I was particularly impressed with how our alumni in legal services take pride in their dedicated lawyering and successful litigations defending client interests and firm reputation. My mentor also told me that to have a healthy relationship with my career, it would be critical to find joy in routine, "miserable" and highly repetitive work, especially as a junior professional. Inspired by these experiences, I have decided to put in more work in exploring different options in college and ultimately find what I am good at and fond of doing. Also, I was inspired to nurture personal drive and passion as the fundamental elements of professionalism.

**3. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?**

Before the program, I was not sure whether I should base my career exploration on the goal of working in public services or in the private sector. I found the two options equally appealing and was confused when considering the next internships to attempt. However, with Sydney's instructions, I got to realize how similar these two seemingly different sectors are and how fundamental skills are transferable. In fact, I realized that public sector experience could even be a great asset when pursuing private sector opportunities, and vice versa, for the increasing public-private engagement in the business world and policy world. I also realized that junior employees in both sectors usually take on quite similar work and challenges in both workplaces can be similar too. Therefore, I adjusted my understanding and decided to explore more in both sectors for the rest of my college. Inspired by that, I also developed an interest in the intersection of both, particularly working in government relations, PPP, and ESG which require wide engagement from multiple parties in the society.

**Mentee: Yuejia Zhu**  
**Mentor: Stephanie Tang**



The conversation with my alumni mentor Ms. Stephanie Tang was very illuminating and enjoyable. As a senior law practitioner, Stephanie is very experienced and encouraging. Talking with her answered my questions and concerns regarding choosing majors, law school preparation, and career planning, and gave me more confidence in pursuing my goal. We haven't been able to meet each other in person yet, due to the pandemic, but I'm really looking forward to meeting Stephanie in the near future :D

**1. As mentioned last time, I'm planning to go to law school after graduating from NYUSH. But I'm currently a bit stressed at getting a high GPA, and I heard that GPA is very important in law school admissions. I'm wondering if it is true that GPA is the most important factor in law school admissions, and do you have any suggestions on how to better prepare for law school?**

GPA is indeed very important, and law schools often have a preference for students with great learning abilities. However, the LSAT exam is also important, and often more important than GPA, because it reflects your ability to reason logically and read promptly, which are crucial skills to study law. Therefore, my suggestion is to prepare well for the LSAT exam and get good scores.

**2. I'm also a bit confused about what kind of internship I should look for. My major is business and finance, but I find it a bit hard to find an internship closely related to what I've learned in class, and most of the firms prefer junior and senior students. Also I heard "rumors" that law schools don't really like applicants who show strong backgrounds in business or finance, but would rather prefer someone who showed strong desire to care for the society, and making me more hesitant in finding an internship. I really hope to hear your suggestions.**

It's actually hard to tell which kind of candidates law schools prefer, since they have a very diverse student body, and welcome students from all undergraduate majors. Therefore, my suggestion on internship will still be that it can be any of any field. As long as you're learning new things from it and improving yourself, it would be a desirable intern experience. **Also it would be nice if you choose an internship that will challenge yourself a little bit, since you'll be able to step out of your comfort zone and learn fast.**

You're in your second year of college, and this is still a perfect time for you to explore different fields through internships. Apart from that, remember that GPA and LSAT grades are also very important and law schools put high weights on them. Therefore, plan your time wisely and don't stress yourself out :)



**3. I'm considering a double major in Social Science, but I haven't decided my track yet, because I'm interested in both Psychology and Political Science. Do you have any suggestion on which one I should choose?**

Political Science may be more closely related to law study, since it will provide you with useful background knowledge such as a better understanding of the legal system and public policies, while also enhancing important skills like writing and analytical skills. Learning Psychology can also be helpful since it prepares you with a better understanding of human behavior, and develops empathy and insight on your bias and prejudices, which can be important when working with diverse clients and communities. **As mentioned earlier, law schools don't have a specific preference on undergraduate majors, so you may choose according to your interests.**

**Mentee: Cynthia Xiao**  
**Mentor: Dr. Shisuo Du**



**1. Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?**

Before joining the program, I held onto the conventional idea that clinical accomplishments were more significant to medical practice than research experience. Through the semesters, however, I've realized how consequential basic scientific research can be to the making of a physician. While clinical research may be more patient-based, focusing on the direct effect of a clinical treatment on a disease, other translational research bridges our understanding of the inner mechanisms of diseases to tangible applications in treatment. Now, the basic molecular research doctors may do at the lab bench is no less conducive to improving a patient's quality of life. The commitment physician-researchers like Dr. Du have towards medicine is inherent in their work to break the gap in knowledge within their fields by identifying the insufficiencies in treatment and diagnostic methods as well as addressing these issues at the lab.

**2. Is there something you did not expect before taking part in this program, but actually benefited you or left a deep impression on you?**

In an exciting opportunity to tour the teaching hospital and its affiliated facilities under my mentor's offer, I had the chance to view the hospital laboratories across departments as well as an exhibition of current technologies offered at the hospital. The visit was quite inspiring as I got to observe the progression of medicine through years of work behind the scenes. It was surprising to see so many patents and innovations for the latest diagnostic tools produced and employed by the hospital's medical professionals, such as the combination of optical imaging techniques with computational blood flow assessments to determine coronary disease progressions. The sole responsibility of MDs to treat patients is not the case anymore when we have so many medical professionals with experience and expertise spanning across fields. They could not have come up with such technology, new procedures, or patents without extensive knowledge in the fields of engineering,

business, medicine, and more. In extension, this has made me more contemplative about what kind of work I would want to do within medicine, on whether I'd like to focus solely on patient interactions or work behind the scenes to improve their care.

**3. What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?**

**Some general advice applicable to all students would be to just try first. Go and try to grasp onto your opportunities instead of contemplating and stressing over the details of whether you're qualified enough, interested enough, or if it will bring you great benefits.** At our current stage, we still have plenty of options and time to probe around our interests; it doesn't have to be exploring across two completely different careers, but just looking into the different options in your field of interest. For instance, if my end goal was to earn a medical degree and work within certain specialties like pathology that does not mean I have to jump start into medical school and secure a spot in the gross room as a resident physician. Learning and experiencing the alternatives is a great fallback for when you find your initial expectations not matching up with the real toils of your interested field or when you discover a new preference for something different in the field. For example, my newfound understanding of precision medicine and infectious disease has expanded my vision of what medical specialties I'd want to work in in the future.

Another major topic that comes to mind was about **financial support**. Graduate school fees are never cheap, and for some programs, it may be harder to gather financial support than others that provide aid in the form of scholarships or salaries. Knowing what your options are in terms of program choices, especially for those that offer hidden support and benefits, can really help you progress further and faster. Sometimes digging deep into your own school or local programs may provide that opportunity you've never known about.





**Mentee: Vivian Chen**  
**Mentor: Tim Yimin Liu**



**1. How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?**

Tim is a really open-minded and easy-going person. I was actually pretty nervous when I got paired with him. He is an industry leader while I'm merely a nobody. But he was really interested in our experience as students and shared with us his suggestions on our career path from a lawyer's perspective. I'm sure the mentees that have talked with Tim would say the same. Tim actively engaged with us and he put himself on the same level with us and I felt like we were having an equal conversation. He even offered to show me around his office in IAPM mall. It's really been a precious experience!

**2. Is there something you did not expect before taking part in this program, but actually benefited you or left a deep impression on you?**

I am a Computer Science major and my mentor is a lawyer. Actually my major does not match my mentor's expertise. Therefore, I wasn't sure what I might learn from my mentor. **But he is very insightful in providing career related advice. Since he is a lawyer, he would interact with people from all industries and he can therefore share with us the pros and cons of different industries and different positions.** Not only did we talk about career options, we also discussed some trivial topics, for example, some academic difficulties I encountered and how to maintain my social circles and how I can compete with others in CS even though I might not excel in my hard skills. So I would still say this is a very rewarding experience.

**3. What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?**

I have been confident in my soft skills but rather insecure with my hard skills. I asked Tim if this would be a problem in finding a job. He said that many employees also value soft skills regardless of what industry you are in. He took law practice as an example. **Hard skills might be more important in the early stage of your career, but the more senior you are, the more soft skills that you might learn from taking a philosophy course or a history course you will need to distinguish yourself.** And even in the early stage, you still need certain soft skills to work with your teammates, communicate with your client or with your supervisor. **Although soft skills might be invisible, they are more than essential nonetheless.**



**Mentee: Zihan Xu**  
**Mentor: Fan Zhang**



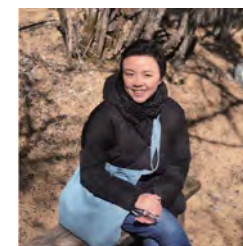
**1. There is a stereotype that Social Science is not a major that will help you gain economic success like Business and Finance. But I could see your great effort and success in your career path. I would like to learn about your personal experience and why would you like to choose to be involved in voluntary work?**

For my personal experience, I started to get involved in NGO projects after my graduation from university. The work in non-government organizations mostly includes three parts: Selling the projects to potential donors, connecting with international foundations and increasing the impact of NGO itself. **I think motivation mostly comes from the passion for the topic itself and the great wish to be involved in public affairs.** I was quite lucky as during the time that I graduated from university in the early twentieth century it was the most booming time for the development of public affairs. The concept of NGO has been largely promoted and public services led by private forces are greatly needed under the transformation from planned economy to market economy. Which provided me a lot of opportunities in pursuing the career. Especially after the earthquake happened in Wenchuan, Sichuan province, more and more people had a more direct understanding of charity and started to realize its necessity and possibility. However, after the golden decade, the development space of public charity is decreasing. Thus, I decided to pursue advanced studies abroad in New York University and understand the difference between Public Administration between China and abroad. In the US, I could see that methodology is strengthened more while China focuses more on the experience, which provided me with a different perspective on how I should pursue a Career in Public Charity. When I came back to China, I changed my role as an NGO project runner to CSR (Corporate social responsibility) in the internet firm.

Great differences have been shown as the work is not only involving passion and social influence but more about how to reach a balance between economic benefit and social responsibility benefit. So even when you decide to join the Career in public service, the career could be completely different. **But what matters most could always be following your passion. That comes along with your major choices.**

**2. Related to my volunteer experiences, I am usually kind of concerned as personal strength is limited compared to the strength of a large company. Would it be more meaningful when I do charity with greater strength?**

This question could be understood as whether the charity work should be done from top to bottom or from bottom to top. Actually, both are meaningful. From bottom to top is more community based as it is like gradually permeating from capillaries to the whole body. This is what NGOs have been doing. Though it won't change a lot in a short period, the consistent and intensive changes keep happening and the whole process would be more sustainable. You, as a volunteer who gets involved, will win satisfaction more easily. The case from top to bottom usually happens as the social responsibility of a big company. At this point, the problems such as how Enterprise influence should be combined with outcome and how they could involve more participants while having a larger scale. There is no defined answer as to which one is meaningful but what you can do and what you want to do.



**Mentee: Marta Wieczorkiewicz**  
**Mentor: Michael Qi**



With the opening of the 2022-23 NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program, I had the pleasure to meet and become acquainted with NYU alumni Michael Qi as my mentor. Michael Qi focuses on corporate finance practice, capital markets and corporate matters. Despite his busy time and hectic schedules tending to clients and meetings, Michael Qi has returned to the program to once again serve as an alumni advisor for students interested in pursuing law. It was my honor that Michael Qi has been so willing to share with me the details of what his career is like and what aspiring young individuals can learn from him.

In our first conversation that we had during the Alumni Executive Mentor Program Kick-Off lunch, I had asked Michael Qi various questions about his life, career, aspirations and what allowed him to become the lawyer he is now. In his answers he has surprised me by allowing me to gain not only a different perspective on a career as a lawyer but also on life. One of the questions I asked has been about confidence and the ability to become a better speaker. Through the conversations I have realized that these skills simply take practice and to get better at them it's necessary to get out of one's comfort zone to strive to become not only better but also more fulfilled with oneself.

**Upon visiting the law firm where Michael Qi works it has changed my perception on how important personal skills and self-discipline are.** Seeing many hardworking people, including my mentor, and how they have the motivation to become better and work further on different projects made me realize that a career as a lawyer comes with many ways in which a person also learns about oneself.

As prior to my meeting with Michael I have never seen the connection between law and business, but as our discussions grew it allowed me to realize how diversified a career as a lawyer can be. Especially since I have been asking Michael Qi many questions about his own education as he himself has an LLB which then motivated him to pursue an LLM, while in comparison after my bachelor I would like to pursue a J.D. However, although I always thought I am passionate only in humanities and social science related subjects, **through the conversations with my mentor whether they would be casual or more field defined, I have realized that I am also interested in researching further into business and enterprise as those fields do also intertwine with the legal field.**

Those conversations that I had the pleasure to have with Michael Qi about a legal career and life of not only being a lawyer but also becoming one, allowed me also to realize how to gain a balance in life. As sports, religion, ideologies, and passions all contribute and allow us to not only feel more motivated to work harder but also to find happiness and stop occasionally to reflect on who we are and who we want to become.



## Mentee: Ziyi Zhu Mentor: Julliet Pan



### 1. How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

The first time we met, Julliet said that in her mind, the relationship between a mentor and mentee could be like friends. Rather than to teach or lecture me, Julliet's way is more like sharing her perspectives as a person who has lived longer, saw and experienced some more than me. Despite her life wisdom and professional achievements, she is still very humble and approachable. Our conversations—along with her deep listening, empathy and kindness—made me feel equal, heard and understood. Planning to study abroad in the middle of her career, Julliet impressed me to be a lifelong learner. Besides being a media producer, she is a philanthropist too. In short, “be kind and curious” is what she told me and who she herself really is.

### 2. What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

Sometimes we may not feel so satisfied with ourselves and are troubled by peer pressure. In reply, Julliet asked, “Would it be possible to become another person? Probably not... **You are your unique existence and that existence is precious; So are others.** Thus, we should not and have no way to compare ourselves to others. When we are turning our heads to see others on their track, we are lagging behind. Rather than becoming another person, what we can do is to become our better selves – while others can be our inspiration. Meanwhile, self-care and self-compassion are very important; yet they are distinct from arrogance.

Concerning “comparison”, people tend to compare grades, salary... all those quantifiable measures. However, many more important things are not quantifiable, like your growth in mind. **After all, your heart, rather than your brain or eyes, guides you to the right path.**”

Regarding procrastination and perfectionism, Julliet said she totally understands that people procrastinate. Meanwhile, one way is to view life and some tasks or projects as “work in progress”--“As long as you start, you are “in progress”, and you “work” on it towards better. You can set your first benchmark not to do the assignment perfectly, but to finish it first.”

Besides, once we talked about the current complex world situations, news and the pandemic. Julliet thinks that wars are caused by humans’

or unfamiliar to us. While greed is instinct and can hardly be stopped, **we can be more open-minded and fear less about outsiders by communicating more and non-violently.** And indeed, we, NYUSH students, have this special mission and opportunity to build the bridges.

### 3. Is there something you did not expect before taking part in this program, but actually benefited you or left a deep impression on you?

One unexpected precious spark was all about this relationship: How much a healthy relationship can bring to one's life! This warm bond between two humans! **I was inspired and cured not only by Julliet's insights, but also because I felt myself heard and I felt seen in this relationship.**

Initially, I thought that the format of the mentor-mentee meeting would be like me asking Julliet questions, but in reality, Julliet started by asking me questions. She hoped to get to know me more, and felt very happy and willing to learn from me and our young generation. Looking back, I found out that such mutual understanding brings us so many deep and sincere conversations where I can share my curiosity and vulnerabilities, feeling at home.

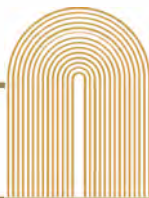
Previously (and now as well), I was very unsure about myself, interests or future. I “diagnose” myself as someone who often procrastinates, often. **Yet Julliet sees what I could not see in myself,** and helps me to re-know myself: As Julliet says, those vague yet real and sometimes flickering wishes to make the world a better place, that hope to care for those besides myself... are all very previous values and outlooks I am holding now that I shall not change—even though as we grow up there are more pressure and temptations that we could easily lose our heart. With these values and will to do good, even I procrastinate—as long as I am on a track for goodness—procrastination only slows down my pace to do something for goodness. Hearing her recognition and encouragement, suddenly I could appreciate myself more and accept the problems I am currently facing so that I can move on.



**Even when we do not see each other for most of the time, I felt that someone—who I admire and respect very much— is there supporting and trusting me in a nurturing way. And this existence, brings me much faith and cure.**



## Mentee: Nathalie Brzesowsky Mentor: Yun Zhou



I had the honor of having Mr. Yun Zhou, head of Zhonglun Law Firm's M&A department and officer at the International Bar Association, as my mentor. After our initial meeting at the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program Kick-Off Event, I was immediately intrigued by his unique views on global affairs and philosophical worldview, motivating me to continue keeping up with the news yet from my own perspective on the driving forces behind the scenes. In our second meeting, we focused much more on Mr. Zhou's professional journey, during which I was deeply struck by his wisdom and advice about the field. The following Q&A summarizes a few of the career-oriented points covered in our meeting:

### 1. Mr. Zhou, how did you decide to follow the career path you have?

In high school, I took the science track, which determined my major in college. However, I realized that my passion lay more in the liberal arts, so I went back and retook that path. Thus, I ended up going to law school. As a motivated student, I wanted to step into the professional world as soon as possible. I cold called international law firms, my English skills eventually impressing an employer and landing me an internship. Once I had a foot in the legal professional world, I was driven to continue on this path, and my application to law school in the U.S. followed.

### 2. What would you say is the most difficult part of being a lawyer?

In a sense, it is very similar to being self-employed. In the legal profession, you must answer for work at all times. Just recently, I was on a business trip and my client called me at 11:00 pm to kick-off a very urgent matter, to which we need to respond right away. Many cases are time-sensitive and require you to work late hours, with pressure, and we don't always have influence on the timetable. Especially with M&A, a lot is at stake, so your client expects a lot from you and you can just as easily also become a scapegoat when things go south, since you are the fee taker and therefore an easy target.

**Therefore, you must be able to work under pressure while taking care not to internalize the stress, otherwise it will end up destroying you. If you can do this, it is a rewarding experience.**



### 3. What advice would you give to succeed in a potential career in international law?

Artificial intelligence is in the process of altering the workplace in all career fields, law included. In the future, it is very likely that AI will replace some functions of being a lawyer. Thus, it is especially important for you to find a niche, some knowledge or experience which would make you valuable and difficult to replace.

Having international connections or knowing something about a specific field like tech or being interculturally competent are some examples. While you're in Shanghai, make the most of your time. **The experience you are getting as an international student in China is very unique, so take the time to explore the language, the culture, and get to know your classmates well. Make deep connections while you are here so that you can keep in contact in the long-term.**

Try to be thoughtful in your job. Much more than test scores or book knowledge alone, emotional intelligence is very important. As a lawyer, the client must like you in order to demand your services. Many people have high scores in college but do not succeed in the workforce because of a lack of attention to detail.

Law firms are hierarchical, and they practice 360-degree review, which means that everyone that works with you will review you. A simple oversight might leave a negative impression on whoever you're working with that might have a negative impact when that person has a chance to review you. My boss who is an American-born Chinese I worked for in Freshfields once told me that he would notice his car's tail light is not working and take special care to have it done right away, for fear that a would-be client might notice that detail in passing and arrive at the conclusion on his own that this lawyer does not manage his details well enough. I don't necessarily fully agree with him on that extremity, but this is one successful lawyer who shares his honest view. This is the kind of feedback you can only get from someone who is close to you and who cares enough to tell you. **The takeaway is, if you want to be successful as a lawyer, try to train yourself to be detail-oriented in all facets of your life, this will carry you a long way.**

I would like to thank Mr. Zhou very much for his kind spirit, extreme positivity during our meetings, and the deep insight I gained into the field of law thanks to our conversations. His experiences have inspired many new ideas I now have to reflect on. It was truly a very valuable time with an incredible mentor!

## Mentee: Muhammad Saffi Ullah Mentor: Joshua Fu



### 1. Tell us more about your work and what one of your typical days on the job looks like?

Since I am doing what I love, the need to distinguish between work days and the weekend becomes a lot less necessary. Instead, I have busy period and rest period, all according to the tasks necessary to complete on hand. I am not working, nor building a career; I am living, having life and life overflowing.

My work at Splendor Plus focuses on connecting nations together through heritage (such as arts and culture) and innovation (such as technology), etc. Specifically, we are pioneers of the industries, creating projects and practices at the national, business, and philanthropic levels to preserve the best of heritage culture to not only help other cultures understand them, but also to ensure the younger generations are equipped with these treasures of the forefathers to better create and grow; to encourage innovation that is human-centric, such as guiding technology to better enable people's creativity, to better people's lives, not to replace them or disable the joys of living.

As the leader of the team, my main work daily is people: communicating, listening, guiding, encouraging, and enabling people, whether it is our own team of partners across the globe or the project team new or familiar. Simultaneously, a combination of creative and strategic design, business and investment structuring, etc.; a combination of group-specific and project-specific tasks. I always remind myself to remember to enjoy every step. I am not doing anything out of necessity; purely joy. Does that mean I have no challenges? Of course not, but **the key is the perspective from which I choose to live and let everything I do breathe with love.**

### 2. Right now, I am at the NYU Washington DC site and everyone here, including the Professors seems to emphasize a lot on networking. How do you view it? What suggestions and tips would you have for me in this regard? And what percentage of your work is networking?

**I think the concept of "networking" needs to be re-examined, especially in the sense of traditional "need-based" relationship building.** A relationship in itself requires a connection point that is more than a need; that is human emotion driven. The traditional mentality of networking builds fragile and empty connections that do not further develop or are easily forgotten, ignored, or broken.

Furthermore, it is a concept that does not work in many other nations or cultures. Perceived social differences, a stronger awareness of privacy, or simply a lack of desire for small talks or forced connections, these are all reasons the traditional networking concept no longer works, especially on a global environment basis.

**The best way is to truly connect, meaning having a real connection with someone. This could be existing or new relationships.** The key is having a genuine connection, through chemistry, through interests, through a natural emotional linkage that cannot be faked. Meanwhile, the motivation to mobilize also needs to be sincere. When you have a true connection, the conversations flow naturally, people will genuinely want to help you; this is very different from premeditated strivings that make people feel uncomfortable or used. Simply put, be polite, considerate, proper, and all the usual business and social etiquette, but be you, and make friends, not just network. This way also makes the whole experience a lot more enjoyable for yourself as well, because you will really enjoy being there with them, hence the dry "networking" becomes a flowing hang out with people you want to talk to. This is how you turn working into living.

### 3. What skill set are you and your business looking for when hiring or working with employees?

First and foremost, we look for persons, living and unique persons who have passions, hopes, likes and dislikes, etc.; we are not merely looking for resumes, abilities, or rehearsed speeches.

Instead we look for people who have spent the time to get to know themselves, through ups and downs, through failure and success, through joy and pain. Someone who has learned through getting up from every fall; someone who has made every experience in life work for their growth. Someone who also has the compassion and consideration for others; someone who love people as much as they love themselves. Sometimes they may not have all the skills and knowledge required for the work at hand, but I would rather have someone who knows themselves, who has passion and is driven to learn, grow, and develop, who is humble, truly humble from knowing themselves, from love and kindness. That is someone I can teach, I can train.

And finally, someone who has joy, not just happiness, but a state of joy which gives them strength to get through anything they experience.

Having all of these is rare, but having the potential is a good start. **As a team we are always there to help people grow and develop, so the right seeds, trees in progress are as welcome as the completed trees.**



## 2023 Distinguished Alumni Speaker Series Recap

On April 19th, we held the first session of the 2023 Spring Distinguished Alumni Speaker Series focusing on **Paths to Passion: Defining Your Career Options**. We were pleased to invite LAW '04 alumna **Stephanie Tang** (Partner, Hogan Lovells), STERN '03 alumnus **Theodore (Teddy) Low** (Senior Director, Nippon Paint China Holdings), STERN EMBA '12 alumnus **Jack Huang** (Managing Partner, M&S Systems Designers Inc.) and NYU Shanghai CO'17 alumna Qing (Sponge) Luo (Consultant, Financial Services and Healthcare Team, Tidalwave Solutions). In this article, we'll recap some highlights from the session.



### 1. How have you figured out your career path? Are there any key moments or figures in college that impacted greatly on you and led you to your current standpoint?

Stephanie: **Mentors** played an important role for me. They can be your friends, family or anyone around you, whom you learn from. When you are working, you can learn from other investors or financial advisors and even your **opposing party**.

Teddy: **School clubs or alumni groups** could be helpful, where you can see what kind of paths the upperclassmen took. You can also directly **reach out to the industry leaders** you admire. They are more than willing to guide you.

Jack: I believe **attitude** is the most important factor. So don't lose your **passion** and that's what motivates you to really take action.

### 2. Have you ever felt confused about your career option in college and in the early stage of your career? How did you deal with it?

Stephanie: As a matter of fact, lawyers always take on the hardest job. And I was wondering if I could **take on a different role**, like investment banker or consultant, rather than such a tough one. I didn't make up my mind to do so, but it turned out I procured more perspectives in evaluating what I can do. So as long as you stay on the track, your career will become your unique ability and your skill.

Teddy: When you plan your career, you need to know **what is trendy**. For me, I chose accounting among all the industries because it was trendy, tangible and it's also transferable to other skills. So you should keep in mind what is hot right now and in the future and also find a job that will give you **strong skills** to sustain your career.

Jack: Confusion is a common topic at the early stage of your career because most of your daily tasks are repetitive and you might feel worthless. So I would break those big challenges down into **short-term plans** to make sure I can achieve the milestones. Then I consult my friends or mentors about next-steps.

### 3. What qualifications are you looking for from the candidates?

Stephanie: One challenge for us when we are hiring is to find the balance between the perspectives of the junior lawyers and our expectations on them. Personally I value candidates' **diligence, integrity and trustworthiness** because these qualities are essential to team work, other than the solid skills.

Teddy: Adding on Stephanie's point, when you collaborate with others on group projects, you can ask your teammates for **feedback** to know more about yourself. Coming back to the question, a prospective candidate should take **initiatives** and add **value** to the company's cause. Don't take everything for granted and always **ask questions** to push things forward.

A key point to remember is different industries require candidates of different personalities. You and the company should be a **mutual good fit** to maximize your own potential.

#### 4. What framework, philosophy, factors do you recommend our students to keep in mind?

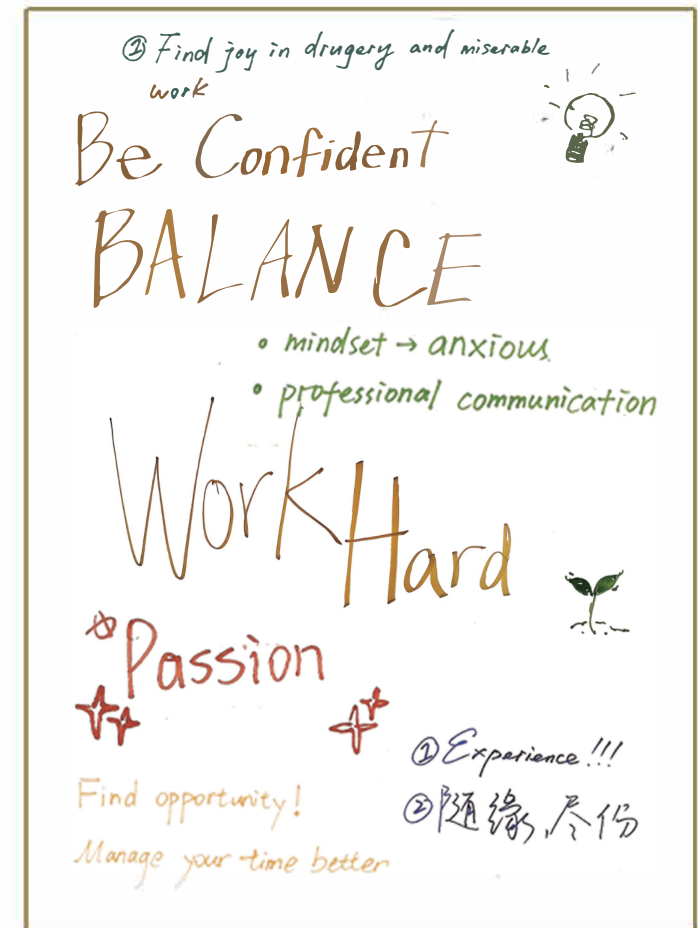
Stephanie: Always think about **the big picture**, in terms of the purpose, the resources at hand. Also, focus on **what you can do** for the team instead of what you can take from others when you engage in teamwork.

Teddy: Find out industries that **interest** you and think backwards on the skill sets you need. Stay **open minded** and try different classes or internships to find your interest. Ask for advice but don't follow others blindly.

Jack: Be **open** to new ideas and **keep learning**. Look at the problem at a different angle and this will help you build your professionalism. Constantly **reflect** on yourself and seize the opportunity when you believe you should pursue a different path.



#### Mentee Get-Together Key Takeaways





## **Mentee Application**

### **Who can apply**

1. NYU Shanghai Sophomores
2. NYU and NYU Abu Dhabi Students currently Studying Away in Shanghai for the whole academic year

### **What to prepare**

1. One-page English Resume
2. Personal Statement
3. Application Form including your mentor choice and reasons

### **How to apply**

Application starts in September. Applicants need to complete the online application form. Please stay tuned to CCD emails (shanghai.careerdevelopment@nyu.edu) and WeChat (ID: NYUShanghaiCDC). Successful applicants will be selected for the program and introduced to their alumni mentor via email by late October.

### **To Learn more:**

<https://shanghai.nyu.edu/mentor>