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Center for
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NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program

2023-2024

MENTEE STORY BOOK



Student Volunteers: Yuhan Liu'26 | Venus Chen'27 | Lein Wu'27 | Esther Feng'27

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Mentee's Voice

Throughout the 2023-2024 Academic Year, we have celebrated the Alumni Executive Mentor Program's 10th anniversary. As this year's mentee cohort, we have had the privilege to partake in this significant milestone, witnessing firsthand the now, decade-long commitment to advancing young student's personal and professional development. We extend our deepest gratitude to NYU Global Alumni Programs and NYU Shanghai Center for Career Development (CCD) for creating and providing us access to this invaluable platform.

As mentees embracing the early stages of our careers, we are eager to learn and forge our paths with intention and ambition. We applied to this program enthusiastically, and since its commencement, we have had the opportunity to stand surrounded by a diverse community of remarkable industry professionals.

We would like to thank our alumni mentors for generously dedicating their time and insights to this program - you have profoundly impacted and enriched our perspectives. To my fellow mentees, thank you for your commitment. It has been an honor to act as your mentee leader representative. As I delve into the following pages of this storybook, I am again inspired by your stories and experiences. It brings a smile to my face to see the strong connections you have forged with your mentors, and I am excited to witness the impact of this experience on our futures.

With warm regards and the anticipation of many more future reunions,

Sincerely,
Adriana Giménez Romera
Mentee Student Leader

Mentee's Voice

There are many points in a person's life where they can take a step to make a change, it's often, quite possibly, the smallest things that have the largest impact on how our lives play out. The lessons my mentor, Stephanie, shared with me will enable me to better identify, understand, and engage with the opportunities for change in the future. Being able to act, even briefly, as the Alumni Executive Mentor Program Student Leader has enabled me to explore my passions further and navigate the complexities of understanding multiple fields, including law, finance, and tech. The program prepares students on what they can look forward to, and possibly even caution them about the tribulations they will face. My mentor, and, more broadly, the alumni society at NYU Shanghai are delighted with the ability to share their knowledge, and I highly encourage any student attending to try their hand at the program. Students have been able to gain internships, job opportunities, experiences beyond their years, and, at the end of it all, a mentor and maybe even a friend. As we celebrate our 10th anniversary, we celebrate the past, but I look forward to seeing the future, and can not wait to see the lessons my mentor shared with me, shared with more ears. This program is a great opportunity for any student interested in gaining real-world knowledge about their fields of interest.

Carson Decker
Mentee Student Leader

Mentee: Poonyasia Chutichetpong

Mentor: Frank Ye



Q1: What were your goals for taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

Since my freshman year, I have been considering pursuing my passions and choosing paths that will be better for me in the future. I also have uncertainty regarding my future career, my strengths and weaknesses, and my long-term life goals. Participating in this program, my primary goals were to find my genuine interests and seek guidance from experts to better shape my career paths. Currently, I have achieved all my goals through this mentor-mentee program. I gained invaluable insights into venture capital during my first meeting with my mentor, as well as significant career and life advice. Moreover, the networking opportunities with other peers and mentors have also expanded my connections and experiences further.

Q2: Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

Initially, my focus was primarily on determining my future path between what I am passionate about and pursuing what I believe to be the best option. However, I have reevaluated my perspectives during the program, which changed my perception of career life. During the first meeting, I was curious about the difference in career transitions, particularly the journey from biology to business. He initially majored in biology, which is what he was passionate about, and changed to finance since he saw the potential that science was only one element that could improve the world, so he wanted to learn from a broader perspective. Consequently, he continued to study graduate school in the business field and established his venture capital firm focusing on bio-life research, notably in COVID-19 vaccine development, aligning with his

initial interests. His academic background and experiences reflect the importance of pursuing a genuine interest, seizing opportunities, and embracing learning through trial and error. I realized that it's essential to find a career path that truly interests me by continuing to explore new areas to discover my passion, strengths, and weaknesses. This journey will show the significance of using the necessary skills to complement my passions. After the meeting, I began exploring new experiences without concern about making mistakes, encountering challenges and obstacles, and understanding that they contribute to personal growth. Through this process, I have understood myself better and have a clearer vision of my professional goals, as well as the steps needed to achieve them.

Q3: What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

One important lesson from my mentor is the significance of being out of my comfort zone and confronting challenges. Accepting mistakes as part of the learning process is essential, which will determine areas of interest and areas that need further improvement. By utilizing personal strengths and addressing weaknesses, one can distinguish themselves while continuously



improving. Moreover, it's essential to prioritize both time and relationship on what truly matters to you. Along the process, the most important thing is to enjoy the journey rather than focusing on the results. As everyone has their challenging times, patience is key that can lead to upcoming positive outcomes.

Mentee: Gabe Wenchel

Mentor: Jeff Wang



Q1: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

From my perspective, I see Jeff as an approachable and experienced person. If I had to use one word to describe him I would choose insightful. Despite us having so far only met online, from the very beginning I could tell he knew a lot and was passionate about what he does. This was evidenced with every question I had asked. He consistently offers clear explanations to complex topics, demonstrating his deep understanding and rich experience. What sets him apart is his ability to connect with me using personal stories and real-life examples, which makes his advice more engaging and applicable. This method not only enriches the learning process but also ensures that the concepts are tied to tangible experiences, enhancing my understanding.

Q2: Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

I believe prior to the start of the program, my perspective has since shifted in many different ways. I am quite grateful for this program to allow me to speak to someone who is much more experienced than me, allowing me to see insights from a different, wiser perspective. For example, at the beginning of the program, I had this idea that doing a CFA would magically make me an expert which would make me land internships/jobs without a problem. Sure, doing a CFA would definitely increase my finance knowledge, or make me a more competitive candidate, but what I learned was, in hindsight, more obvious, that all roads lead to Rome. Or, more clearly, it's not a certificate that will help you, but not only the acquired knowledge but also the process is what will be most beneficial to you.

Q3: What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

I think one takeaway from my mentor that I have now since implemented would be to start doing. Many people would prefer to perhaps put things off if they feel that they could perhaps study it better, or analyze it better, and so on. Succinctly, it would be paralysis by analysis. While I think most people also know they should start taking action, it often isn't realized. For me, I think it materialized once my mentor encouraged me to try things and not over-analyze things. For example, I started getting up at 7:00 AM most days so as to have some time to read or get work in, before the day properly starts. While, of course, the takeaway is not to get up earlier, but in essence it is to become more effective. Waking up early for a few weeks isn't going to make a very large difference in the short run, but what matters is that this skill and discipline, like compound interest, accumulates.

Mentee: Shuyuan Zhang

Mentor: Ryan Xiao



Q1: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

Being an experienced venture capitalist now working in a startup focusing on 3D printer technology, Ryan brought some insights about how to plan on future career development by seeing through the lens of venture capital. Wisely choosing the industry to enter as a starting point would matter. An industry in the expansion phase brings more opportunities and possibilities. Stepping out of the specific industry that you are crazy about and analyzing from a higher level may help to foresee its life cycle and future trends. Besides, he also highlighted the importance of forming a comprehensive outlook from the perspective of company management based on his previous experience in corporate strategy. Reflecting on resource allocation, talent acquisition, executive collaboration and so on contributes to the long-term development of a company and therefore better assists its adjustment and resilience under different stages. This high-level thinking framework would work for other aspects of our life as well, being a powerful tool to fit into the rapidly developing society.

Q2: Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

As a shy girl, one stressful thing for me is proactively reaching out to people I don't know because I don't think I am talkative enough to start a random but rich conversation. However, I was inspired a lot by Ryan's reinterpretation of the concept of "socially active". We don't necessarily have to "talk" to show activeness since it is not the only way to express ourselves. Behaving appropriately depending on different circumstances could be equally important --- sometimes actions speak louder than words. As long as we have a clear goal, are working hard towards it, and could be responsible for the outcome, there are

definitely multiple paths to choose from rather than just speaking more words. He also expanded the definition to the field of self-motivation. Step out of our comfort zone, leveraging the resources around us, and exploring the unknown area itself could be considered active for sure. So just believe in yourself, and embrace the uncertainty.

Q3: 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 joined this Executive Mentor Program with great eagerness to develop a deeper understanding of the finance world, and yes, the insights brought by Ryan could always satisfy my curiosity promptly. However, I never expected that I could learn as much from him as a person throughout the journey. Behaving in a way that well interprets "stay humble, stay foolish", Ryan left a deep impression on me through his modesty and inclusiveness. I was always encouraged to voice my sound and challenge his viewpoints. One way being suggested was to take away reasonable parts from others and refine one's own arguments by constant integration and careful selection. "It is only right because I think it's right. It doesn't mean anything. Right or wrong, you will have your own answer." While talking on the phone, this was the thing that he emphasized again and again --- Open up to any idea, and be critical while listening to others. Engage in different conversations and embrace their diversity. You will foster a unique perspective from the collision of different thoughts.



Mentee: Kehan Luo

Mentor: Mark Yang



Q1: What were your goals for taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

My goal of taking part in the mentorship program was to expand my horizons beyond the campus and to glean wisdom from successful alumni. Mr. Mark is such an insightful and kind mentor. He provided me with insights into academics, life, and opportunities to meet other people and learn from them. Thanks to Mark's invaluable mentorship, I have gained not only practical suggestions and tips for courses and career paths but also long-term advice on the attitudes toward life and the world.

Q2: 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 of the most unexpected yet immensely beneficial experiences was when Mark invited me to volunteer at an alumni exchange event for the field of quantitative finance. Beyond the wealth of knowledge and insights I gained, I actively participated in organizing and assisting the whole process of the event. Through this involvement, I had the opportunity to meet a diverse array of excellent people. I found that all of them shared a common trait: being open-minded and fully attuned to the demands of the times. I find these two points to be of great importance. As Mark has conveyed to me, the university experience is a period of liberty. Rather than prematurely confining oneself to specific pathways, it is advantageous to maintain an open-minded approach and engage in thorough exploration. Whether one ultimately discovers a passion aligned with their innermost desires or reaffirms their initial choices, both outcomes are commendable. Upon acquiring such insights, I am committed to integrating this lesson earnestly into my college journey. After this volunteering experience, I have a clearer mind and confirm my original passion for pursuing a path in quantitative

finance. After this volunteering experience, I have a clearer mind and confirm my original passion for pursuing a path in quantitative finance. I found my enthusiasm for the sheer excitement I feel when contemplating the continuously changing challenges, where I can endeavor to develop my own models and apply them. For this determination in my direction, I owe immense gratitude to Mark, whose guidance led me to declare my passions confidently. Moreover, pursuing one field does not mean being restricted in such a field. I would also like to carry the open-mindedness I learned from Mr. Mark and expand my exposure to other diverse fields like physics, engineering, psychology, etc.

Q3: Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

I used to perceive the quantitative finance arena as a series of rat races, where one must constantly anticipate the twists and turns of a changing world. Observing many of my peers immersing themselves in courses, internships, and research within this field, I felt anxious about preparing for entry. The pressure to accumulate knowledge day and night weighed heavily on me. This



is not completely wrong, but Mark taught me about staying calm and staying curious. I realized that it is a mistake to abandon the inherently powerful trait of human curiosity in the pursuit of preparation for the future. The fact is that you cannot always be prepared for your future. What truly matters is not static knowledge, but the ability to learn and adapt flexibly. Mark taught me not to kill this learning motivation at any age in my life.

Mentee: Mindy Tse

Mentor: Michael Mi



Q1: What were your goals for taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

Coming into this program my goal was to find a career track that I would possibly be interested in and gain more insight from a professional. I felt indecisive about what I wanted to do and had no idea of what future I wanted to pursue. With a major in Business and Finance, I felt that the only thing I knew about my major was its title and brand. However, after meeting with Michael I have learned so much about different career paths. I developed a deeper understanding of my major and my concentration in accounting, especially about the interconnectivity between majors and careers. Previously I felt constrained to my major and felt that I could only be a part of one type of industry. I've learned so much industry insight and felt more confident in my career choices since I met Michael. He tells me many of his own experiences and speaks of many current events that allowed him to have a deeper grasp of different industries. The more I spoke with Michael, the more confidence I had in diving deeper into my career choice. Without this program and Michael, I probably would still be thinking about my career and stuck in a roundabout.

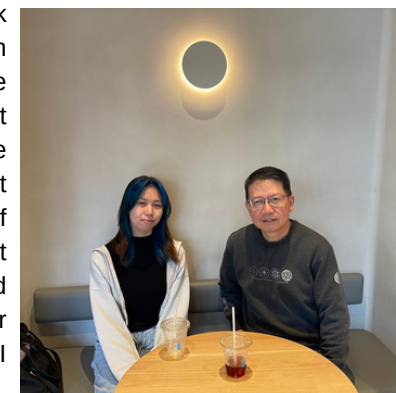
Q2: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

Before I met Michael, I always thought that work was something I had to focus on every day and spent the majority of my time on. However, after speaking with Michael I understand that work isn't everything. I started thinking about how I could incorporate work into a life that I wanted rather than giving up things for work. This helped me plan out a future that doesn't require me to give all my time away, but rather allow me to have a different focus alongside my work. I put this thinking into my personal life as well, where people shouldn't give up the things they

want in life in order to pursue something else that takes everything away. There is always a way to incorporate and compromise a life or even a personal goal without having to give up your own interests and desires. This is what I will hold forever as it gave me a whole new perspective on a subject that I thought I would spend most of my life pursuing.

Q3: 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?

Something that has really stuck with me since meeting with Michael was to be more aggressive. Aggression doesn't have to have a negative connotation, but rather it can act as a momentum to push yourself to achieve a goal. Before our first meeting, I felt hesitant and nervous to ask questions, but after meeting Michael I learned that I didn't need to hesitate when



speaking or when writing on applications. I saw myself change by the day as I became more confident in myself. Speaking with more industry professionals and pushing myself out there has been a progress I would've never thought I could achieve. Being aggressive in pursuing my career has led me to multiple different opportunities and to look towards a future I would have never imagined. Not only did Michael give me advice and push me to delve deeper into my career, but also pushed me to become a more confident self.

Mentee: Sirius(Xingyu) Shi

Mentor: Tony(Ang) Zhu



Q1: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

First of all, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my mentor, Tony Zhu, for his insightful instruction and all-round support of my personal and professional growth. Reminiscent of the familial warmth and wisdom often associated with a paternal figure, Tony embodies a unique blend of approachability and sagacity. He loves posting shares in moments about his life, inspiration, and the latest analysis on the market. Each meeting with him begins with a reassuring pat on the shoulder, a gesture that sets a welcoming tone and reinforces his supportive nature. His mentorship transcends the typical boundaries of professional advice, encompassing a holistic approach to both life and career development including mentality management, how to find my own alpha (or advantage) to beat the market and cultivate it to become a moat (as Warren Buffet might say) that serves to protect and distinguish my professional identity in the competitive landscape. Furthermore, Tony recognizes and nurtures my keen interest in quantitative finance. His efforts to connect me with a seasoned quant in the industry have not only expanded my horizons but also enriched me with considerable technical skills. Overall, Tony is an exceptional, dedicated, insightful mentor as well as an approachable friend that I am so lucky to have in my life.

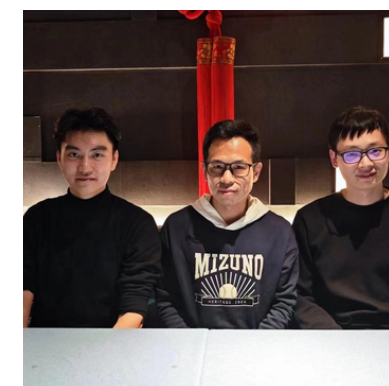
Q2: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

My mentor imparted a pivotal lesson that resonates deeply with me: at this stage in our lives, our primary focus should be on studying, specifically the acquisition of universal skills. This encompasses a broad and versatile set of abilities, crucial in today's ever-evolving landscape. He emphasized the importance of mathematics, computer science, and data science—fields that form the backbone of our digital age and are indispensable across various industries. These technical skills equip us

with the analytical tools necessary to navigate complex problems and innovate solutions that not only make us competitive in our own country but also across different nations. By mastering these universal skills, we position ourselves to adapt and thrive in diverse environments, tackle multifaceted challenges, and seize opportunities in a wide array of fields. My mentor's advice underscores the fact that these skills are not just foundational but also instrumental in fostering long-term success and relevance in an increasingly competitive and interconnected world. Also, he gave some practical advice on course choosing. For instance, he suggested I take courses with Aswath Damodaran and Nassim Nicholas Taleb in Stern. Damodaran is one of the foremost experts in valuation and Taleb is the author of numerous famous books including "The Black Swan" and "Antifragile".

Q3: What were your goals for taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

When I joined this program, my primary objectives were to gain a deeper understanding of the finance industry, identify a clear career path, and establish meaningful connections with seasoned professionals in the field. I am pleased to report that these goals have been fully realized due to the dedicated support and guidance of my mentor. His extensive knowledge



and network within the industry have not only illuminated the intricacies of finance but have also provided me with invaluable insights that have shaped my professional aspirations. Furthermore, the relationships I've cultivated with senior industry figures through his introductions have been instrumental in expanding my understanding and creating opportunities that align with my career goals. Thanks to my mentor's unwavering commitment and assistance, my participation in this program has been profoundly successful and enriching.

Mentee: Yuhong Zhang

Mentor: Wayne Lee



Q1: What were your goals for taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

Engaging with seasoned professionals who have accumulated years of industry experience is a rare opportunity, and it was my primary reason for joining this program. I was eager to gain diverse perspectives shaped by time, understand changes in the world, and better define my own place within it. I am immensely grateful to my mentor, Wayne. The insights he provided have been incredibly enriching. Through our conversations, I gained a deeper understanding of both life and work in the United States, particularly in the finance industry. I can confidently say that my goals for this mentorship have been fully met!

Q2: Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

I'd like to share a transformative piece of wisdom that Wayne offered during our sessions. He advised, "Think of your plan as how your family would go." This powerful piece of advice has reshaped how I view my personal and professional journey, embedding my aspirations within the expansive narrative of my family's legacy. It instilled in me a profound sense of duty and pride, propelling me forward with a blend of the responsibility and the encouragement that comes from my love for my family. Initially, I perceived this approach as something reserved for families with a storied past, but I've come to realize that each of us is the protagonist in our own epic, capable of pioneering our unique legacy. This insight prompted a significant shift in my decision-making process, moving away from youthful spontaneity towards a more strategic, resource-driven approach, considering where I aim to be in 10 or 30 years. Wayne underscored the importance of building upon the 'shoulders of giants', a metaphor for utilizing the available resources and foundations laid by predecessors to forge my own path.

Additionally, he highlighted the indispensable role of networking and cultivating meaningful relationships within the industry. These connections are not merely conduits to opportunities - they are partnerships that can amplify my professional capacity and influence. Through this mentorship, I've learned that strategic relationships are crucial for unlocking doors to new possibilities and achieving my fullest potential in the competitive landscape of our industry.

Q3: What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

A critical lesson I've embraced from my mentor Wayne is the indispensable value of adopting a global perspective in today's tightly interconnected world. He stressed the importance of understanding and navigating diverse cultures, markets, and political environments to achieve success across any industry. Wayne has inspired me to cultivate a comprehensive worldview, urging me to stay abreast of current trends and to actively seek opportunities for studying and working abroad. This approach not only enhances my self-awareness but also enriches personal and professional development. Leveraging my current environment at NYU Shanghai, along with the study away opportunities it offers, I am keen to immerse myself in diverse cultural settings. By forging connections with peers from varied backgrounds and assimilating a spectrum of perspectives, I am positioning myself to become a more informed and adaptable global citizen. This actionable insight from Wayne is not just a piece of advice - it's a strategy for lifelong learning and growth.



Mentee: Harvey Jiang

Mentor: Yang Xia



Q1: 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?

In the end, I did realise that Yang's advice has influenced every bit of my future choices. Our first meeting happened in quite a hurry when Yang was rushing between meetings and we decided to meet somewhere around the Hongqiao Airport where he used to have work lunch. We mostly talked while eating and walking, but this never disrupted his passion for sharing. He asked my major as usual. As a financial expert, he approved my willingness to explore the fundamental mechanism of market operations by studying both Econ and Math. However, he surprised me with his following suggestion of taking psychological and behavioral-related courses, which in my original belief, was miles away from either of my majors. But Yang insisted on that tryout and promised me a brand new understanding of interactions of humans both in conversations and in the market. Somehow, I swapped to a behavioural economics course this semester after consulting with Prof. Weng, one of my economics professors, and actually, I finished my last session with Kyle (Behavioural Prof), and it has been indeed one of the nicest experiences that I've ever expected in college. Besides routined answers on learning objectives, I have been gifted with a funny but valuable takeaway. I began to get angry less when I could understand the behavioural mechanism that human beings are supposed to show. As a rational thinker when judging others (most of us are), I usually get puzzled about why people don't choose the obvious "right" solution before they make the mistakes, but the truth is, when I later on among those reaction systems, I found that I will do the exact same thing. Thinking back, I really appreciate Yang proposing the innovative course choice for me which later ignited my new perspectives to the present where my research and studies rely.

Q2: What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

One of the most easily actionable insights from Yang is to think about the fundamentals of everything. I once asked for Yang's opinions on the Consulting industry, as many, both in and outside the industry, have expressed negative perspectives on it. Yang didn't answer me straightly, instead promoted me to the reason why companies ever need consulting companies. Companies are making decisions by themselves, but they might fail, and consulting companies are there to secure their choices. That's what I thought, and I really don't believe that a company, successful as it is, needs to reach out to the third-party to ensure their correctness. However, Yang said, when you mentioned "successful", you mean the company or the people who run it. People are going to retire, they are going to be old, if they make one right decision, that doesn't mean that they need to be right next. Meanwhile, when a company becomes larger, it's no longer one or a group of people in charge. Consulting companies are not there to create successful businesses, they are hired to maintain the advantages of the enterprises, so even in a bad market, they will have businesses anyway.

Q3: Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

When I communicated with Yang, I mentioned that I was working as a research assistant and used to work as a researcher in securities. However, Yang alerted me that even though both occupations have the word research in them, it doesn't necessarily mean that I was doing research. Grabbing datasets for your boss only doesn't really count as research, instead, creating new ideas does. That's part of the reason why I came up with more innovative projects with the professors, with one of them being completed individually.

Mentee: Makayla Hsieh

Mentor: Gloria Song



Q1: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

“Pick what compels you, and run towards problems.”

Right from our initial meeting, Gloria posed a reflective question that would shape our subsequent discussions: “Where do you see yourself in 10 years?” This wasn’t just a question about career aspirations; it was an invitation to reverse-engineer my future into actionable steps. Gloria’s philosophy of starting with the end in mind allowed me to identify my core values, what truly drives my ambitions and the fears that could potentially hold me back. Gloria firmly believes that everyone has a niche in the world, provided they have aligned their inherent strengths and ignited passions. However, understanding these aspects of oneself is merely the starting point. The journey extends into harnessing these personal insights to make a tangible difference in society. Gloria encouraged me to contribute my skills and energy towards a cause or a problem that resonated with me personally. From our conversations, Gloria often drew up examples from her network to showcase that a deeper sense of purpose and joy is what ultimately drives individuals to a good career. Through these stories, Gloria



demonstrated that knowledge and development come from proactive engagement from tackling difficulties head-on. By finding something that you can contribute to, you’ll not only grow in your career but also find fulfillment. She taught me to seek out challenges, not avoid them because overcoming

obstacles is how we learn and improve. In short, Gloria’s wisdom is: understand who you are, recognize what drives you, and then use that knowledge to tackle issues that matter. By doing this, you’ll carve out a meaningful place for yourself in the world and make a genuine impact.

Q2: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

I was honored to celebrate Gloria’s decade of service with NYU Shanghai’s Alumni Executive Mentor Program this Spring. Gloria was everything I wished for from a mentor as she not only possesses extensive experience in her industry, but she is also passionate about sharing her insights on industry trends and giving valuable career guidance. To be honest, I was a bit intimidated when I first met Gloria, and I was expecting to learn from her experiences by listening to her talk about her life experiences. Instead, Gloria offered a listening ear and engaged me in a dynamic dialogue, keenly attentive to my narrative. I always felt safe talking about my concerns about my early career with Gloria, because she would curate a safe space for me by asking follow-up questions. Gloria’s mentorship style is a blend of empathy and pragmatism. While asserting her understanding of my situation, Gloria points out the realistic options available to me, guiding me through potential hurdles with a firm but encouraging hand. She always emphasized the importance of making well-informed decisions, not only in the context of immediate internship opportunities but also in considering long-term career planning. Gloria’s approach has always been to foster independence; she encouraged me to analyze situations from various angles and to develop my own strategies for addressing challenges. This has not only boosted my confidence but has also equipped me with the critical thinking skills necessary to navigate the complexities of any professional environment. Her unwavering support and thoughtful guidance have been instrumental in shaping the professional I am becoming. Gloria’s dedication to mentoring goes beyond mere advice; it involves cultivating a mentor-mentee relationship that truly enhances personal and professional growth. I am immensely grateful for the mentorship Gloria has provided, and I look forward to further cultivating our relationship in the future.



Mentee: Harry(Guanheng) Cen
Mentor: Alan Li



Q1: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

From our first conversation, my mentor and I delved into the topic of uncertain future planning. While I had always been aware of the importance of networking, I had never truly grasped how to put this into practice. My mentor inspired me to expand my network through those I already knew, making the original nerve-wracking idea of building connections a tangible goal. By engaging with the friends of my friends, I began to see my network as a living entity that thrived on each new connection. In addition, my mentor also instilled in me the need for critical reflection when absorbing the experiences of successful individuals, reminding me that not every piece of advice is one-size-fits-all. This novel approach of networking has significantly altered how I approach my personal and professional relationships. By seeing beyond the surface level of each connection, I have learned to appreciate the intricate web of interactions that foster both individual growth and collective success.

Q2: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

An important lesson from my mentor that could benefit my peers is the principle of seizing every opportunity with initiative. Before the program, I was hesitant to actively pursue opportunities, worrying that being too aggressive might discomfort or annoy others. However, my mentor supported the opposite approach, encouraging me to proactively interact with colleagues and peers and not to shy away from asking questions. This advice changed my thought process, allowing me to approach my studies and professional engagements with newfound confidence and motivation. I've learned the importance of clear and direct communication and the transformative impact it can have on one's self-assurance and maturity.

Q3: 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 was originally nervous, but thanks to my mentor's unexpected down-to-earth, and comforting demeanor, I was able to engage in a stellar, open-hearted, and helpful experience. Initially, I harbored concerns that mentors might be unapproachable or carry a sense of superiority due to their professional stature. However, these concerns quickly dissolved after my first interaction with my mentor. The openness with which they invited my questions, regardless of their complexity, was unexpected and deeply appreciated. Throughout our conversations, my mentor demonstrated an inspiring humility despite their extensive experience in the financial sector. This attitude not only provided valuable industry insights and eased my transition into the professional world, but also imparted a vital life lesson on the importance of staying grounded and approachable, regardless of one's achievements.



Mentee: Yuhan Liu

Mentor: Danny Bao



Q1: Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

Throughout my participation in this mentor program, my understanding of future education options, especially the choice between enrolling in a graduate program or pursuing a Ph.D., has evolved profoundly. Initially, my plans did not extend beyond a Master's degree. However, my mentor introduced me to a new way of thinking about this important life decision. He likened the process of choosing a postgraduate path to navigating a decision tree, where each branch represents potential future pathways and outcomes. He explained that while most graduate programs often focus on immediate employment, a Ph.D. opens diverse avenues, ranging from academia and industry research to potential roles in governmental and non-profit sectors. This broad spectrum of opportunities highlighted the Ph.D.'s unique advantage in offering flexibility and depth in career development. Encouraged by my mentor to consider these options early, I learned the importance of strategic planning and foresight in shaping one's academic and professional trajectory. This mentorship has not only informed my understanding of educational pathways but also enriched my approach to making future career decisions.

Q2: What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

One actionable takeaway from my mentor's guidance was the importance of seizing opportunities for academic enrichment when studying away. Specifically, he advocated for a diverse course selection, particularly recommending classes at the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences in New York, the leading center for applied mathematics. Drawing from his MBA experience at the Stern School of Business, where he balanced work and study, he shared experiences

that underscored practical learning and exposure to industry insights. For one thing, he stressed the value of integrating academic expertise with real-world experience, sharing how he learned to use statistical tools to tackle financial challenges effectively. For another, he also spoke about engaging with distinguished professors and industry experts in fields like entrepreneurial finance, who brought invaluable real-life case studies into the classroom. By encouraging me to optimize my learning opportunities in New York, he underscored the transformative impact of immersive education and the advantages of learning from seasoned professionals.

Q3: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

A valuable lesson I learned from my mentor centers on making informed career choices and avoiding herd mentality. He advised against merely following prevailing trends, which often prove fleeting and could negatively impact one's future trajectory. Instead, he emphasized the importance of discovering and pursuing personal passions. Highlighting the strong correlation between job satisfaction and alignment with one's interests, he argued that choosing a career that resonates with your passions ensures lasting fulfillment. Moreover, my mentor stressed the importance of aligning one's career with personal values. He explained that a mismatch between professional responsibilities and personal beliefs can lead to significant dissatisfaction and energy depletion. This advice resonated with me, encouraging me to prioritize personal satisfaction and values alignment in my career decisions, fostering a sense of purpose and long-term professional fulfillment. Inspired by this, I plan to explore diverse industries and academic fields, seeking hands-on experiences to better understand what aligns with my values and interests. By doing so, I aim to identify a rewarding and meaningful career path that allows me to make a positive impact while achieving personal and professional satisfaction.



Mentee: Tong Qu

Mentor: Ray Lu



Q1: What were your goals of taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

My primary goal in taking part in this program is to get some deep insights about the financial industry and gain some suggestions related to my future career path. Though I could get useful information from my professors and classmates, I still think what we can learn about at school remains a certain distance from what is happening around the world. By attending this program, I hope to grab the opportunity to talk with professionals in the financial industry and get their opinions about what is the right thing to do now. I think the program perfectly meets my expectations. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my mentor Ray Lu, who has provided me with global perspectives of the whole industry in such an interconnected world and also shared his experience in working in both China and the US. I must say I have benefited a lot from this program and taking part in it is definitely the right choice for me which I will never regret.

Q2: How do you see your mentor? What does he/her look like?

When I first met with Ray, I felt like I was not only talking with a mentor but also a close friend. He was 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 and he also takes the time to understand my situation and concerns. His comprehensive and profound understanding of the business world has helped me broaden my horizons in various fields of the financial industry. His guidance has been instrumental in shaping my personal and professional growth. I appreciate the opportunity to have him as my mentor and friend.

Q3: Can you share a perspective that you have revalued throughout the program?

A perspective that made me revalued after the program may be the diverse direction of my future career path. Before the program, I was kind of stubborn and believed that I must get a job in investment banking immediately after graduation. However, after talking with my mentor, I gradually understand there are a lot of job opportunities in different fields including venture capital, private equity, and also accounting. As an undergraduate student, I should not limit my eyes to only one area in the financial industry. Instead, I should try to explore different possibilities and choose what suits me best in the future. My perspectives on my future career path have changed significantly after the program. Thanks to Ray's mentorship, I feel more confident in navigating my career path and excited about the diverse opportunities ahead.



Mentee: Cedric(Liyi) Jiang

Mentor: Zhen Ji



Q1: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

Mr Ji Zhen is a gentle, approachable, helpful person, who is exactly the kind of mentor anyone would hope for. After several in-person meetings with him, I found that he's not only knowledgeable and experienced in diverse business areas but also incredibly supportive and understanding. His approachable manner means that no question is too small or insignificant; he is always ready to help. Moreover, Mr. Ji Zhen's openness extends beyond just professional topics. He is also open to discussing broader life advice, making him not only a mentor for my career development but also a wise counselor in my life. His ability to navigate through a wide range of discussions—from intricate career strategies to personal development and more—makes him an invaluable resource. His guidance has often provided me with fresh perspectives, helping me to tackle challenges and seize opportunities more effectively. Having such a resourceful and empathetic mentor like Mr. Ji Zhen has greatly enhanced many aspects of my personal and professional life.

Q2: Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

When I first joined the program, my understanding of what constituted a "good career" was quite conventional, influenced heavily by societal norms and typical career paths every business student may pursue. Mr. Ji has been instrumental in broadening my perspective. Through our conversations, he shared valuable insights into today's economic environment and the myriad career opportunities it presents, many of which I had never considered. This knowledge pushed me to rethink traditional business career paths and explore some other emerging fields. More importantly, my interactions with Mr. Ji led to a shift in my mindset. I moved from an all-in pursuit of a job in consulting or finance to seeking a career that aligns with global economic trends. This shift

has fundamentally changed not only my career aspirations but also my overall philosophy toward life, compelling me to seek true purpose and broader impact in my professional endeavors.

Q3: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

Think Out of the Box: Mr. Ji consistently emphasizes the importance of innovation, especially during challenging economic times. He often quotes the adage, "Survival of the fittest," to highlight that each era presents unique opportunities. He encourages me to approach problems with creativity and to always look forward rather than dwelling on the past. This approach to thinking creatively and seeking out new opportunities can be crucial for anyone looking to advance in today's fast-paced world.

Don't Underestimate Yourself: Confidence is vital in any field, particularly when facing challenges. There have been occasions when I doubted my ability to explore different career opportunities. Mr. Ji observed these moments of self-doubt and always offered encouragement and support. His belief in my capabilities

helped me build my own confidence, pushing me to take on challenges that I might have otherwise avoided. This lesson in self-belief is something that can dramatically influence a student's growth and success. Gaining Practical Experience: Mr. Ji emphasizes the value of practical, hands-on experience. He advocates for engaging in internships within one's field of interest. This isn't just about building a resume; it's about applying theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, which enhances my employability. His advice to actively seek out these opportunities has driven me to embrace practical experiences, significantly deepening my understanding of the industry and improving my job prospects.



Mentee: Nam Son Dang Thai
Mentor: Alfred Wong



Q1: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

On our first meeting our conversations may have started quiet but it didn't take long for us to talk freely about things. Mr. Wong was very happy to share his life experiences, and the insights and advice that he gave me were all very helpful. I always enjoy talking with him because our conversations are not one-sided at all – we both share things that we find interesting, and it's always a pleasure because Alfred seems to know about everything that's going on in the world! Mr. Wong is obviously a very busy man, given his position running an investment group with activities everywhere around the world. Yet, to be committed to the program for more than 10 years, and to have always been able to make time for a long sit-down dinner with me where we could talk freely about everything is something I'll always look up to him for. When you're in an executive position like his, time is worth everything, and I highly respect his ability to dedicate time to leisurely activities like these, even when it's easy to fall into the pothole of work and business.

Q2: 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?

If I had to pick what gave me the deepest impression from our first meeting, I would say it was that Mr. Wong and I both share a sentiment of adventure. We both ventured out from where we were born and raised to go to different environments to study and work. We believe that there is a virtue to bravery and exploration – you must be able to step out of your comfort zone if you want to grow and better yourself as a person. The more you experience, the more you dare to do things you've never done before, and the better you are prepared for what's to come later. Taking this advice, I mustered the courage to catch up with an expert in my field who was planning to start a project on AI

biochemistry, an expert in my field who was planning to start a project on AI biochemistry, and since then I have been self-studying the required concepts as well as talking to professors about it. The position I plan to take next year will not be easy and will require more learning, but I am still excited to do it. Looking back on what he told me, I think he ultimately gave me the small boost of confidence I needed.

Q3: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

Connections and relationships are two-way streets. I came into the program to learn from the insights and experiences of highly experienced alumni but later was shown by Mr. Wong that the alumni also benefit from learning about the unique backgrounds of every generation of students that they mentor. As people who are in an environment where we are engaged with so many people from so many places, we have the



chance but also a responsibility to connect people around us together, in the spirit of mutual benefit and understanding. Many students think networking is just going around and trying to ask questions or favors from others but fail to understand that they in turn need to give value to the other party as well. It's impossible to make everyone revolve around you, and you need to think about connecting those around you together. Care for those around you, not just for your own sake, but for the benefit of everyone, and it will only be a matter of time before you also reap the benefits of your surroundings.

Mentee: Athar Ali

Mentor: Andy Xia



Q1: 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 had stepped into the program with a primary objective of understanding the technical concepts behind the working of a PE firm. My mentor, Mr. Andy Xia, is an executive director at PAG, a PE firm with \$50 Billion. I had inquired questions like “Why has there been so much more volatility with the PAG III fund?”, “Also between the common that shows PAG III fund’s J curve, what do investors value the most between IRR, MOIC?”, “If you could also briefly explain what a ‘vintage year is.’” Each one of my questions corresponded with a direct answer that helped to quell my curiosity. Perhaps a secondary benefit was simply the inherited confidence of having a mentor like Mr. Andy. My personal background does not stem from a universe where finance was of importance, or even appropriate. Even the topic of money was considered a taboo topic in my household situated in a developing nation struggling with economic challenges. I was never allowed to have a conversation about money. Before my enrolment at NYU, we lacked opportunities to converse about technical financial topics in academic settings simply because in a country that lacks the complex structure of financial institutions they did not have the answers to our questions. However, having questions not only answered but validated by an industry professional gives that timorous kid the confidence to ask more questions, and even more to capitalize on opportunities that are now available.

Q2: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

“I guess there is no great way around it except for moving on and trying to learn from these challenges,” was the answer my mentor provided me when I had requested his advice on a situation that had me perhaps a little disheartened. The words had struck a chord. As humans we tend to inflate our happy experiences and repress our failures. We tend to feel lost when things don’t tend to go our way, and that’s okay. It is not always the case where we need to find a solution to every problem. Sometimes it is perhaps more crucial to inherit that failure and learn from it, rather than try to figure a way to escape it. While I hope to achieve many great things in life, I also know that I’ll face just as great failures along the way. When that happens, I’ll know that there’s no great way around it except for moving on and trying to learn from them. I hope others can also benefit from this advice along their journey in life.

Q3: Any other things that you would like to share.

I’ve always had an innate fascination with biographies. I believe that there’s something so fascinating about reading about someone’s whole life inked on paper. My mentor recommended – which later became one of my favorite reads of all time – *Out of Gobi* by Weijan Shan. I have been in absolute awe of this book, everything from its inherent content to the prose was infatuating. Just to mention a few favorite quotes from the book:

“It is really true that in international relation, there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent interests”

“Men marry women hoping they will never change; women marry men hoping they will change, both are disappointed”

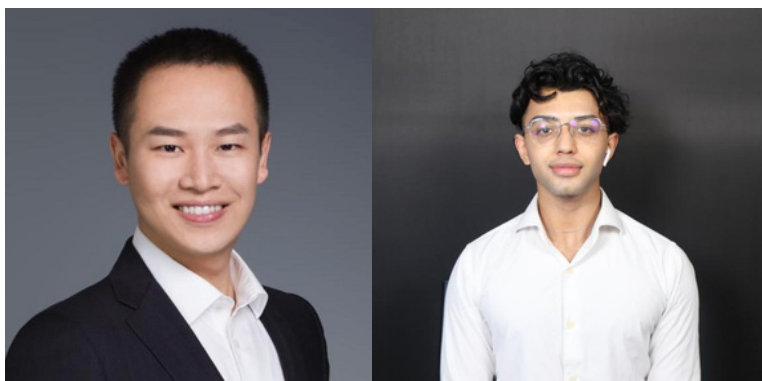
“I think one always appreciates most the things that are difficult to get, those things that once seemed impossible to attain”

NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program

"I never cared to respect authorities on the basis of their authorities alone"

"Too much of a good things really can be too much"

I'd highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to read a critically written book.



Marketing & Media

Mentee: Phương Anh Nguyễn

Mentor: Joshua Fu



Q1: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

I cherished the chance to participate in the Alumni Executive Mentor Program and to get to know my mentor, Joshua Fu. Joshua is an incredibly charismatic, creative, and intriguing individual. From our first conversation, I could feel his deep passion for his work and his strong belief in pursuing what resonates with oneself rather than simply following trends. Our first one-on-one meeting took place in a cute little coffee shop in the Black Stone Apartments area (one of the most important protected heritage architectures in Shanghai), where Joshua introduced me to the area's many exploration opportunities. He specifically selected that area because of my expressed interest in arts and culture. Through conversations with him, I could feel the wealth of experience he possesses—not just in terms of work but also the perspectives gained from actively engaging with the world around him and drawing inspiration from it. I truly admire his principles and aspire to follow his passion and approach, while - at the same time, as Joshua suggested, exploring what truly aligns with me.

Q2: Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

The first time we met, Joshua offered me valuable advice on how to explore and better understand myself, my taste, and what deeply resonates with me. I still recall feeling a bit hesitant to ask Joshua why I just don't resonate with some very famous designs, and no matter how I see it, I cannot appreciate it the way many people praise it. Joshua reassured me that it's perfectly okay to have different tastes, and encouraged me to explore what truly speaks to me. Because of that, I slowly learned to become more truthful with myself, no longer feeling obligated to like things just because others do. While I know I have a long journey ahead, shortly after my one-on-one with Joshua, during a

NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program

trip to Beijing, I made a point to visit exhibitions showcasing ancient Chinese arts, jewelry, costumes, ceramics, and more. There, I found pieces that inspired me greatly, contributing to my understanding of what I appreciate. As Joshua often reminds me, exploration isn't something that happens overnight, but I've been enjoying the process and learning from it, just as he advised.

Q3: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

Throughout the course of an academic year, the most memorable advice that Joshua gave me was when I was rejected from an academic internship opportunity that I was genuinely hoping for. At that time, I felt disappointed and somewhat hopeless, as I saw it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that I just missed, and which also shook my confidence in pursuing other opportunities. I turned to Joshua for advice, because what I needed was the point of view from a respectable professional and someone who may understand my situation. Joshua told me a key message: a decision made out of fear or anxiety is rarely a good decision. A good decision should be made out of clarity and happiness. He told me to reevaluate if the opportunity truly aligns with the future I want to pursue, or if I was merely afraid of missing out on something I was not particularly clear about. It did not only make me feel better about not getting what I thought I wanted, but it also redirected my path and perspectives afterward. I sat down and reflected on what I wanted; I carved out my action plan, charged the online classes on my parents' credit card, and started taking actions that went in the direction of pursuing my goals, not just what I was told to do. I even decided to redo my entire resume, and just in a week following that, I managed to land my first internship.

NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program

But this story isn't really about the internship, nor the one I missed. It's not solely about how my learning journey with Joshua led to a successful ending and that ending is all that matters. This is about how my mentor altered my perspectives and helped me handle rejection in a positive, meaningful manner, even in the midst of a busy work day and my texts were as long as essays. As Joshua said to me, his mentorship will not just conclude when the school year ends, leaving us never to communicate again. He will always be my mentor, and I'm immensely grateful for that.



Mentee: Rebecaa Zhao

]Mentor: Lisa Chang



Q1: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

My mentor for the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program's 10th cycle is Lisa Chang, the founder and creative director for Angle Communications. With a background in International Business & Marketing from Stern, Lisa is renowned for her ability to connect Western cultures and influences with her APAC audience. Her understanding of the local consumer base has helped propel international brands to new heights in China, building distinctive stories around brands people know and love. Pepsi, Chanel, H&M, Line Friends...you name it, she's probably worked with them before. Lisa has so much valuable industry experience, and I love how she's always traveling, looking for new adventures, and picking up all sorts of interesting projects along the way. Beyond marketing, Lisa invests in indie films (The King of Peking) and curates cutting-edge exhibitions (The World of Tim Burton), while also mentoring the next generation of aspiring marketers.

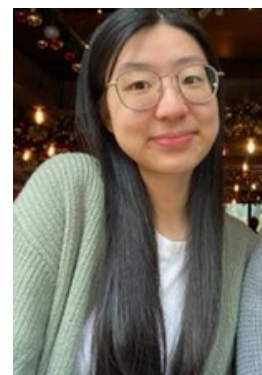
Q2: What's the biggest piece of advice you received from your mentor? How did it go? What changes did you see in yourself by taking the advice?

"You should try to immerse yourself in different kinds of experiences and environments. Stepping out of your comfort zone isn't easy, but first-hand experience is the best (and only) way to figure out what you want to do. Being in Shanghai is a fantastic opportunity and you should make every effort to pursue unique life experiences that wouldn't be possible anywhere else in the world. Practice the language with locals, experiment with new hobbies, and check things off your bucket list. Being in a new environment doesn't mean you have to give up all activities you did back home. Since you love running in the States, I'd recommend joining a local running club here! There are a lot of community and neighborhood groups that are foreigner-friendly.

Remember, you can always start small and work your way up." I tend to overthink and Lisa's given me a lot of confidence & reassurance. We don't have to take everything too seriously. It's ok if some things are out of our control because life is unpredictable that way. Agonizing over details we can't control won't help resolve the problem—things will work out the way they're meant to. Only worrying about what we can actively change is a mindset I've been working on incorporating. It's not perfect (I still overthink haha), but we're getting there!

Q3: What were your goals for taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

The Alumni Executive Mentor program was a way to get involved with the NYU community beyond our immediate student body. Networking with industry professionals helps build fundamental interpersonal skills we'll need going forward. I wanted to take advantage of our global network and learn from people who have had decades of international work experience. The program felt like the perfect opportunity for cultivating meaningful relationships, honing my communication skills, and fostering a deeper understanding of industry trends and expectations. From getting to know fellow mentees in my cohort to meeting Lisa, I thoroughly enjoyed the program experience and feel that I've achieved most of the goals I had going into it.



Mentee: Angel(Siqin) Guo

Mentor: Carol Zhou



Q1: What were your goals for taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

My primary goal in participating in this program was to engage with accomplished alumni and learn from their experiences. It was both interesting and insightful to listen to my mentor Carol telling her experiences. Interacting with Carol, who excels in her respective fields, has provided invaluable insights and inspiration. I've gained a deeper understanding of beauty and fashion industry trends and insights beyond what textbooks offer. While I've made significant strides in this aspect through my mentorship, there's always more to learn, and I remain committed to continued growth and learning.

Q2: What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

One key takeaway from my mentor Carol that I can readily put into action is the importance of resilience and acuteness in navigating the professional landscape. Her career journey underscores the significance of perseverance in the face of challenges, and that's what gets her here today. As an SVP who makes essential decisions in investments, she told me it is always important to stay agile and have a vision toward future trends. I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for Carol's guidance and support throughout this program. Her willingness to share her knowledge and expertise with me has been invaluable in shaping my perspective and helping me navigate my career path. These lessons serve as a constant reminder for me to be both persistent and acute at the same time in today's dynamic environment.

Q3: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

From my mentor, I've gained invaluable insights into the beauty and fashion industry, along with precious career advice that can be generalized to benefit other students from hearing. Firstly, she emphasizes the significance of building a diverse skill set and staying curious about emerging trends and innovations. Additionally, she encourages young people to be passionate and active in the workplace and considers it as one of the most important qualities for young people. Finally, she emphasizes the need for women to boldly voice their opinions in male-dominated workplaces and actively advocate for their worth and contributions. These lessons resonate not only within the beauty and fashion industry but also across various professional domains, making them universally applicable and invaluable for all of us.



Mentee: Jinyuan Xu

Mentor: Julliet Pan



Q1: What were your goals for taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

Primarily, I was motivated to apply to this program to connect with accomplished alumni, aiming to engage in meaningful exchanges of fresh insights and ideas. If I were to distill my experience at NYU Shanghai into a single word, it would undoubtedly be "diversity." I firmly believe that diverse perspectives and ideas are essential for progress, both on a societal and individual level. Diversity enhances our comprehension of various subjects and cultures. However, much of what we learn in academic settings revolves around theoretical knowledge and its application, often lacking real-world societal perspectives. Alumni, with their significant accomplishments in diverse fields, possess profound insights into the social dimensions of various issues, which is precisely what I hope to glean from participating in this program. From my perspective, most of the goals were achieved. To be honest, my mentor was more approachable than I had expected and I didn't feel any barriers talking to my mentor. Hence, our conversations were more casual and it paved the way for a cozier conversation. For example, we talked about the popular TV series filmed in the Shanghai dialect called "Blossoms Shanghai", which was also Wong Kar-wai's first TV series. Since I'm from Shanghai and my mentor was born in Shanghai, this TV series brought us more topics to talk about. We discussed how people in different age groups might view this TV series and what made this TV series outstanding. Since I'm a student majoring in IMA, I believe that this kind of conversation will bring me more inspiration for my work.

Q2: Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

Indeed, my perspective on my potential career path has shifted. Before

this program, I had fallen somewhat into the utilitarian trap, being too eager to find my potential track to better plan my academic career. However, after communicating with my mentor, I realized that it was important to explore different fields and tracks during my undergraduate years. In other words, don't set limits on yourself!

Q3: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

I think the biggest advice that I learned from my mentor was how to figure out my career path. My mentor told me about three main factors: the first factor is your interest or hobby. This matters a lot because you have a great passion for your interest or hobby, and this passion can become the main driving force to help you stick to your career and make progress. The second factor is your skill or technical knowledge. This could involve expertise in a specific area or any task that you naturally excel at. The third factor is the trend of the market. When we are deciding our career path, we also need to consider which field has greater potential than others. Then we need to make three lists, each corresponding to one of the three factors. By doing this, we can discover new connections between different components in the list to find the career that fits us. This "DIY" experience brings me new inspirations for what could be my future career. I believe this advice could be beneficial to other students as well.



Mentee: Victoria Cheng

Mentor: William Hsieh



Q1: What were your goals for taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

When joining this program, my goal was to gain industry knowledge of the entertainment business and develop interpersonal skills to assist me in my career. My aim was to have a mentor with whom I could relate to on various levels. Thanks to this program, I was able to meet William, who served not only as a mentor but also as a friend I could open up to and engage in many insightful conversations with. I see him as a role model, and I aspire to work towards becoming as open-minded and accepting of unexpected events in life as he is. My original objectives have been achieved, and I've acquired further insights while setting fresh goals, thereby embarking on an ongoing journey of growth and learning. Looking ahead, I'm confident that I can always rely on William for guidance in both my career and personal life, or simply as a friend to connect with. This experience has nurtured in me the mindset to explore diverse paths, and I'm looking forward to continuing my learning journey by shadowing under William's guidance.

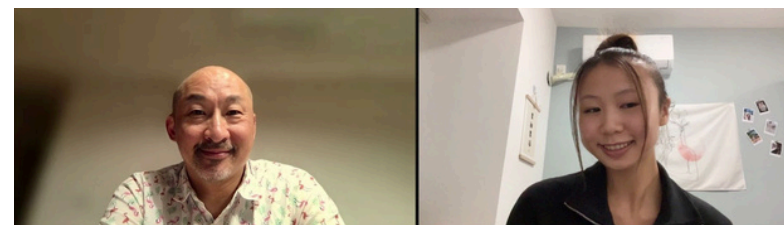
Q2: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

When I first joined this program, I was prepared to maintain a formal tone with my mentor, as I typically do with those who are older or have more seniority. However, when I came across mentor descriptions, I was particularly excited to find that we shared interests in yoga, music, and other hobbies. As William was my top choice, I was overjoyed when I received the email announcing that I'd been selected as his mentee. Despite only being able to meet online due to his new role as Managing Director at Universal Music Group in Taiwan, our conversations have been effortless. William's down-to-earth demeanor and unconventional mentoring style make chatting with him feel like catching up with an old friend from California. He creates a relaxed atmosphere where I feel comfortable

comfortable expressing my thoughts and opinions without fear of judgment. Despite his professional success, William embodies a refreshing Gen-Z spirit, making him incredibly relatable and easy to connect with.

Q3: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

Throughout our conversations, I've learned countless pieces of advice that I believe are applicable to many experiences. As William's mentee, he taught me that it's more than okay to embrace confusion as a natural part of learning, as it helps us gain clarity through it. There is an art to navigating struggles, and he told me that one of his goals as a mentor is to assist students who are confused because in this stage of college, it is normal to juggle our options. As long as we stick to pursuing our area of expertise and enjoy the ride, things will work out in the end. It is good to stay curious, seeking insight into the industry of interest. I've also learned a good amount about leadership, and I think one main tip that many students could benefit from is mastering the art of saying no when needed. Cultivating resilience and confidence to maintain relationships, seeking out transformative books, and practicing meditation to sharpen focus are some things I plan to take action on immediately. Most importantly, confusion is a sign of growth; trust the process, stay curious, and never stop learning. I'm honored to have been a part of the program under William's guidance, and I hope that every student has the opportunity to meet a mentor like him.



Mentee: Audrey Devina

Mentor: Alicia Zhao



Q1: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

Alicia is not only my mentor, but she also feels like a sister or mother figure to me. She guides me patiently, encourages me to exchange ideas, provides valuable input, and shares her experiences, not only as a professional but also as a remarkable woman and mother.

Q2: What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

To genuinely love and provide sincere care to your loved ones! From her family, her son, to her team, I see how Alicia shows love and care, truly inspiring! Alicia's way of taking care of and raising her sons is absolutely impressive, and it truly leaves a lasting impact on me. She goes out of her way to make sure her sons are having happy memories, even if it means taking them on walks just to unwind or have some fun after a tiring day at school. It's incredible to see her dedication as a mother and her commitment to creating a joyful and nurturing environment for her sons. In the professional area, Alicia has a unique approach to her team. She believes in avoiding excessive pressure on her team members. Instead, she encourages them to find passion and enjoyment in what they do. Alicia wants everyone on her team to truly love their work and have a good time doing it. She will have meetings outside the office and formal space and let her team have a different environment to work. It's these moments outside the workplace that bring people closer and create a positive and united team spirit.

Personally, Alicia's thoughtfulness and generosity have had a profound impact on me. She never hesitates to reach out and stay connected. I'm always amazed by her surprises, like bringing back souvenirs from her travels just to make others feel appreciated and valued. What's more, she regularly checks in on me, offering book recommendations and genuinely caring about how I'm doing. Alicia's proactive and supportive

nature has taught me the importance of maintaining meaningful connections and supporting others in their personal and professional journeys. I can tell how sincere she is in being a mentor in this program. Through Alicia's example, I've learned incredible lessons on being a great mother, mentor, manager, and woman. Her dedication, caring attitude, and ability to juggle multiple roles inspire me to be the best version of myself. I'm truly grateful to have such an extraordinary mentor and role model in Alicia, whose kindness and genuine care will forever take place in my heart.

Q3: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

I see Alicia as a woman who always wants to learn and wants to be better. Alicia is a mother to 2 amazing boys, and when she was pregnant with her 2nd child she was also taking a master's in psychology. I think it's amazing, showing that Alicia really

wants to upgrade herself. If there is a chance, Alicia also always makes time for her loved ones, such as traveling together and so on. I still remember one time when I asked Alicia why she wanted to resign from her old, amazing job and move to a new place with uncertainty. Alicia answered, "if you reach a point, you will get bored and want to look for a new challenge." There I was amazed and felt that it was truly extraordinary when people wanted to continue to be outside their comfort zone. Alicia is a complete, inspiring, and extraordinary woman. I learned the word "balance" from Alicia's life. How she manages to take care of and upgrade herself while still loving the people around her. Ultimately, how to live outside the comfort zone and keep learning!



Mentee: Yufeng Xu

Mentor: Jialei Wang



Q1: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

Meeting my mentor, Jialei Wang, has been a stroke of good fortune. Despite our recent acquaintance last November our bond feels like that of old friends. Conversations with Jialei are a seamless exchange of ideas, where understanding blooms effortlessly. What strikes me most about Jialei is his impeccably organized mindset and insatiable curiosity about the world. He often emphasizes the importance of problem definition as the cornerstone of navigating complexity. In an age where AI offers solutions aplenty, Jialei underscores the intrinsic value of problem-solving skills as quintessential human traits. He once challenged me to envision the construction of an epidemic surveillance system based on our experiences during COVID-19, and another time, he probed why Japan faltered in the market of new energy automobiles. While I may not have provided definitive answers, Jialei's curiosity about these profound questions left an indelible mark on me.

Q2: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

Jialei's insights into the distinction between "skills" and "scenarios" have been invaluable. He emphasizes the need for essential skills that transcend specific career paths. Whether it's a robust foundation in mathematics or a deep understanding of computer organization, these skills enable adaptability across diverse professional landscapes. This wisdom extends beyond the realm of Computer Science and holds relevance for any student navigating the maze of career choices.

Q3: What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

Jialei's practical advice resonates deeply with me, particularly his emphasis on enhancing essential skills. In response, I am committed to taking concrete steps to bolster my capabilities. While engaged in AI-related research at NYU Shanghai, I recognize the importance of complimenting high-level exploration with a focus on foundational skills. Consequently, I plan to enroll in courses that sharpen my proficiency in open-source development, a fundamental skill for any Computer Science student. Additionally, I aim to revisit mathematical proofs and delve into classical AI architectures to deepen my understanding of the field's intricacies.

Q4: Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

Throughout the program, my understanding of the diverse career paths available to Computer Science graduates has undergone a transformation. Initially, I had limited understanding of the distinctions between working in a large tech company versus a startup, or the differences between academia and industry. Jialei's wealth of experience generously shared insights into these realms. He likened working in a tech giant to functioning as a link in a chain, while working in a startup demands attention to the entire chain. These insights have profoundly shaped my perceptions of my future career path, providing clarity and direction.



Mentee: Ruilin Wu

Mentor: Lei Yao



Q1: What were your goals of taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

Upon joining this program, I established a range of short-term and long-term goals for myself. As the program draws to a close, a reflection on the past few months reveals that, with the support and guidance of my mentor, Ms. Lei Yao, I have successfully met most of these objectives.

To start with, her advice was instrumental in clarifying my academic direction and resolving my indecision about pursuing a double major. My final decision to focus on Data Science allowed me to outline a comprehensive plan for my studies, including upcoming internships and research opportunities. As a senior industry expert, Ms. Yao also provided me with critical insights into current market trends, thus helping me to bridge knowledge gaps and acquire targeted industry insights. Additionally, the benefits of this program were not limited to our invaluable 1-on-1 coffee chats; events such as the program kick-off and the 10th Anniversary Reunion, organized by Center for Career Development, afforded me the privilege of engaging with fellow mentees and their mentors, furthering my goal to connect with outstanding peers and alumni from various fields and disciplines. While I have not yet fully achieved some of my long-term goals, I am actively laying down small milestones. These goals include obtaining hands-on opportunities in data science, and deepening my understanding of graduate programs and institutions.

Q2: 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?

I have received numerous invaluable suggestions from Ms. Yao that I've been actively putting into practice. I'd like to highlight two pieces of advice that have had a profound impact on me. Before this program, I was at a stage where I felt quite lost about my academic path and

career objectives. Given my personal situation and prevailing industry trends, Ms. Yao supported my decision to pursue a path in data science. Moreover, she advised that rather than feeling anxious about peer pressure and future uncertainties, I should concentrate on what was within my control—my academics, knowledge, and technical skills. Thanks to Ms. Yao, I've turned my attention more towards the present and my personal growth, dedicating myself to tangible improvements. Throughout this year, I've observed a notable shift in my mindset, successfully channeling my anxiety into motivation and a strong inner drive.

Additionally, Ms. Yao emphasized the critical role of communication in both professional and personal settings, advising me to improve my interpersonal skills. Despite being an introvert, I have consciously worked on these skills during event planning and group discussions, becoming more assertive in expressing myself and better organized in my speech. As a result, I've seen remarkable enhancements in my communication abilities and self-confidence.



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Q3: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

My mentor, Ms. Lei Yao, is a cheerful, warm, and elegant woman, brimming with wisdom (and a great taste in coffee!). She serves not only as a guide on my academic and professional journey, but also as a friend who is willing to share and communicate, radiating positive energy. As an experienced veteran in Marketing Communications, she always provides in-depth answers to my questions and shares her professional insights, making each of our meetings incredibly informative. I've learnt a lot from her. Beyond academic and professional topics, she also generously offers guidance on life and personal choices, drawing from her rich experiences. In my eyes, she is a role model, truly embodying an incredible career woman with a unique personality. I feel extremely fortunate and grateful to have her as my mentor and gain immensely from this program.

Internet & Tech

Mentee: Edoardo Gargiulo

Mentor: Sixin Zhang



Q1: 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 first meeting with my mentor, Mr. Zhang Sixin, a distinguished professor teaching in Toulouse, France, I received invaluable advice that has profoundly influenced my career trajectory. One piece of advice that resonated deeply with me was regarding the importance of considering graduate school as a pathway to academia. Mr. Zhang explained the differences between the academic systems in Europe and the United States, shedding light on the unique opportunities each offers for pursuing advanced studies in mathematics. For example, he explained to me that, if in Europe a Master's is obligatory to proceed to more advanced studies, in the U.S. it is possible to pursue a Phd directly. Encouraged by his insights, I began researching graduate programs that aligned with my interests and aspirations. Putting Mr. Zhang's advice into practice was both enlightening and challenging. I am starting to find information about applications to different graduate programs both in the U.S. and in Europe, with a special focus on France, where Mr. Zhang currently teaches. I proceed fueled by the belief that pursuing further education will open doors to fulfilling career opportunities in academia. Reflecting on the changes I've observed in myself since taking Mr. Zhang's advice, I can confidently say that I've developed a clearer sense of purpose and direction in my academic journey. His guidance has instilled in me a newfound determination to pursue excellence in my studies and to actively seek out opportunities for intellectual growth. Moreover, I've become more proactive in seeking mentorship and guidance from seasoned academics, recognizing the value of learning from those who have walked the path before me.

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Q2: What were your goals of taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

Participating in the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program was a deliberate choice driven by several goals. Firstly, I sought to gain insights into potential career paths and opportunities within my field of study. Through engaging discussions with my mentor, I aimed to broaden my understanding of the academic landscape and to identify areas of specialization that aligned with my interests.

Additionally, I hoped to establish a meaningful mentor-mentee relationship that would extend beyond the duration of the program, providing ongoing support and guidance as I navigated various academic and professional milestones. Reflecting on my experience, I am pleased to say that many of my goals have been achieved. The mentorship provided by Mr. Zhang has been instrumental in shaping my academic and career aspirations, providing me with invaluable advice and perspectives that have enriched my journey.



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Q3: What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

One key takeaway that I have gleaned from my mentor, Mr. Zhang, is the importance of embracing challenges and seizing opportunities for growth. He emphasized the value of stepping outside of my comfort zone, whether it be by pursuing advanced studies abroad or exploring interdisciplinary research avenues, such as connections between Mathematics and Data Science or Computer Science. This actionable wisdom has inspired me to adopt a proactive mindset, constantly seeking out new challenges and experiences that will propel me toward my academic and professional goals.

In conclusion, my journey with the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program has been transformative, equipping me with the insights, guidance, and confidence needed to fuel my dream of pursuing a fulfilling career in academia. I am immensely grateful for the mentorship provided by Mr. Zhang and look forward to applying the lessons learned to future endeavors.

Mentee: Zifan Zhao

Mentor: Wei Gu



Q1: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

My mentor, Wei Gu, is an exceptional figure who seamlessly combines professional expertise with profound personal qualities. She embodies the perfect blend of knowledge, empathy, and enthusiasm that one seeks in a mentor. With an extensive background in Public Relations, Wei possesses a deep well of tech industry knowledge and an intuitive understanding of its dynamics, which she articulates with clarity and passion. Wei's demeanor is incredibly friendly and supportive, making her approach to mentoring profoundly collaborative. She aims to empower rather than merely instruct, creating a mentoring relationship that feels as familiar and nurturing as that with a family friend who has known me for years. She is also an exceptional listener, which enables her to provide not just wise guidance but also advice tailored to my specific needs and situations. For instance, as I shared my concerns about ongoing debates in the field of artificial intelligence research, Wei offered valuable insights drawn from her own professional experiences. This guidance has helped me better visualize my future career path and the roles I might pursue. Furthermore, Wei's approach to balancing work and personal life—demonstrated by her successful career and her active role as a mother—serves as a profound inspiration. We share a passion for skiing, and she has even offered recommendations for ski resorts in Japan, enhancing our connection beyond professional boundaries. Wei shows me the possibility of excelling professionally while maintaining a rich and fulfilling personal life.

Q2: 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 surprising aspect of my participation in this mentorship program was discovering the depth and breadth of personal connections and shared interests that could arise unexpectedly. My mentor, Wei, has

established a distinguished career in Public Relations and is also a mother to two remarkably talented and diligent sons. Interestingly, her sons and I share a keen interest in robotics and software engineering, which opened up various topics for engaging discussions. I found great joy and inspiration in hearing about the impressive accomplishments of her sons, who are only a few years younger than me. These conversations not only allowed us to bond over common interests but also enabled me to explore educational and career possibilities within these fields more deeply. Moreover, these discussions provided a reflective space where I could revisit my own experiences, drawing lessons and insights that had previously eluded me. This unexpected facet of the mentorship—connecting on a personal level with my mentor and learning about her family's experiences - proved to be profoundly beneficial. It broadened my understanding of the field and deepened my appreciation for the diverse paths one can take within it, underscoring the value of personal connections in professional growth.



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Q3: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

An invaluable lesson from my mentorship centers around the profound personal development it catalyzed. Initially, I expected the mentorship to enhance my understanding of industry-specific knowledge and expand my professional network. However, a surprising and immensely beneficial aspect was the degree of personal introspection it prompted. Wei encouraged me to engage in deep reflection concerning my values and long-term career objectives. This introspection led to a much clearer vision of my professional journey and imbued me with a renewed sense of purpose. At a point when I found myself torn between pursuing a career as a professional researcher and venturing into a role more centered around business issues, Wei advised me to follow my heart and ease my frustrations about the future. Her reminder was timely, especially as I tend to worry excessively about prospective paths. Wei's guidance pushed me to confront and reconcile internal conflicts about my career choices, leading to more deliberate and confident decision-making. The experience has had a lasting impact on how I approach both personal aspirations and professional engagements. For other students navigating similar crossroads or uncertainties, embracing such deep self-reflection can illuminate their core motivations and aspirations, guiding them towards a path that aligns more closely with their personal and professional goals. This aspect of mentorship, focusing on introspective growth alongside practical career advice, is a powerful tool for any student preparing to make significant life decisions.

Law, Non-profit, Healthcare, Others

Mentee: Adriana Gimenez Romera

Mentor: Tim(Yimin) Liu



Q1: How has interacting with both mentors and fellow mentees enriched your experience? What advice would you give to future participants of the mentor program?

Interacting with both mentors and fellow mentees has greatly enriched my experience by exposing me to a wide range of perspectives and insights. This program is a hub of ideas, allowing for deep engagement not only with my mentor but also with other mentors and mentees. This diverse environment fosters invaluable learning opportunities and professional growth. My advice to future participants is to fully immerse themselves in the mentor program and leverage the rich network it offers. Actively participating in conversations and building relationships within this community can significantly enhance your learning experience. You'll gain valuable knowledge from various fields, which is essential for your professional development. It's sometimes intimidating to initiate conversations with senior professionals, which is why the program is so beneficial. It provides a safe space to learn, cultivate skills, and build confidence for engaging effectively in the professional world. The mentors are kind, caring, and patient, offering immense support throughout this journey. So, don't hesitate to step out of your comfort zone and seek these interactions—they are key to your growth and success in the program.

Q2: In what ways has your mentor's encouragement impacted your learning experience and personal growth?

During one of our conversations, I expressed my keen interest in immersing myself in the Chinese business ecosystem and culture, emphasizing the importance of learning Chinese for this purpose. I also shared my struggle with feeling confident when speaking the language. Tim's response was incredibly supportive; he encouraged me to push outside of my comfort zone, and we began communicating in Chinese

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more often. This practice has been invaluable, gradually helping me acquire specialized vocabulary that isn't covered in our Chinese class materials, such as specific legal terminology and business lexicon. At times, NYU Shanghai can feel like a bubble. Despite its diverse community, we frequently use English for both communication and academics, which can limit our integration with the local culture and the broader Chinese business ecosystem. This highlights the importance of actively seeking opportunities to explore and learn from our immediate environment, embracing local experiences and knowledge alongside our global education. The mentor program has been crucial in providing firsthand insights into the Chinese business ecosystem. Through my mentor's invaluable guidance, I've not only expanded my knowledge of cultural nuances and business practices specific to China but also gained the confidence to navigate this unique environment effectively. This experience has fueled my curiosity and determination to further immerse myself in the intricacies of the Chinese business landscape, emphasizing the importance of continual learning and exploration in complementing our global education at NYU Shanghai.

Q3: What were your goals of taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

When I applied for the program, my primary goals were to enhance my knowledge and skills and to forge meaningful relationships with professionals whose journeys I admire. I envisioned this program as a platform to gain insights, network, and receive mentorship that would significantly impact my personal and professional growth. Throughout my time in the program, I have had the privilege of interacting with a diverse group



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of remarkable industry professionals with informed and thorough insights that have influenced my approach to my career and studies. Under my mentor's guidance, I have developed a much deeper understanding of the legal field and how my interests in business, law, and entrepreneurship intersect. This newfound clarity has been pivotal in shaping my future plans, prompting me to seek internships and a minor in legal studies to further my knowledge. In summary, this program has honed my networking skills, boosted my confidence in interacting with senior professionals, provided clarity, and opened up new opportunities for my professional development.

Mentee: Crystal Lin

Mentor: Leon(Junliang) Huang



Q1: What were your goals for taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

When I started sophomore year, I was overwhelmed by the uncertainty of my future. I knew I wanted to pursue medicine, but I constantly questioned how to achieve that dream. Doubt was my constant companion, whispering that maybe I wasn't capable of reaching my goals. College, life—everything seemed like a giant question mark. But meeting Leon changed everything. Our conversations weren't just about plans; they were enlightening moments where Leon helped me clear the fog surrounding my life and goals. He made me realize that everyone's journey is unique, and it's up to us to shape and drive our path. That really hit me. Suddenly, I began to take more control of my life, focusing on myself and refraining from comparing myself to others. It felt incredibly liberating. Letting go of all that unnecessary stress and worry about the present and future was like a weight being lifted off my shoulders. Now, I'm all about living in the moment, staying true to myself, and facing whatever comes my way with a calm, collected attitude. So, yeah, the real victory for me in this program? It's not just about checking off accomplishments—it's about finding peace and confidence in myself, even amidst the uncertainties of pursuing my dreams in medicine. And I owe that to Leon and this program.

Q2: How do you see your mentor? What is he/she like?

Right at the start of the program, I was the quiet one, hesitant to speak up. But Leon crushed those hesitations with unwavering encouragement. "Ask me anything," he'd say, ready to unravel any tangle with patience and care. His support nudged me out of my comfort zone, sparking a newfound drive to push myself further. But what makes Leon stand out isn't just his reliability—it's his depth. Each question I threw his way sparked deep conversations that stretched my mind. He wasn't just fixing problems; he was revealing whole new

paths, showing me the vast tapestry of life beyond the here and now. With Leon, it wasn't just mentorship; it was like crafting our masterpieces. What's more, Leon keeps it real. He's not just about dropping wisdom; he's also open to learning from me, making our talks raw and genuine. With Leon, I didn't just find a mentor; I found a confidant and a lifelong friend whom I hope to keep on my journey of growth and discovery.

Q3: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

From Leon, I've learned three invaluable lessons: Firstly, he instilled in me the value of authenticity—being true to oneself. To Leon, understanding oneself is foundational; thus, prioritizing personal aspirations and opinions over others' influences is crucial for achieving success. Secondly, he highlighted the beauty of being unique. Each of us possesses our special blend



of strengths and passions. Regardless of the obstacles, he encouraged me to pursue my dreams fervently, emphasizing the importance of self-belief and perseverance. His guidance reminded me that personal growth often stems from embracing our differences and learning from our experiences. Lastly, Leon advised that life is inherently unpredictable. While it may present us with obstacles or unexpected turns, these moments offer invaluable opportunities for growth and self-discovery. Rather than fearing uncertainty, Leon taught me to embrace it with an open mind and resilient spirit, highlighting adaptability and fortitude in navigating life's twists and turns. Leon's mentorship was transformative, guiding me toward a deeper understanding of myself and the world around me. His wisdom and support have empowered me to approach life's challenges with resilience and optimism. And for that, thank you, Leon.

Mentee: Carson Decker
Mentor: Stephanie Tang



Q1: 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?

Since my first interaction with Stephanie Tang, a distinguished lawyer at Hogan Lovells, her seasoned advice has profoundly influenced my professional development. Stephanie emphasized the importance of adaptability in the fast-evolving legal field. This advice resonated deeply as she exemplified this trait herself, navigating her career to become one of the few female partners in a competitive Asian legal market in 2012. By embracing her approach, I incorporated a more flexible mindset in handling legal cases, which significantly enhanced my problem-solving skills and ability to anticipate client needs. This shift not only boosted my confidence in making critical decisions but also fostered a proactive attitude toward continuous learning and self-improvement. Reflecting on this transformation, I see a version of myself that is not only more competent but also more attuned to the nuances of legal practice.

Q2: 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 initially joined the mentorship program with expectations of acquiring substantive legal knowledge and networking opportunities. However, the most impactful takeaway turned out to be Stephanie's strategic foresight and her methodical approach to the law. Her adeptness at '举一反三' (analyzing one to infer three), a principle deeply embedded in her practice, taught me to extend my analysis beyond the obvious facts and delve deeper into the implications of each case. This method not only sharpened my legal reasoning but also ingrained in me a thoroughness that is essential for crafting robust legal strategies.

Furthermore, Stephanie's personal anecdotes about navigating the complexities of cross-border legal frameworks profoundly enriched my understanding of the global legal landscape, an area that I had not anticipated would captivate my interest to such an extent.

Q3: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

Among the myriad lessons learned from Stephanie, the concept of valuing time stands out as universally applicable and particularly vital for young professionals. Stephanie often discusses how the flexibility of youth provides a golden opportunity to explore and take calculated risks, a strategy that has become a cornerstone of her professional ethos. She encourages embracing every chance for growth, no matter how daunting it might seem, with the rationale that the true cost lies in missed opportunities rather than in failures. This perspective has inspired me to approach my career with boldness and an eagerness to innovate. Stephanie's journey to partnership, overcoming substantial gender and cultural barriers, underscores her advice, demonstrating the power of resilience and strategic planning. Her belief in the potential of young lawyers to shape the future of the profession is a potent reminder of the impact we can make with our time and efforts.

Mentee: Suvi Biesinger

Mentor: Dr. Shisuo Du



Q1: 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?

When meeting with my mentor, I had many questions about becoming a doctor and what it is like to live as one. I was very impressed with the dedication and work that my mentor has and is still putting into his career. He gave me a lot of advice on how to decide what was going to help me and what was unnecessary, and I am putting that into practice by deciding what to put my time and energy into, as well as my longer-term planning of how I am going to spend my summers and free time. He also gave me a lot of indirect advice via his own experiences. He showed me how my learning in biology interacts with my future studies as a doctor, and I am trying to put into practice his example of diligence and dedication.

Q2: What were your goals for taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

My goal for this program was to better understand my career options as a biology/premed major and build the specific skills and experiences for success. I had the great opportunity to have Dr. Du as my mentor because he has impressive careers in both the medical and biology research fields. I now better understand how my interests in molecular biology could either help me develop a career in medicine or become a career in itself. He helped me become more solid in my decisions for my future, develop a clearer understanding of how to get there, and why I would want to be there. He also gave very good advice on what experiences and knowledge I needed to be successful. Not only to become a doctor but to become a good one. Many people have only one piece of advice for pre-med students: to choose a different career, but Dr. Du did not do this. He was realistic about how hard it was and

the drawbacks, but he also showed me many aspects of becoming a doctor that I had not considered before, which helped me better understand why I wanted to become a doctor in the first place.

Q3: Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

Going into the program, I was worried that as I became more specialized in the medical field, I would lose the chance to continue learning and studying other aspects of biology. I was afraid that I would have to dedicate everything I had to only one focus to become successful, which was disheartening because there are so many amazing things to learn in biology. I hoped this program could help me reaffirm my decision to go into medicine or help me discover other options. I saw a big difference between pursuing research in biology and pursuing medicine and felt I had to make the decision now and was preparing to when I entered the program. Instead, I learned a lot about how it is not a yes or no choice and I do not have to give up on learning research skills or studying other aspects of biology to pursue medicine. There are many options, such as becoming a clinical researcher, a microbiologist who studies human cells, a doctor who keeps up with the biology research in their spare time, or someone who does both at full capacity. It opened my horizons of where I could go from here and helped me understand that I am now building the basics to help me do what I want with my future.



Mentee: Xiaoqing Xu

Mentor: Sydney Lai



Q1: What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

One important and easily actionable takeaway that I learned from Sydney is building connections and networking with different people. I still remember that in our second meeting, I brought a lot of questions to Sydney with my fuzzy mind, trying to navigate myself through my thoughts. I shared with Sydney that after exploring at NYU Shanghai, I'm glad that I already figured out where my passion is and what I'm determined to do in the future. However, sometimes I feel like I live in a bubble where I don't know enough about areas that I'm not that interested in, I don't know enough about different industries and the market, and this can be a limit for me. Therefore, I would put pressure on myself, telling myself that I need to learn and know as much as I can. Sydney told me that it's okay not to know everything. There are so many things happening every second, but it's simply impossible to be aware of and understand everything that's going on. Just try to grasp some key information from different areas and mainly focus on the area that I'm passionate about. But no matter what I want to do and what field I'm in, it's always important to build connections and network with different people as at the end of the day, we all need to work with people. Simply talking to people and listening to others' stories can help us open our views, get information, and explore different fields. Especially when building connections with people from the area where we want to work in, their experiences and insights can be very helpful. Resources also come from people. When it comes to work, it's always a well-cooperated team that can help things move forward faster and better, and we need inspiration from others. Overall, Sydney helped me realize more about the significance of building connections and the value of human resources. Talking and networking with people is something approachable, and actionable in our daily lives, and can create a long-term impact on our future.

Q2: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

Sydney is always very warm, encouraging, and supportive. I'm influenced by her passion for what she is doing now and her open and positive attitude towards life. One important thing that I learned from Sydney is to do what I want to do and what I love to do, and don't give up our dreams while not forgetting to consider our current conditions in reality. Sydney's encouragement helped me become more determined about my path in focusing on research and trying to become a researcher in the future. She also provided me with a lot of valuable suggestions regarding possible career paths relevant to research and the possibilities I might have interest to explore more. She shared with me that it's great to keep pursuing what I really want to do and do what I have passion about for my future. But sometimes also don't forget to consider the condition in real life. If there are no big things to worry about, then it's great, just move on. If the current condition doesn't allow me to keep doing what I have the most interest in, it's also fine to stop a bit, wait, and then work to establish the right conditions for myself first. After that, I can come back to pursuing my dream later. We can all find our path to do what we like through different ways and at different times and don't give up on doing what we like to do.

Q3: Any other things that you would like to share?

It's totally fine not knowing what you want to do in the future. We are always exploring our lives, there are so many possibilities. Reflecting back to what I shared with Sydney in our meetings at different times, what I want to do already has a slight change. Sydney shared with me that one day her son told her that he's worried as he doesn't know what he wants to become when he grows up. Sydney said it's totally fine, even till now, she's still exploring what she might want to do in the future, we are always exploring our lives. I can feel that Sydney has her love towards her life. Her attitude of always exploring and the attitude of facing life relaxingly and happily influence me a lot.



Mentee: Yelena Ye

Mentor: Fan Zhang



Q1: In what way has your mentor influenced and inspired you?

In our first call, my mentor explained to me the different structures and operation modes of organizations committed to creating social impact and changes. In addition to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and non-profit organizations (NPOs), there are also departments in companies dedicated to public welfare. I also asked her about companies' ESG (environmental, social, and governance), and what BCorps are. She inspired me to do further investigation into these organizations and departments. In the future, I'd like to work with departments in charge of Philanthropy in companies. I also asked her about my future career and academic path, because I am curious about the reasons why she chose to continue her studies at NYU Wagner. She described to me her previous work experience. For example, one organization she worked with was relatively small, and had fewer people. Thus, the small and refined structure allowed everyone to follow their passion and carry out actions. This is very beneficial to me because it might be impossible for me to get familiar with different organizations and understand their operation modes in a short time. I can refer to the information she provided when making choices in the future.

Q2: 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 crucial piece of advice from my mentor was to pursue my passions and interests boldly. I sometimes questioned the value of my work in non-profit organizations due to the workload and challenges. However, inspired by my mentor's encouragement, I delved deeper into exploring opportunities and taking on challenges. Putting this advice into practice led to significant changes. I became more proactive in seeking out

diverse experiences and learning opportunities. For instance, I took on projects outside my comfort zone. One of my tasks I get from my internship is to research about Sustainable Development Goals and write articles. I am not so familiar with topics related to economics, however, after reading the information on SDG's website, I decided to give it a try. I realized that by embracing challenges and staying true to my passions, I could make a meaningful difference. I also re-evaluated my experience with a NPO last summer, and tried to appreciate the positive experience and personal development it has brought me. This mindset shift has not only shaped my career aspirations but also instilled a sense of purpose and resilience in pursuing my goals

Q3: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

I would say, don't be afraid to embrace changes and uncertainty. I am curious about why my mentor decided to go to Wagner after working for a few years. And it seems to me that she changed her job several times. In the past, I always envisioned myself staying with only one organization. However, after she explained to me her decision making process, I think I would be more willing to embrace changes, and not be content with the status quo.



Mentee: Lareina(Xinyue) Chen

Mentor: Michael Qi



Q1: 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 our first meeting, Michael Qi emphasized the importance of resilience and adaptability in facing the current challenging environment. He advised me to stay informed about global trends and developments, particularly those impacting our industry and society at large. He encouraged me to embrace change and view challenges as opportunities for growth. Implementing these strategies had a profound impact on me. I became more proactive in seeking knowledge and staying updated with the latest developments. This newfound awareness helped me anticipate changes and better prepare for them, making me more resilient and adaptable. Additionally, my ability to engage in informed discussions improved, allowing me to contribute more meaningfully in both professional and personal contexts. Overall, Michael's advice helped me develop a mindset geared towards continuous learning and adaptability, which has been invaluable in navigating the complexities of today's global environment.

Q2: What have you learned from your mentor that you think other students could benefit from hearing as well?

One of the most significant lessons I learned from Michael Qi is the importance of maintaining a balance between professional ambitions and personal well-being. In today's demanding work environment, it is easy to become overwhelmed and neglect self-care. Michael emphasized that achieving long-term success requires a sustainable approach that includes taking care of one's mental and physical health. I believe other students would greatly benefit from this advice. By prioritizing self-care and establishing healthy work-life boundaries, we can enhance our overall productivity and job satisfaction. Additionally,

being mindful of our well-being allows us to approach challenges with a clear and focused mindset, ultimately leading to more effective problem-solving and decision-making.

Q3: Is there something you did not expect before taking part in this program, but actually benefited you or left a deep impression on you?

Before joining the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program, I did not anticipate the extent to which the program would emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence in professional settings. Michael Qi highlighted the significance of empathy, communication, and relationship-building, especially in high-stress environments. This focus on emotional intelligence was a pleasant surprise and left a lasting impression on me. By learning to better understand and manage my own emotions and those of others, I have improved my interpersonal skills and conflict-resolution abilities. This has been particularly beneficial in navigating the challenges posed by the broader environment, where effective communication and strong relationships are crucial for success. The ability to empathize with colleagues and clients has allowed me to build more meaningful connections, fostering a more collaborative and supportive professional network. In conclusion, the NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program has provided me with valuable insights and practical advice that have significantly impacted my professional journey. The guidance from Michael Qi has not only helped me navigate the challenges of the broader environment but also equipped me with the tools to thrive in my career. I am grateful for this opportunity and look forward to applying these lessons in my future endeavors.



Mentee: Androw Ramy Saed
Mentor: Theodore(Teddy) Low



Q1: Can you share a perspective that you have reevaluated/changed over the course of the program?

I have broadened my perspective on the job market fields. Initially, as a neuroscience major, it was challenging to have a clear idea of the available pathways after graduation and whether to join a grad school program or get a job first. During my talks with Teddy, I realized that being a neuroscience major doesn't confine me to lab and research projects. Teddy, currently a Senior Director at Nippon Paint China Holdings, focuses on value creation in the global chemicals space. He shared his insights, revealing that my neuroscience knowledge can be applied in various business contexts, such as understanding market customer behaviors and analyzing behaviors for marketing campaigns. Additionally, this knowledge allows me to evaluate new and existing neuroscience discoveries, such as medicines or procedures. This revelation opened my eyes to the potential of combining neuroscience with business, which has always been my aspiration. As a result, I started taking data science courses to equip myself with skills that would qualify me for the job market before pursuing grad school.

Q2: What is one key takeaway that is easily actionable that you learned from your mentor?

One key takeaway from my mentor, Teddy, is the importance of balancing learning and experiencing life. Teddy emphasized that academic success should go hand-in-hand with practical experiences such as company visits, internships, and travel. He shared how exploring the city and country outside the classroom can significantly enhance one's understanding of different industries and cultures. Following his advice, I started seeking internships and participated in company visits here in Shanghai. These experiences not only enriched my understanding of the business world but also taught me valuable

lessons about time management and balancing study with personal growth.

Q3: What were your goals of taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

My primary goals in joining this mentorship program were to gain clarity on my career path, explore the intersection of neuroscience and business, and develop practical skills to enhance my employability. Through my interactions with Teddy, I have achieved a significant part of these goals. I now have a clearer understanding of how to apply my neuroscience background in various business contexts. For example, I can leverage my knowledge to analyze consumer behavior, improve marketing strategies by understanding cognitive responses to advertising, and optimize product designs based on neurological insights. Additionally, my background in neuroscience can contribute to drug development by providing insights into cognitive functions and the effects of pharmaceuticals on the brain. These applications demonstrate the diverse opportunities available at the intersection of neuroscience and business. As I embark on my junior year, I am confident that these valuable insights and guidance from Teddy have put me on the right path for future success.



Mentee: Haoyun Tong
Mentor: Dasong Wang



Q1: 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 mentor gave me a lot of helpful advice based on his PhD research experience, but one piece of advice that stood out was to reach out and build connections with professors during my undergraduate period. He suggested that I read about professors at my school from the faculty list, learn about their research interests, and most importantly, attend their office hours—even if they weren't teaching my classes. Taking this advice, I started visiting professors' office hours, discussing questions that I had after reading their research paper, and seeking their insights on how to plan my future research path. What's more, I emailed professors at NYU New York to make plans for my study away next academic year. This practice provided me with valuable recommendations for future studies. As a result, I noticed a significant change in myself: I became more proactive in my academic journey, more informed about the field of neuroscience, and more confident in making conversations and connections with seniors. At first, I thought reaching out would be extremely challenging for an introvert like me. However, my mentor encouraged me from the perspective of senior professors. He said there was no professor who would not welcome an enthusiastic beginner interested in research. That gave me the courage to step out of my comfort zone. Additionally, these interactions have opened up opportunities for more potential mentorship and collaboration, which have been incredibly beneficial for my professional growth.

Q2: What were your goals of taking part in this program? Are they all achieved?

When I decided to participate in the mentor program, I had several goals in mind. First, I aimed to receive professional pieces of advice from

experienced mentors. My career plan has always been to pursue a PhD after graduation. Studying for a Ph.D. is a long-term process, and it is very likely that the expectations I made during my undergraduate period did not match the actual obstacles and length of this road. If I step on this road but only to find out that this is not what I want and different from what I thought, then I will have to wait, or even suffer, for five years or even longer. It would be a waste of time and energy. So I need more experience from people who have been there to tell me what kind of journey this is, including the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Additionally, I wanted to build a stronger network of contacts with alumni, both senior mentors and peers, which I believed would provide valuable support and opportunities for collaboration. This would also be an exercise for my social skills. I wanted to exercise and enhance my social skills, such as communication, relationship-building, and also interview skills, to become more confident and effective in professional settings. Reflecting on my experience, I can say that I have achieved these goals to a significant extent. Through regular interactions with my mentor, and also with other professionals during the tenth-anniversary reunion, what I gained is precious. My confidence has grown, and I now feel more prepared and motivated to pursue my academic aspirations.

Q3: 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 I did not expect before this program was the candid and personal advice from my mentor, Steven, regarding his own stressful PhD experience. He shared in detail the challenges he faced working under his mentor during his PhD years, and he strongly advised me that if I decide to pursue a PhD, choosing a kind and supportive mentor should be my top priority. This was surprising because before meeting him, when reading the mentor's bio, I had viewed Steven as a highly successful individual, and I did not expect him to share such a non-glamorous and difficult part of his journey. His willingness to use his own negative experiences as a cautionary tale left a deep impression on me. I believe that it highlighted the importance of mentorship in academic and professional success and provided me with insight into

NYU Alumni Executive Mentor Program

the potential pitfalls of graduate studies. These honest suggestions have greatly influenced how I will approach my future academic decisions. Additionally, I did not expect my mentor to offer so many daily life tips about living in New York. Having lived there for years, he provided me with valuable tips, such as navigating the city, knowing the neighborhoods that you live in, managing living expenses, and making the most of the cultural opportunities available. Initially, I thought this program would focus solely on professional growth and industry insights. However, my mentor's tips on life made me realize that a mentor's role extends beyond just the professional advice and responsibilities of a serious teacher. A mentor can also be a life guide, offering support and wisdom in various aspects of life, much like a friend. What I received from my mentor Steven has greatly helped me plan both my career and personal life more effectively.



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 the late October.

To Learn More:

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