TIA MENTOR DESCRIPTION

The TIA mentor team is comprised of entrepreneurial alumni, parents, faculty and staff who volunteer their time and expertise to enable our TIA entrepreneurs to realize their visions and go from thought to action. The success of the TIA Incubator hinges on the dedication of the TIA mentors; their invaluable coaching makes the Incubator truly unique and is what enables our entrepreneurs to think strategically, take action, make hard decisions, and grow their ventures.

We look for mentors who best exemplify the ideals of entrepreneurship. In particular, we look for mentors who have experience creating ventures from the ground up; exhibit an obvious passion for moving ideas forward to meet a need; practice the Socratic method of listening more and talking less; and value a liberal arts education and the impact it has on solving problems and realizing goals.

MENTOR MANIFESTO

- Be Socratic.
- Be optimistic.
- Hold information in confidence.
- Be challenging but never destructive.
- Have empathy. Remember that startups are hard.
- Be authentic / practice what you preach.
- Be direct, but kind. Tell the truth, however hard.
- Provide specific actionable advice, don’t be vague.
- Separate opinion from fact.
- Be responsive.
- Listen.
- Be open to conflicting advice and opinions from other mentors.
- Know what you don’t know - it’s ok to say, “I don’t know” when you don’t know.
- Guide, don’t control. Teams must make their own decisions. Understand that it’s their company, not yours.
- The best mentor relationships are two-way.
- Commit to mentor or do not. Either is ok.
- Expect nothing in return; you’ll be delighted by what you do get back.
MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

Mentor Orientation

- Mentors meet on Saturday mornings at 10:00am for a quick orientation, to review the topic for the lecture, and to discuss any issues they may be having with their section of entrepreneurs (more below).

Lecture

- The program begins promptly at 11:00am with an interactive one-hour lecture on a particular topic (see schedule). During the lectures there are various opportunities for the entrepreneurs to raise questions, present their ventures, and contribute to the overall discussion. Typically, mentors will use the questions/issues raised by the entrepreneurs as a springboard for discussion during the break out sessions (below). Mentors may be invited to present on a topic and are encouraged to contribute during the lecture, but are not responsible for creating a curriculum; there is a core curriculum that we use and iterate on year to year.

Lunch

- During lunch we invite a number of teams to come to the stage and pitch in front of the audience to receive feedback. Lunch is also an opportunity to network with other mentors as well as entrepreneurs who are not in your breakout session but whom you think you can help with their venture.

Breakout Sessions

- After lunch, mentors and entrepreneurs are divided into groups, each with approximately 4-5 ventures and 2-3 mentors. These breakout sessions allow for greater in-depth conversations with each team on what steps need to be taken to advance the venture, and how to address problems, issues, and challenges.
- Mentors provide guidance and direction to these discussions. Additionally, our experience has shown that TIA entrepreneurs benefit as much from peer review as they do from the mentors, and mentors should insure that there is a balance of both during the session.
- Mentors must make sure that entrepreneurs leave the breakout sessions with 3 clear deliverables that they commit to working on for the next workshop. The breakout session usually ends around 4:00pm.

Accountability

- Teams should arrive at each breakout session having delivered on their previous-month deliverables--specifically, having done the work they agreed to do in order to advance their venture. A core element of the Incubator is that we hold our entrepreneurs to real-world standards. As such, failure to deliver on commitments usually results in a warning the first time, and being “voted off the island” the second time.
- The performance standard of “delivering on your commitments” is shared with the entrepreneurs from the day they apply to the Incubator and reinforced throughout the year. It is a core element of both TIA and of a successful entrepreneur’s ‘personal brand.’
After The Workshop

- Mentors should be available during the month for scheduled mentor/entrepreneur conference calls and online interaction to review progress, give guidance and encouragement, and to answer questions.
- Mid-month progress conference calls are scheduled by the Lead Mentors of every section. These are quick 15-minute calls with each team in your section to make sure that things are moving along with the venture and to review their progress and tackle any challenges they encounter. Be prepared to spend 1-2 hours a month engaging remotely, outside of the on-campus workshops.
- Email updates and the website dashboard are an additional way for TIA entrepreneurs to keep mentors and the general public up-to-date on what is currently happening with the venture. If you see comments that piqued your interest, even if not from your section, and you think you can add value or encouragement, please post a response...it'll go a long way.
- In a perfect world, TIA entrepreneurs would automatically list their goals on the website and keep us informed; we know this is not the case. A simple "type update" post on a project wall is a good push to make sure the team is still on track. Sometimes it’s helpful to post any notes that you have from the workshop discussions on their dashboard as well.

MENTOR REQUIREMENTS

Mentor qualifications include:

1. Member of the Colgate community: alumnus, parent, faculty, administrator, or pretty much anyone who feels love for the school.
2. Clear and demonstrated success as an entrepreneur or as a business/enterprise/organization builder that supports entrepreneurship.
3. Passion for mentoring, entrepreneurship, and working with budding entrepreneurs.
4. Open to sharing both good experiences as well as lessons learned.
5. Bias towards listening before speaking and a practitioner of the Socratic method.
6. Efficiently and effectively relate with entrepreneurs.
7. Participate in the TIA program gratis.
8. Able to come to campus at least once a semester.

BOTTOM LINE:
TIA mentors arrive on campus and are willing to coach and share their entrepreneurial experiences, successes, failures, and lessons learned. If you’ve been selected as a TIA Mentor, we’re confident that everything else will fall perfectly into place.
PROTOCOL FOR TIA BREAKOUT SESSIONS:

When entrepreneurs arrive at the first workshop, it is likely they have never done ANYTHING like the TIA Incubator before. In the application process, we do our best to identify the most passionate and committed entrepreneurs and prepare them for what is to come, but we really don’t know what they’re made of until they start moving down the road with their ventures.

The initial application consists of three questions: What is your idea? Why do you want to make it happen? Why do you have the stuff to make it happen? We then interview them to get a better sense of their character and commitment. During the summer they are assigned a research assignment to speak to prospective customers and start crafting their 60-second pitch.

Nonetheless, when they arrive for the first workshop in September, they are very green. Most mentors are used to working with more polished entrepreneurs running businesses with more traction. The TIA entrepreneurs, however, are starting a step earlier, so please have patience early in the year while the entrepreneurs grow; we’re confident you’ll learn a lot through the process as well!

Here are some things to keep in mind during the breakout sessions:

1. **Practice the Socratic method throughout the session:** Instead of giving the entrepreneurs the answers, ask them questions that push them to think through issues they are facing and reason their way to the answer themselves. (“Teach a man to fish” vs. “Give a man a fish”)

2. **Set a timer:** Work around the table, dealing with one team at a time. Each team should receive ~30 minutes of mentoring focused exclusively on their venture. Make sure no single team sucks up all the airtime. Plan on being done by 4 p.m.

3. **‘Stand and Deliver’:** Each team will start by delivering their 60-second pitch, describing their venture across 4 essential criteria: Problem, User, Solution, Benefit. We do this every session for a couple of reasons: 1) the ventures are constantly evolving, and 2) it’s really important they get comfortable delivering a pitch in front of an audience. After ‘Stand + Deliver’, it is crucial that the group provide clear and candid feedback regarding the clarity, power, and completeness of the pitch. Being honest is way more important than being gentle. Make sure they take notes.

4. **Deep Dive:** Next, the team will detail their 3 deliverables from the previous workshop, the progress they made on each one, problems they confronted, and how they solved/didn’t solve these challenges. This generally turns into a very organic discussion involving the entire group about problems/issues/tactics/strategies for moving forward.

5. **Close by having the team commit to 3 clear deliverables for the following month:** The team must post these deliverables on the TIA website. Deliverables must have real substance to them; don’t let the team off on a deliverable that feels easy or isn’t clear...the commitments should make a substantial contribution to advancing the venture. **Then move onto the next team.**

6. **Remember that before responding, encourage the other TIA entrepreneurs at the table to offer solutions/POVs:** We aim to foster a problem-solving mindset and consultative culture within all of the participants...mentoring is not just a one-way street.
TIA has been in existence since the fall of 2009, and the university has financially supported the program since the beginning. As we grow, we continue to seek support from alumni and parents through volunteer mentoring hours as well as with financial gifts that are used to directly support student entrepreneurs.

**Hotel Accommodations**
Getting to Hamilton is the biggest challenge...after that TIA will arrange and cover the cost of lodging for your stay on campus. We have a limited budget for the year, which allows for one night of accommodations. Lodging assignments are made and sent out a few days prior to the workshops. You are always free to arrange your own accommodations; however, TIA will not be responsible for payment.

**Mileage Reimbursements**
We are in a position to help defray some of the costs associated with driving to campus. TIA reimburses at the yearly federal mileage rate for miles driven in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service. Car rental may be reimbursed provided a receipt is submitted showing charges. Reimbursements are made either for mileage or car rental, not both. We are not able to reimburse for airline travel.

We are unable to reimburse meals or any expenses other than those stated (such as gas and tolls).