

EVENT: Decision Day Prep – 12.9

Grade 12 – Choosing the Best Path

This event will begin a decision day campaign to celebrate mentee college choices and post-secondary plans. Mentors and mentees will also learn about the enrollment steps that they still need to complete during the summer before college and begin to collaborate toward completion of these steps.

Background Research:

During the summer between high school and college, students face obstacles that can interfere with college enrollment. For example, they must finalize a plan to finance college, submit forms to intended colleges, interpret confusing communications about course registration, resolve complicated logistics around travel, and more. During this time, students no longer have the support of their high schools, which are no longer in session, but are not yet connected to the supports of their intended colleges. As a result, many do not receive the support they need to complete the required tasks successfully, and a small obstacle can result in failure to matriculate at all. This phenomenon is known as the “summer melt” and affects 10–20% of college eligible students, and disproportionately affects low-income and first generation college students. [Source](#)

(http://curry.virginia.edu/uploads/resourceLibrary/9_Castleman_SummerTextMessages.pdf) .

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Event Overview

Objectives:

Pairs will:

- Celebrate college decisions of themselves and peers in their community

Guiding Questions:

- Why am I excited about the college choice that I've made?
- What's next after I finalize my college choice?

Lesson Resources:

- [Event materials](https://drive.google.com/open?id=OB-7uUgJJA5seVt1RMG5KU1ZwRDg) (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=OB-7uUgJJA5seVt1RMG5KU1ZwRDg>) (PDF)
- [Event agenda](#)

- Understand summer melt and summer enrollment tips
- Begin to plan how they will collaborate as a pair or with peers to complete summer enrollment steps

- How can my mentor and I collaborate between now and the start of college?

(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/OB-7uUglJA5seakkOaVE5OTgzaGM/view?usp=sharing>) (Word)

- Event agenda template
(https://docs.google.com/document/d/1c2mDhEaw_9PkPaZSBsDVkuJJI_DpR7VZm7bfkZlbakl/edit)
- Best fit template
(<http://docs.google.com/document/d/1YUNYX3lyFB1XFFFT8pSQNSshBcdXzeQ1jsG2yTPBY/edit>) (from prior lessons/events)
- Alternative fit template
(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/OB-7uUglJA5seR3V6dF85em1OQzg/view?usp=sharing>) (from last event)
- College program one pager
(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/OB-7uUglJA5seRUMtZFCMVtiaDA/view?usp=sharing>) (keep separate from event materials – for mentor huddle)
- College pennant template
- Markers and any other materials desired for icebreaker activity

Entry Point (35 min)

Welcome and Opening (5 min)

Chunk One: Welcome

- Staff formally welcomes all participants.
- Staff thanks everyone for showing up on time (it'll be important to emphasize punctuality as part of event success).
- Present opportunity for school staff, principal, etc., to welcome participants.

Chunk Two: College Pennants

- Pairs will use the template provided to design a college pennant for the college they have selected, or for a college that they are strongly considering
- At staff discretion, staff can create additional excitement around this activity through one or more of the following:
 - Encourage pairs to take a selfie with their completed pennant and text or email it to you
 - Create a competition for most _____ selfie/pennant
 - Encourage pairs to take a selfie with their completed pennant and post it to social media
 - Hang up completed college pennants in the event space and facilitate a gallery walk at the end of this activity or at another point during the event

DISH: Connecting Over Dinner (30 min)

Chunk One: Food Ritual

- Staff will instruct pairs on how they will get food and return to their seats
- It is important that staff set strong rituals for how participants get food to maximize efficiency

Chunk Two: Conversation Starter Deck

- Staff ensures DISH conversation starter card decks are on the tables. When pairs return to their tables with food, they draw cards and discuss the content on the cards. The cards are intended to be used if pairs do not already have a conversation to engage in.
- For full list of conversation starters, check out this article on [Conversation Starters](https://learn.imentor.org/help/article/link/conversation-starters) (<https://learn.imentor.org/help/article/link/conversation-starters>) .

Chunk Three: Seconds and Clean Up

- Staff will signal that seconds are available (if applicable)
- Staff will give pairs 5 minute warning to clean up and throw away trash

Keystone 1 (35 min)

Purpose:

Mentors and mentees will learn about the enrollment steps that they need to take after finalizing a college choice, and begin to collaborate toward their completion.

Steps:

Chunk One: Understanding Enrollment Steps (10 min)

- Pairs will review the infographic on summer melt and sample enrollment tip sheet
- Pairs will spend time understanding the infographic, then reviewing each step on the enrollment tip sheet. The goal is to get a snapshot of the amount and type of work that must be completed prior to enrollment, and pairs can choose to unpack individual steps as they see fit.
- Staff note: be sure to circulate at this time to answer mentor and mentee questions about the enrollment steps - what they are, why they are important, what could happen if not completed, etc.

Chunk Two: Planning to Collaborate (20 min)

- Pairs will get into groups of 4-6 people (or 1-3 other pairs)
- Each group will choose 1 step from the enrollment tip sheet. For the chosen step, discuss:
 - Why is this step important? For example, what does completing this step allow you to do or what could happen if you do not complete it on time?
 - What could go wrong? List all the hurdles you can anticipate to completing this step successfully and on time.
 - How can you collaborate as a pair or as peers to get ahead of these challenges?
- Staff note: be sure to continue circulating at this time to answer questions about enrollment steps

Chunk Three: Share-Out (5 min)

- Staff will ask for a volunteer from various groups to share:
 - The step they chose
 - Why this step is important and why it might be difficult
 - How pairs and peers can collaborate

Keystone 2 (30 min)

Purpose:

During this activity, pairs will continue to formalize their college choices, and the community will collaborate to formalize and refine mentee decisions.

Steps:

Chunk One: Best Fit Pitch - College (15 min)

- Pairs will briefly revisit their conversations about best fit college, specifically the college they chose and why it is the best fit
 - If mentees have received additional college acceptances since last filling out this template, pairs should consider them in this format
- Pairs will work together to craft a 1-3 sentence pitch describing why you have chosen this college
 - If mentees are still deciding which college to attend, pairs should return to the Best Fit Template to continue a conversation about which college is the best fit.
 - Let pairs know that starting at the next event we will celebrate their decisions by giving them an opportunity to give their pitches to the larger community and formalize them through several activities

Chunk Two: Best Fit Pitch - Other Pathways (15 min)

- Pairs will briefly revisit their conversations about best fit options after high school, specifically the option they will pursue and why it is the best fit
 - If additional options have become available to mentees since last completing this template, pairs should consider them in this format
- Pairs will work together to craft a 1-3 sentence pitch describing why they have chosen this option.

Chunk Three: Open Forum (15 min)

- Staff will instruct pairs to partner up with another pair in an open forum style to do the following.
 - Each mentee should share their pitch or discuss the factors that they are considering in making their college choice
 - After each mentee shares, answer the following:
 - Based on your own experiences, what advice could you give to this mentee to help them arrive at a decision?
 - Listening to this mentee's thought process, what ideas could you apply to your own college decision?
- Repeat this process as time allows

Exit Ramp (5 min)

Pair Debrief and Mentee Exit

- Mentors and mentees will huddle up as pairs to briefly summarize the most prominent portion of the event for them, and focus on next steps
- Exit ritual for mentees

Mentor Huddle (15 min)

Introduction

- Staff will thank mentors for participating in the event.
- Staff will call mentor attention to the summer melt infographic and enrollment tip sheet, and discuss the summer melt content as the first major content area of work in the college program.

Community Dialogue

- Staff will facilitate group discussion around summer melt infographic
 - Allow mentors space to learn and process the summer melt and how this concept does or does not apply to their mentees
- Staff will provide some additional context around the sample enrollment tip sheet
 - Explain that this is a generic tip sheet that could be applied to any college
 - Explain that some colleges are better than others are making these steps transparent and simple for students to complete. Some colleges have their own detailed checklists, but at other schools, the process can be nearly impossible for students to follow.
 - Knowing that many colleges are not good at making this process easy for students, this worksheet is an attempt to put all of the possible steps that students might need to keep track of into one place.
- Encourage mentors to get into groups of 2-4 to review the sample enrollment tip sheet
 - Spend time processing specific steps that are unclear and asking questions to better understand them
 - Which steps do you imagine begin particularly prominent or challenging for your mentee?
 - What role can you play in helping your mentee complete these steps successfully?
- Staff will facilitate a brief share-out and answer mentor questions about the enrollment steps

Announcements

- Staff will introduce text messages as the primary mode of communication in the college program.

- The reason for this is that the type of support mentees need in college will be much more individualized than it has been in high school.
- Therefore, mentors in the college program need to play a much more active role in determining when mentees need support and what type of support they need, involving their College Success Counselors as needed. This is in some ways the reverse of the high school program, where the PC often determined what type of support a pair needs and advised the mentor of their role.
- Text alerts in the college program are automated, and are meant to give mentors and idea of what things to look for in their mentees to determine what kind of support they might need. Mentors can reply to text alerts to get more detailed responses from a CSC.
- **Staff will reiterate summer enrollment steps as the first major content area in the college program and explain that mentors will begin to receive text alerts related to this content area during the spring**

Closing Ritual

- **Staff should facilitate a closing ritual for mentors to build community and to leave on a high note.**
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