



## **Mentor Program Guidelines**

**You have agreed to enter into a mentor relationship which pairs a community member with personal financial management expertise and a student at Lancaster Seminary. What follows is a set of guidelines for participants.**

**Purpose of the Project.** Learning good money management skills and minimizing student loan debt will equip students to face the future with confidence in their personal financial health and in their ability to manage the budget of a congregation or other organization. Our goal is to provide our students with practical knowledge integrated with personal reflection on the theological significance of money. Stewarding resources is a spiritual practice.

We have received a grant from Lilly Endowment to study, research, and attempt to minimize the burden of student loan debt for those attending Lancaster Seminary. Our goal is reduction of student indebtedness for current student through exposure to and practice of the money management tools they will need throughout their lives.

**Length of Service.** We ask that mentors commit to meeting with and assisting students from admission to graduation. The course of study for most students takes three years, and that would be the length of your commitment. A minimum of one meeting per month is expected, but more frequent contact, by email, telephone, video chat or other form of communication can be arranged if the student and mentor believe it is necessary and useful.

**Reporting.** This project is overseen by an advisory committee here at Lancaster Seminary, and by the Lilly Endowment. Both entities require progress reports on a regular basis. In order to complete those reports, we will need input from our mentors and students each month. The report is brief, and will be sent by email at the end of each month. A sample is included here. You will be asked to complete and return the report to the Project Manager.

These reports will also provide us with the information we need to make this experience useful and productive for all involved.

**Scope of Mentor Relationship.** Mentors are expected to provide general guidance in money management skills and techniques. Mentors are asked not to offer tax and financial planning advice even if that is an area of expertise. Specific questions about student loans should be addressed directly by the student with the Loan Officer. If a student has questions or concerns which the mentor cannot or prefers not to address, please direct those questions to the Project Manager, or the Loan Officer.

**Confidentiality.** The student/mentor relationship only works if it is based on trust. Students will be sharing sensitive money issues with mentors. All financial information obtained about the student must be held as confidential. The confidentiality agreement is included here. Monthly reports by the mentor will include only general trends, successes and challenges, not specific financial information. Should such information inadvertently make its way into a report, the Project Manager, who is bound by the same rules of confidentiality, will delete it.

If a mentor reasonably believes that a student presents a threat to her/himself or another, or learns of actions or plans which are potentially illegal, or which violate the norms of conduct for a student at Lancaster Theological Seminary, the mentor is obligated to report this information promptly to Dean of Students, Frank Stalfa at 717-380-9092. If immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of this student or others, and Dean Stalfa is not available, 911 should be called.

**Breakdown of Communication.** If difficulties arise in the mentorship relationship that cannot be resolved by, you should notify the Project Manager. If personality or cultural differences make continued work unlikely to be productive, a new mentor can be assigned.

**Ending the Mentorship (student).** Your participation in this relationship is intended to be valuable and beneficial. If you feel that is not the case, you should speak with the Project Manager prior to ending the mentorship to determine if a different mentor might make the experience more productive. If your participation is a condition of a scholarship you have received, the decision to end mentorship may impact renewal of your scholarship for future semesters.

**First Meeting.** The student you will be assisting is responsible for contacting you to set a time and place for the first meeting. If you do not hear from the student within two weeks of your assignment, contact the Project Manager. During the first meeting you will become acquainted, set goals for your work together and create a schedule for future meetings.

**Creating a Spending Plan.** All students in the mentoring program will, with their mentors help, create a spending plan (budget) that reflects current income and spending. The primary focus of the plan is to minimize the need for living expense related student loans. The plan is reviewed monthly and revised as needed. This review is not for the purpose of judging how "good" the student has been at sticking to the plan. Instead it gives the student an opportunity to really think about spending and to modify the plan to reflect the particulars of that student's situation. An important function of the mentor is assisting the student to brainstorm ways of getting what s/he needs and still practice good money management.

Students who are matched with mentors will have completed a financial education class which teaches the basics of budgeting. The materials used are available for your review, and can be

used as the template for budget planning.

**Canceling or Postponing Meeting.** Mentors and students are expected to meet at least once a month. If you are unable to attend a scheduled meeting, contact your partner directly and propose an alternative date to meet. If a student cancels or fails to attend more than one meeting, it should be noted on the monthly report.

**Ending Service (mentor).** While working with a mentor is voluntary for students, those who agree to do so promise to continue through to graduation. However, there may be circumstances that require an early end to the work. For example, a mentor may experience a change in work or family circumstances, or the mentor and student find it difficult or impossible to work together because of personality or cultural differences.

If a mentor can no longer work with a student, the mentor should promptly contact the Project Manager. Similarly, if there is a breakdown or failure to develop a working relationship, the Project Manager should be notified promptly so that another mentor can be assigned.

**Role of the Project Manager.** The project manager will monitor this program, report on it to interested parties, and modify it when needed. Your input is welcomed and encouraged. Feel free to email or visit the Project Manager with suggestions, issues, or insights.

**Exit Interview.** Your experiences will help us evaluate and improve this aspect of our project. At the end of your service, you will be asked to talk with the Project Manager about your experiences. This conversation will be brief, focused and will take place at a time and place most convenient to you.