


# NEXT AVL

WHERE YOU WANT TO BE



## PROGRAM HANDBOOK & PLANNER

YOU ARE  
NEXT 



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# PREFACE

Where do our region's employers find their talent? According to a 2018 State of the Workforce survey, 71% of participating employers said they turn to personal connections and networks when it's time to hire. That means future workers need relationships in their chosen industries, and employers need to connect with younger, more diverse populations to expand their talent pools.

That's where NEXT AVL comes in. NEXT AVL is a mentorship program that works to bridge the gap between young people and employers in the Asheville area by pairing second- and third-year students from local colleges and universities with mentors who are working professionals in a range of industries. Together with our partners at Mars Hill University, Montreat College, the University of North Carolina – Asheville, Warren Wilson College, Western Carolina University, and the WNC Human Resources Association, we help students develop professional connections and networks that can be leveraged to find their first jobs here in Asheville after graduation.

We're invested and committed to the success of NEXT AVL because we understand that in the real, working, professional world, economic opportunity and mobility is less about who you know and much more about WHO KNOWS YOU.



# WELCOME

Welcome to NEXT AVL. You are among an important cohort of individuals working to change the face of Asheville's future workforce.

The success of your NEXT AVL mentorship depends on YOU. The relationship between mentor and mentee should be mutually rewarding, collaborative, engaged, and dynamic. It is important to remember that the mentor is volunteering their time and expertise. Likewise, it is important to remember that the mentee is a college student juggling the demands of academic studies and obligations and nascent in the concepts of professionalism and time management.

As you embark on this journey, please remember you are not alone. Please see the contact page if you have any questions or concerns at any point during the program.

GOOD LUCK  
as you begin this NEW ADVENTURE!



# WHO'S NEXT?

## MENTEES

NEXT AVL mentees are college students who are interested in professional and meaningful job opportunities in the Asheville area post-graduation. Their career interests span a spectrum of professional fields including, but not limited to, marketing, engineering, biology, psychology, sociology, art, finance, criminal justice, political science, business law, and management.

Students accepted into the program meet the following criteria:

- Students at Mars Hill University, Montreat College, UNC Asheville, Warren Wilson College, or Western Carolina University
- Sophomore or Junior year
- Motivated, committed, and proactive in the program
- Open to learning, collaborative, and dynamic
- Looking for additional professional or career direction

Additionally, most students meet one of the following criteria:

- First in family to go to college
- From underrepresented or historically marginalized community
- Receives financial aid
- From culturally diverse background

## MENTORS

- Seasoned professionals established in their fields
- Committed to mentee success
- Voluntary participants
- Ideally working in or have connections within mentee's field of interest
- Open to sharing experiences, knowledge, and their network

# THE PROGRAM

## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

This is a formal relationship in which the **mentor** will guide the **mentee** in their field of interest and provide exposure and greater understanding of the profession.

The **mentor** will answer questions, take personal interest in, guide, encourage, and support the **mentee**. The **mentor** agrees to meeting monthly and will follow up as needed.

The **mentee** will be prepared with complete assignments for each meeting. The **mentee** will also initiate discussion regarding professional goals with the **mentor**. Both **mentor** and **mentee** will commit to the program and stay connected for the duration of the program.

## OBJECTIVES

As a result of this mentorship program, students will:

- Have a clearer vision of their career aspirations and goals
- Participate in professional development opportunities
- Talk about themselves and their professional aspirations clearly and concisely in a public or private setting
- Identify 3-5 employers in the Asheville Area within their field of interest
- Build a professional network

# CODE OF CONDUCT

## EXPECTATIONS

### MENTEES

- Committed to being active and responsive to their mentor
- Committed to holding self accountable acknowledging that my success in this program is reliant on me
- Complete assignments on time and arrive at meetings prepared and ready to ask questions
- Follow dress code for meetings - business casual, unless otherwise informed by mentor
- Participation is voluntary and there is no financial compensation

### MENTORS

- Committed to being active and responsive to their mentee at all times
- Answer questions, take personal interest in, guide, encourage, and support the mentee
- Agree to meeting monthly and will follow up as needed
- Commit to the program and stay connected for the duration of the program



# SCHEDULE OVERVIEW



IMPORTANT DATES

# SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

MONTH	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
MEETING	<p><b>MODULE 1:</b> Kickoff / Launching the Relationship</p> <hr/> <p><b>WHO:</b> Mentors &amp; Mentees</p>	<p><b>MODULE 2:</b> Always Start with WHY</p> <hr/> <p><b>WHO:</b> Mentees</p>	<p><b>MODULE 3:</b> Industry Research &amp; Career Readiness Skills Inventory</p> <hr/> <p><b>WHO:</b> Mentees</p>	<p><b>MODULE 4:</b> Getting the Most Out of NEXT AVL</p> <hr/> <p><b>WHO:</b> Mentees</p>
TO DO	<p><b>Ixl:</b> Launch &amp; Dive In</p>	<p><b>Ixl:</b> Discuss Strengths &amp; Explore Career Options</p>	<p><b>Ixl:</b> Compose First Draft of Resumé</p>	<p><b>Ixl:</b> Catch Up Over Winter Break</p>

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
<p><b>MODULE 5:</b> Developing Team Building &amp; Questioning Skills</p> <hr/> <p><b>WHO:</b> Mentees</p>	<p><b>MODULE 6:</b> Putting It All Together</p> <hr/> <p><b>WHO:</b> Mentees</p>	<p><b>MODULE 7:</b> How to Stand Out in the Network</p> <hr/> <p><b>WHO:</b> Mentees</p>	<p><b>MODULE 8:</b> Developing a Plan</p> <hr/> <p><b>WHO:</b> Mentees</p>	<p><b>MODULE 9:</b> Awards &amp; Closing</p> <hr/> <p><b>WHO:</b> Mentors &amp; Mentees</p>
<p><b>Ixl:</b> Polish Resumé &amp; Explore Job Shadow Opportunities</p>	<p><b>Ixl:</b> Draft Pitch &amp; Schedule Job Shadows</p>	<p><b>Ixl:</b> Polish Pitch</p>	<p><b>Ixl:</b> Prepare for Closing Event</p>	<p><b>Ixl:</b></p>

# IMPORTANT DATES

	MARS HILL UNIVERSITY	MONTREAT COLLEGE
FALL 2021 SEMESTER BEGINS	August 30	August 17
THANKSGIVING BREAK	November 23-26	November 24-26
FALL 2021 SEMESTER ENDS	December 10	December 3
JANUARY TERM BEGINS	January 4	N/A
JANUARY TERM ENDS	January 25	N/A
SPRING 2022 SEMESTER BEGINS	January 31	January 12
SPRING BREAK 2022	March 21-25	March 14-18
SPRING 2022 SEMESTER ENDS	May 17	May 6
COMMENCEMENT	May 21	May 15

UNCA	WARREN WILSON COLLEGE	WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
August 16	August 23	August 23
November 24-26	November 24-26	November 24-26
November 30	December 14	December 10
N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	N/A
January 10	January 10	January 10
March 7-11	February 28-March 4	March 7-11
April 26	May 2	April 29
May 7	May 7	May 7

# ICON KEY

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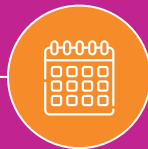


**ITEMS TO BRING  
WITH YOU**



**TO DO LIST**

# MONTHLY AGENDAS



SEPTEMBER-MAY  
2021-2022



PROGRAM  
CURRICULUM



# SEPTEMBER 2021

## MODULE I:

### NEXT AVL Kickoff / Launching the Relationship

## MENTEE & MENTOR

**What:** All-cohort meeting

**Where:** Center for Craft  
67 Broadway Street  
Asheville, NC 28801

**When:** September 9, 2021, 6:00PM - 8:00PM

We'll begin our work in NEXT AVL by diving into the meaning of mentorship and beginning this year's mentor/mentee relationships.

### AGENDA

- Welcome and kickoff
- Introduction to mentorship
- Small group introductions and conversations
- Overview of upcoming monthly meeting topics and assignments

### TO DO

#### BEFORE NEXT MONTH'S GROUP MEETING

- Review How to be a Great Mentee slide deck
- Complete reflection activity and email results to your mentor before your first mentor session
- Schedule and attend a meeting with your mentor
  - Review program guidelines and expectations
  - Discuss ideal outcomes for NEXT AVL
  - Discuss career interests and goals
  - Discuss classes and opportunities to tie NEXT AVL mentorship to an in-class assignment



### DRESS

Business casual

### NOTES

# OCTOBER 2021

## MODULE 2:

### Always Start with WHY



#### DRESS

Business casual



#### BRING

Program handbook  
and planner

#### NOTES

## MENTEE

**What:** Mentee group meeting

**Where:** Virtual via Zoom

**When:** October 2021 — Date and time TBD

From professional networking to job interviews, understanding your interest in a particular career field or role is key to communicating why you're a great candidate. This month, we'll explore our strengths and how they support our career interests.

## AGENDA

- Guest speaker: Karen Eilers, Career Development Specialist, Montreat College
  - O\*Net StrengthsFinder as a career readiness tool
- Small group discussions
- Introduction to mission-driven is the new business as usual



## TO DO

### BEFORE NEXT MONTH'S GROUP MEETING

- Complete StrengthsFinder evaluation and career application and email results to mentor
- Browse available jobs in your field of interest via ONet or NC Careers
- Make a list of 3-5 roles you are interested in now, with links and job descriptions copy/pasted beneath each role
- Make a list of 3-5 roles you see yourself in 10 years from now, with links and job descriptions copy/pasted beneath each role
  - Note for aspiring entrepreneurs: use this exercise to understand the roles you might fill based on paths taken by entrepreneurs you admire
- Schedule appointment with campus career center to create a first draft of your resumé
- Discuss results of mentee StrengthsFinder evaluation and career application with mentor
- Discuss resumé preparation with mentor

## NOTES

# NOVEMBER 2021

## MODULE 3:

### Industry Research and Career Readiness Skills



#### DRESS

Business casual



#### BRING

Program handbook  
and planner

#### NOTES



## MENTEE

**What:** Mentee group meeting

**Where:** Virtual via Zoom

**When:** November 2021 – Date and time TBD

With many organizations in various industries working hard to hire, it can be tricky to focus your job search. This month, we'll review ways to find roles based on your chosen industry and specific interests.

### AGENDA

- Guest speaker: Mark DeVerges, Senior Manager, Dixon Hughes Goodman LLP / DHG Executive Search  
– Introduction to LinkedIn
- NACE Career Readiness Introduction

## TO DO

### BEFORE NEXT MONTH'S GROUP MEETING

- Complete NEXT AVL Career Planning and Self-Assessment Worksheet and review with mentor
- Review first draft of resumé with mentor
- With mentor, discuss networking opportunities to attend

# DECEMBER 2021

## MODULE 4:

### Getting the Most Out of NEXT AVL

## MENTEE

**What:** Mentee group meeting

**Where:** Virtual via Zoom

**When:** December 2021 (Winter Break) – Date and time TBD

This month, we'll check in about our progress and discuss how the experience of participating in NEXT AVL is going to date.

### AGENDA

- Guest speaker: Courtney Gauthier, Associate Director of Career Integrated Learning, Western Carolina University  
– Peer-to-peer sharing

## TO DO

### BEFORE NEXT MONTH'S GROUP MEETING

- None



### DRESS

Business casual



### BRING

Program handbook and planner

### NOTES

# JANUARY 2022

## MODULE 5:

### Developing Team Building & Questioning Skills



#### DRESS

Business casual



#### BRING

Program handbook  
and planner

#### NOTES



## MENTEE

**What:** Mentee group meeting

**Where:** Virtual via Zoom

**When:** January 2022 (Winter Break) – Date and time TBD

Employers in every industry value workers who work well on teams and are strong problem-solvers. This month, we'll explore a questioning tool that bolsters problem-solving skills.

## AGENDA

- Guest speaker: April Brown, Director of Business Recruitment and Expansion, Economic Development Coalition for Asheville-Buncombe County/Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce
  - Developing skills for working in diverse teams to solve complex problems
  - Questioning tool introduction and practice

## TO DO

### BEFORE NEXT MONTH'S GROUP MEETING

- Work with mentor to identify companies to consider for job shadows and informational interviews
- Review your resumé with your mentor

# FEBRUARY 2022

## MODULE 6:

### Putting it All Together

## MENTEE

**What:** Mentee group meeting

**Where:** In person at Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce

**When:** February 2022 – Date and time TBD

So, you've developed your resumé, identified and developed your strengths, and done your research. Now it's time to put all that together and learn how to describe yourself, your skills, and your aspirations with confidence.

## AGENDA

- Guest speaker: Barrie Barton, Founder and Lead Facilitator, Stand & Deliver Asheville
  - Qualifications + Experience = Expertise
  - Structure of crafting a pitch
- Resumé development: how has your resumé changed so far?
- Scheduling job shadows and informational interviews

## TO DO

### BEFORE NEXT MONTH'S GROUP MEETING

- Draft your pitch and practice pitch delivery with your mentor
- Put finishing touches on your resumé
- Work with your mentor to schedule networking events, job shadows, and/or informational interviews



## DRESS

Business casual



## BRING

Program handbook and planner

## NOTES

# MARCH 2022

## MODULE 7:

### How to Stand Out in the Network



#### DRESS

Business casual



#### BRING

Program handbook  
and planner

#### NOTES



## MENTEE

**What:** Mentee group meeting

**Where:** In person at Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce

**When:** March 2022 — Date and time TBD

In today's competitive job market, it's important to learn how to build trust within our professional networks and set ourselves apart in our chosen industries. This month, we'll use our draft pitches to practice presenting ourselves with confidence and learn tips and tricks for overcoming anxiety around public speaking.

## AGENDA

- Guest speaker: Barrie Barton, Founder and Lead Facilitator, Stand & Deliver Asheville
  - Public speaking tips and tricks
  - Practice pitching in small groups
    - Small group chooses one to share with large group
- Identify ways to continue improving and building upon your pitch

## TO DO

### BEFORE NEXT MONTH'S GROUP MEETING

- Make finishing touches to elevator pitch
- Continue practicing pitch delivery with mentor



# APRIL 2022

## MODULE 8:

### Developing a Plan

## MENTEE

**What:** Mentee group meeting

**Where:** In person at Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce

**When:** April 2022 – Date and time TBD

Successful career development comes from careful planning. This month, we'll work on developing a clear understanding of our goals and how to make plans to reach them.

### AGENDA

- Setting short-term and long-term goals
- Backward planning, or backcasting
- Strategic foresight
  - What are some problems your field is facing during the pandemic?
  - What are some problems your field might face in the next 10-20 years?
  - How might this affect your desired role(s)?
  - How can you prepare for this and be resilient?

## TO DO

### BEFORE NEXT MONTH'S GROUP MEETING

- Review progress to date with mentor
- Discuss ways to continue developing professional network
- Discuss plan to carry on mentor/mentee relationship

## MENTORS:

Write a letter of recommendation and a personal note with 3 strengths your mentee should stay focused on



### DRESS

Business casual



### BRING

Program handbook and planner

## NOTES

# MAY 2022

## MODULE 9: Awards & Closing



### DRESS

Business casual

### NOTES

## MENTEE & MENTOR

**What:** All-cohort meeting

**Where:** In person — Location TBD

**When:** May 2022 — Date and time TBD

In our final meeting, we'll reflect on how our resumés, professional networking styles, and understandings of our chosen industries have changed over the course of the NEXT AVL curriculum.

### AGENDA

- Student pitches
- Discuss ways we present ourselves professionally now versus when we began our work in NEXT AVL
- Review key takeaways and share what we've learned
- Conclude 2021 cohort

# CONTACTS

## NEXT AVL PROGRAM MANAGERS

**SAMANTHA COLE**, Workforce Partnership Manager  
Economic Development Coalition for Asheville-Buncombe County  
Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce  
[scole@ashevillechamber.org](mailto:scole@ashevillechamber.org)

**TIARRA WILKIE**, Workforce Partnership Specialist  
Economic Development Coalition for Asheville-Buncombe County  
Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce  
[twilkie@ashevillechamber.org](mailto:twilkie@ashevillechamber.org)

## MARS HILL UNIVERSITY

**JIMMY KNIGHT**

[jknight@MHU.EDU](mailto:jknight@MHU.EDU)

The Cothran Center for Career Readiness, 828-689-1122, [mhu.edu](http://mhu.edu)

## MONTREAT COLLEGE

**KAREN EILERS**, Career Development Specialist

[karen.eilers@montreat.edu](mailto:karen.eilers@montreat.edu)

Thrive Center for Learning, Calling and Career  
[montreat.edu/mymontreat/thrive/calling-career](http://montreat.edu/mymontreat/thrive/calling-career)

## UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA - ASHEVILLE

**CATE MARSHALL**, Student Engagement Coordinator, Career Center

[dearnhar@unca.edu](mailto:dearnhar@unca.edu)

Career Center at UNC Asheville, 828-232-5099, [career.unca.edu](http://career.unca.edu)

## WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

**COURTNEY GAUTHIER**, Associate Director of Career Integrated Learning

[cmasha3@unca.edu](mailto:cmasha3@unca.edu)

Career Center at UNC Asheville, 828-232-5099, [career.unca.edu](http://career.unca.edu)

## WARREN WILSON COLLEGE

**HANNAH RICHARDSON**, Director of Internships

[hrichardson@warren-wilson.edu](mailto:hrichardson@warren-wilson.edu)

Center for Integrated Advising and Careers, 828-771-3815  
[warren-wilson.edu/after-wwc/careers/](http://warren-wilson.edu/after-wwc/careers/)

# FAQs

## How are mentoring matches made?

We review each applicant's field of interest and begin the hunt for professionals in our existing networks of over 1,700 member businesses and over 3,000 recipients of our weekly newsletter. We send hundreds of emails to follow up on leads, respond to questions, and find the right person. Each prospective mentor is required to submit an application to confirm their interest, provide contact information, provide a professional field of expertise, and confirm their understanding of the program expectations.

## What should I do if I experience misconduct from my mentor?

Misconduct of any kind should be immediately reported to Tiarra Wilkie, the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce's workforce partnership specialist, who will then notify the Asheville Chamber of Commerce's vice president of finance and operations as well as its general counsel. Mentor misconduct will be evaluated and their direct supervisor or appropriate chain of command within their place of work will be notified. Depending on the nature of the misconduct, further action may be determined at that time.

## What should I do if my mentor is not directly aligned with my career interest?

While we spend hundreds of hours trying to track down a professional in the students' field of interest, we aren't always able to find a professional within every field. In these cases, you may be matched with a seasoned professional who is committed to the program objectives of making connections for you in your field. Anyone who commits to participate in NEXT AVL as a mentor is a valuable guide in professional skill development. The best advice is to lean in, spend time getting to know your mentor, and give them ample opportunity to get to know you. The more you engage, the more likely your mentor is to make great connections for you.

## Can I switch my mentor after the program begins?

The short answer is no. There are rare cases when switching mentors is successful, but it's only available on a case-by-case basis. Typically, if the relationship doesn't successfully launch in the beginning, trying to match with a new mentor will set you back on the schedule, making the launch of a new relationship unsuccessful.

## Who should I contact if my mentor/student is not being responsive?

Please contact **Tiarra Wilkie** as soon as you have concerns with responsiveness. Mentees may also contact their respective on-campus career services professionals for assistance. Given the monthly schedule of activities, it's important to maintain weekly communication to avoid falling behind.

## How are meetings set up and conducted?

Mentors and mentees are responsible for scheduling their own meetings per the mentorship program schedule. In addition to attending the monthly large group meetings, plan to touch base on a weekly basis through email, phone, or text. For one-on-one meetings, it is up to you to decide if you want to meet face-to-face or virtually. Mentees are responsible for proactively arranging meetings, preparing the agendas based upon the curriculum and schedule, and completing assignments ahead of the meeting.

## What happens once I've completed NEXT AVL?

Mentees may stay in touch with their mentors if both parties agree. Mentors will be asked to confirm their interest in being available to the next cohort of mentees. Additionally, all mentees will be enrolled in NEXT AVL as an ambassador to help identify and recruit future mentees and participate in other NEXT AVL programming.

# FAQs

What is the role of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Coalition for Asheville-Buncombe County?

The Asheville Chamber and EDC are here to facilitate mentors/mentee relationships and provide a basic framework to launch those relationships.

Please direct any questions or concerns related to NEXT AVL to **Tiarra Wilkie**, the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce's workforce partnership specialist.

Who was involved in developing NEXT AVL?

The Asheville Chamber and EDC initially developed NEXT AVL in 2018 as a pilot program in partnership with UNC Asheville, Western Carolina University, and the WNC Human Resource Association. In 2019, students from UNC Asheville, Western Carolina University, and Warren Wilson College participated. The WNC Human Resource Association continues to serve as a working group partner that recruits mentors and develops content.

Developing NEXT AVL: Your input is requested!

NEXT AVL is an ongoing program, and your thoughts, ideas, and recommendations will help ensure that it is an effective workforce development, networking, and professional development tool. To keep NEXT AVL relevant and effective, we welcome any feedback or suggestions. Please send your feedback to **Samantha Cole**, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce's workforce partnership manager.

Other Questions?

For questions or concerns, please contact

**Tiarra Wilkie** at [twilkie@ashevillechamber.org](mailto:twilkie@ashevillechamber.org) or

**Samantha Cole** at [scole@ashevillechamber.org](mailto:scole@ashevillechamber.org).

CONGRATULATIONS  
TO YOU!



NEXT **AVE**

WHERE YOU WANT TO BE