AIGA Philadelphia

2021 Mentorship Program
Overview + Tips

THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE AIGA MENTORSHIP PROGRAM!

As mentors, I hope you will spark inspiration, learning, and professional growth within our design community. As mentees, if you are looking to take things to the next level, to gain advice, or to just meet more people with whom to talk design — you're in the right place! I aim to give mentors and mentees an opportunity to join us for a few group gatherings, as well as make you aware of other awesome events that are already happening locally (and/or virtually). I also wanted to mention that it's **you** that makes this program work — your time, your commitment, your energy and creativity — and I'm truly grateful.

Sincerely,

Maria DeFazio, AIGA Philadelphia Mentorship Director

ABOUT THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Launched in 2010, the AIGA Philadelphia Mentorship Program pairs seasoned designers with emerging designers at the onset of their professional careers to provide encouragement, motivation, and guidance. Our term begins in January each year and concludes in June. The application period for the program opens annually in December. Each mentoring relationship is unique: partners (and trios) set their own goals, drawing on the experience of the mentor and the aspirations and interests of the mentee(s). Meeting schedules and venues are fully flexible to your schedule — though we hope you will be able to connect with one another at least once a month. AIGA Philadelphia provides ongoing support to our mentoring pairs, and we host a series of events where our mentors and mentees can socialize together as a group.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

There is no strict format within the program, but we do have a few pointers to guide your partnership:

- We hope this experience will be inspirational and rewarding to both mentors and mentees — it is not meant to be an internship or job–hunting program.

- Make time to (virtually) meet at least once a month if possible. Trios can meet as a group or one–on–one; it depends on your group dynamic and if the three of you share similar interests. This is also determined by the mentor's availability.

- Be courteous. Let one another know when you are going to be available and unavailable. Be prompt in responding to voicemails and emails.

- Although we try to match partners with similar interests, sometimes our matches just don't work out, for different reasons. Please speak up if your partner is not the right fit for you and we'll do our best to find a better match for you.

- As always, please keep in touch during the term, and feel free to e–mail Maria at any point with questions at mdefazio@philadelphia.aiga.org. Also, we love to see pictures and hear how you're doing!

MEETING IDEAS (VIRTUAL OR POTENTIALLY IN-PERSON)

Attend an AIGA event or lecture, critique a resume or portfolio, visit an art museum or exhibition, review a current project, go along on a press check, collaborate on a design, conduct a mock interview, job shadow for a day, take a ceramics workshop, grab a coffee or drink and talk design, tour a studio, trade software tips, attend a professional networking event, take a Skillshare class, shadow a photoshoot, tour a letterpress or printing company, or do lunch.

ROLE OF THE MENTOR

As a mentor, we hope that you will realize your importance to your mentee. Thank you in advance for offering your best insights and inspiration. All of you made it possible to have a record-breaking **98 participants in this year's program!**

- Try to work with your mentee to help him or her set realistic goals—both for your partnership and long-term—and then assist in developing ways to achieve them.

- It is useful to define a specific goal such as "improve mentee's portfolio," "make a project together," or "help mentee connect with other professionals." This can frame your interaction and activities, plus provide a sense of achievement.

- Be prepared to adjust goals and tactics as interests change.

- We hope that you will help familiarize your mentee with professional resources and local organizations and encourage your mentee to learn new facets of the trade as well.

- You can start by simply asking your mentee(s): Why did you apply to the program? This helps to determine what your mentee is looking to gain from your partnership.

- If your mentee is unresponsive after your attempts to communicate, please notify Maria.

ROLE OF THE MENTEE

Welcome to the program! As a mentee, we hope you'll gain perspective, explore new areas, get advice, and learn from your mentor's experience.

- Please be respectful of the time your mentor is giving to you. In general, we abide by a "two-strikes" policy for unresponsiveness. If your mentor has twice attempted to contact you and you haven't replied, you'll be asked to leave the program. Each year, there's a high demand for mentors and a mentee waiting list. If you're unable to commit to the partnership, we'll open your spot to someone who is. This situation can also happen in reverse (lack of response from a mentor). If so, please notify Maria.

- Feel free to share with your mentor any insights, tips, or design trends of which you're aware. We hope that you will both be learning from each other.

- Think about your career goals and aspirations, interests, and questions. Meet with your mentor to discuss these goals and expectations right away.

- It is your responsibility to make the most out of this experience.

- This is not a job-hunting program. Please be mindful of the resources that your mentor might choose to share. Make sure you are on time and always be prepared. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up on communication and (if applicable) to travel to or from meetings.

- And lastly, please remember to show appreciation for what your mentor is able to provide.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Mentorship program will be hosting some exciting, free virtual events in the coming months! All of them will provide the chance for networking, and you'll receive e-mailed invitations with more details. Additionally, these events will be open to the general public—so if you're enjoying the program, tell your friends to join us for a virtual gathering! The Mentorship program runs until June, at which point we'll host a final event to meet as a group. Dates are TBD:

March: UX Design | **April:** Illustration + Animation | **June:** Creative Mixed Bag/Closing Event

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR PARTNERSHIPS!