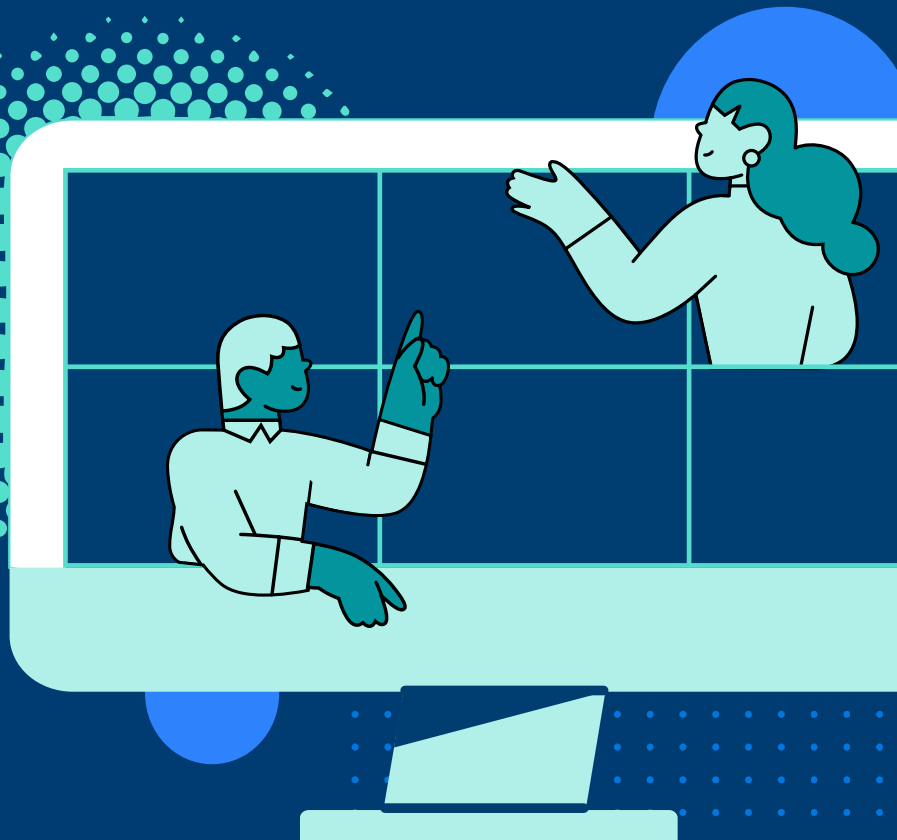


Creating an Equity-Centered Experience

Lessons from the
Every Learner Everywhere
Student Fellowship

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↔
everywhere



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Introduction

In equity-centered decision making, it is imperative to **seek the input of the community you are serving** to develop a better understanding of that community's strengths and experiences. In the field of higher education it is easy to only rely on the voices of "experts" such as institutional leaders, policymakers, and other professionals, but rarely do we engage with the voices of those that the work seeks to impact; **students are experts of their own experiences** and bring a unique perspective that is not always considered in efforts to improve educational systems.

Fellowships are one approach that organizations and institutions can adopt to incorporate student voice in a sustained and meaningful way. They simultaneously benefit students, not just by compensating them, but also by providing valuable access to networking, professional learning, and hands-on experience.

Between 2021 and 2022, the [Every Learner Everywhere network](#) designed and operated the first three cohorts of its newly founded [Every Learner Fellowship](#) (referred to henceforth as "the Fellowship") as part of the network's mission to help institutions use new technology (such as digital courseware) to innovate teaching and learning, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, poverty-affected students, and first-generation students. The network found that the Fellowship exceeded expectations, with Fellows infusing the network's work in digital learning with new insights and energy.

While fellowships are a wonderful tool that can make a positive impact on both organizations and Fellows, setting one up is not without its difficulties, and it's important to mindfully create a positive experience for all and not inadvertently create harm for students. **In this report, we will share the approach we took to standing up an equity-minded, remote fellowship and the lessons we learned across our first three cohorts. Our hope is that this enables others to design similar programs efficiently and equitably.**



This resource documents best practices and our reasoning for these practices, stemming from our own experience planning and implementing the Every Learner Everywhere Fellowship. In this document, we cover:

1

Our Fellowship

Important context for understanding Every Learner Everywhere's approach to its own Fellowship

2

Best Practices for Running Your Fellowship

Recommendations for running an equitable fellowship, based on our learnings

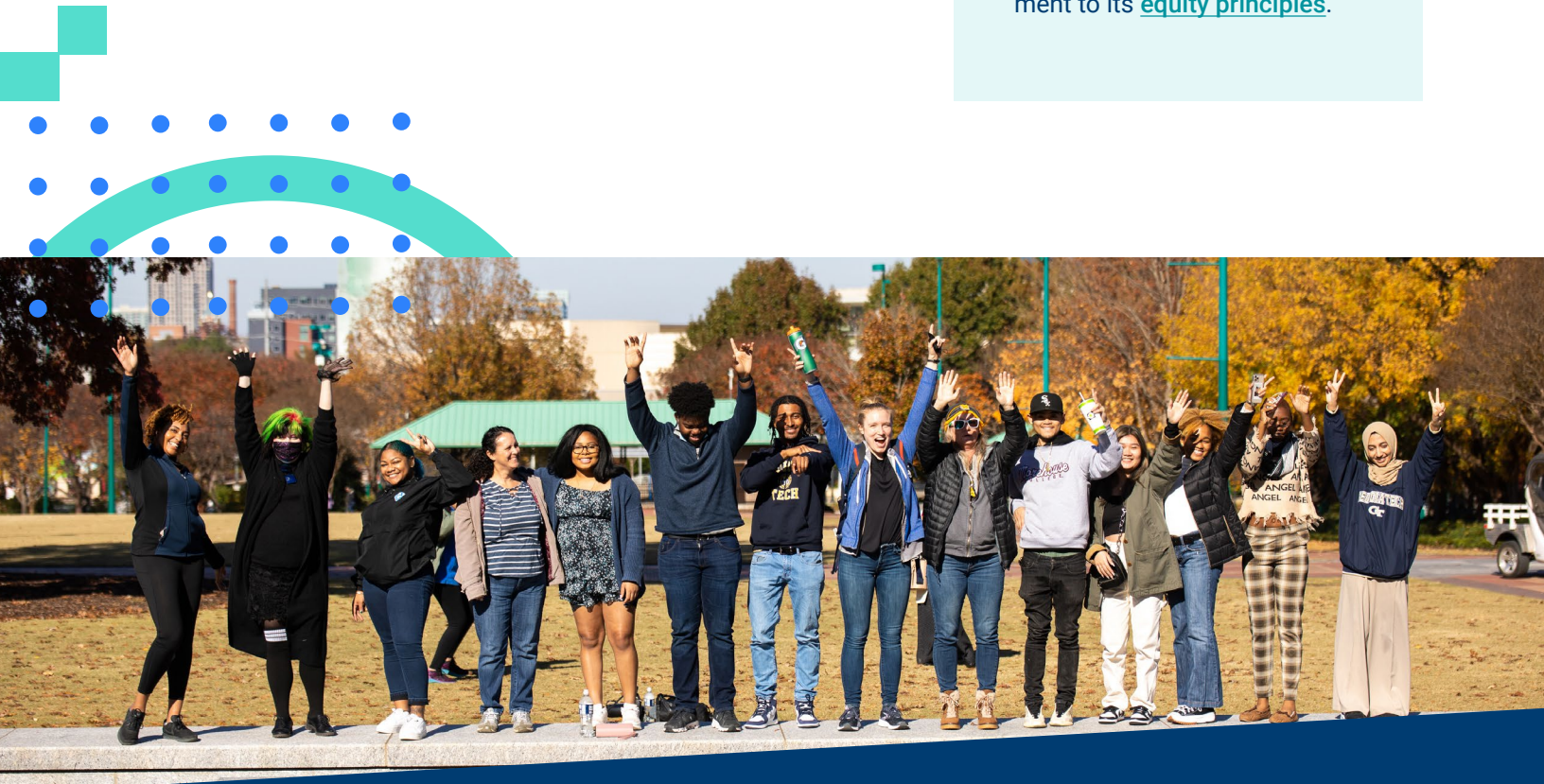
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Potential Challenges

Challenges and setbacks that might occur, and how to address them using the best practices we've documented

Goals of the Every Learner Everywhere Fellowship

- Provide racially minoritized, poverty-affected, and first-generation students with the opportunity to expand their network and complete a hands-on, meaningful digital learning project in a professional sector the students are interested in.
- Learn more about students' experience with courseware and digital learning and where there are opportunities for improvement. Get student feedback on the network's work, including written pieces, marketing, events, and data analysis.
- Get clarity on key questions about the design of the Fellowship and co-design future iterations of the Fellows program with the help of this cohort of students.
- Live out the network's commitment to its [equity principles](#).



Our Fellowship

Every Learner ran three cohorts of its remote Fellowship in conjunction with one of its partner organizations, [Intentional Futures](#) (iF). In the Fellowship, students were assigned to sub-groups working with different Every Learner partner organizations on hands-on project work that lasted the duration of the program. Students regularly met as a larger cohort with Fellowship Leads from iF for community building and professional development sessions.

Overview of our programs to date:

SPRING 2021

Cohort 1

Duration  18 weeks*

Number of Fellows 16 

Project Partners    

WINTER 2021

Cohort 2

Duration  18 weeks*

Number of Fellows 14 

Project Partners    
INTERMEDIARY (LEADERSHIP) TEAM

SPRING 2022

Cohort 3

Duration  18 weeks*

Number of Fellows 10 

Project Partners    
INTERMEDIARY (LEADERSHIP) TEAM

**Duration refers to the Fellows' time and does not include the time spent by organizers on defining or preparing the Fellowship.*

Our philosophy for working with students

As creators of a fellowship experience, we saw it as our primary duty and responsibility to create an inclusive environment that centered and elevated students' lived expertise.

Positioning students as the experts means:

- ◆ Giving true deference to their input and ideas
- ◆ Listening constantly and being open to learning and changing
- ◆ Providing them with meaningful work that has real, tangible impact
- ◆ Empowering them with decision-making authority
- ◆ Encouraging them to ask questions and challenge assumptions



Meaningful work that has a real tangible impact is super important, especially as a student who is already busy. When you take something else on, you think about the time, but also always looking for opportunities for growth, but if the organization doesn't know what to do with you then it doesn't really help you to participate. ”



Kristina Tucker
2021 STUDENT FELLOW



Over the course of our time facilitating the program, we were constantly learning and growing. One example is the importance of contextualizing the work the Fellows were doing within the larger goals of the organizations for which they were doing it. The students craved a throughline that helped them understand the meaning and impact of their work. Showing this follow-through and acknowledgment of the Fellows' role is also critical to avoiding tokenization or other extractive behaviors.

Recommended roles

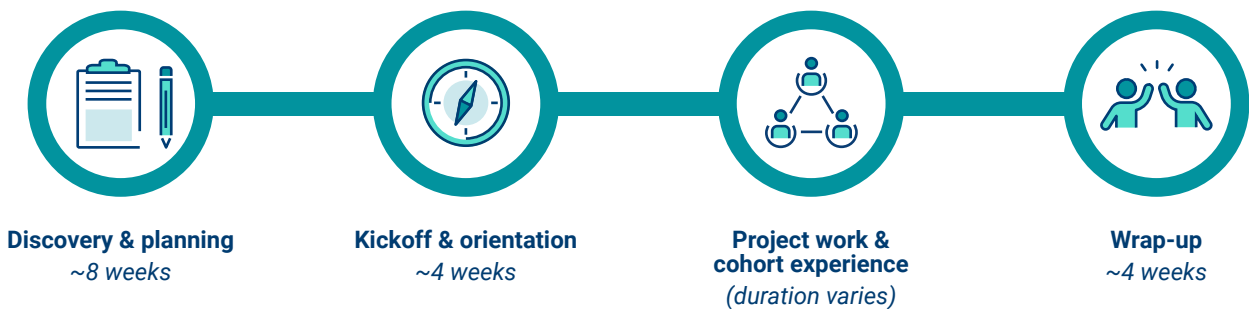
Organizing a fellowship requires the coordination and input of multiple parties: those managing the fellowship, those managing the projects, and the Fellows themselves. Below we've outlined some recommendations for responsibilities and an estimated time commitment.

Because of its network model, Every Learner sourced these roles from different organizations under the network umbrella — if a single organization were to develop its own fellowship, some of the following roles may be combined.

Role	Responsibilities	Time Commitment
Fellowship Lead (x2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create and distribute application and outreach materials• Review, select, and notify Fellows• Plan and facilitate cohort meetings & events• Provide timely strategic support to Project Leads and Fellows• Create and maintain a central hub of information for both Fellows and Project Leads• Manage out-of-scope requests• Be available for one-on-one meetings with Fellows	Total 10-20 hrs/week (heavier during the preparation and onboarding phases)
Project Manager (In some cases, the Project Manager may be one of the Fellowship Leads)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage logistical tasks including, scheduling, event planning, budgets & Fellows' compensation	5-10 hrs/week (heavier during the preparation and onboarding phases)
Operations Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the legality of fellowship agreements• Distribute fellowship payments (accounts payable)• Distribute tax documents	1 hr/month
Project Leads (In some cases, the Project Lead(s) may be one or more of the Fellowship Leads)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set goals and scope for the Fellows' projects• Support students to complete their projects• Convene Fellows on a weekly basis	5-10 hrs/week
Fellows	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend meetings with Fellowship Leads, Project Leads, and Mentors• Complete project work	5-10 hrs/week each
Mentors (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet with Fellows bi-weekly to provide guidance and allyship• Meet with Fellowship Leads bi-weekly to provide status updates	~4 hrs/week each
Guest Speakers (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guest Speakers and/or people outside of the fellowship who can speak on a topic at professional development meetings or supplemental meetings	

Sample timeline

Below is a sample timeline that lays out the key activities of running a fellowship, from planning to completion. Each activity is mapped to best practices that can be found in the next section of this document: [“Best Practices for Running Your Own Fellowship.”](#) **While this timeline can serve as a helpful reference tool, we recommend reading through the whole document first before jumping from section to section.**



Phase 1: Discovery & planning	
Key activities	Relevant best practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Before getting started, establish the goal of your fellowship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Determine fellowship goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Finalize project descriptions and objectives; identify plans for gathering ongoing feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Set up and run projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Create and disseminate all programmatic documentation including (but not limited to) Fellows’ contracts, media release forms, W-9s and additional payment information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Create contracts and legal documentationCompensate Fellows
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Create and disseminate the student application.Select and notify selected Fellows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Craft applicationsDisseminate applicationSelect Fellows
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan and create fellowship orientation materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hold orientation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">If applicable, begin to plan Fellows’ final assignments or share-outs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assign final presentations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">If applicable, identify Mentors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide mentorship

Phase 2: Fellowship kickoff* and orientation

Key activities	Relevant best practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Selected Fellows attend a series of 2-3 orientation sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hold orientation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Introduce Fellows to projects, Fellows select desired projects.If applicable, notify Project Partners of their assigned Project Teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Set up and run projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Optional: Fellows attend 2-3 professional development sessions on topics relevant to successful completion of the fellowship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide professional development opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Optional: Begin organizing and coordinating the in-person convening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Convene Fellows in person

**Formal fellowship start date. Phase 1 can be back-planned from this date.*

Phase 3: Project work + cohort experience

Key activities	Relevant best practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Host Fellows bi-weekly cohort meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Run meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Execute the Fellows' projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Set up and run projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Host bi-weekly check-ins with relevant internal teams (e.g., Project Leads, Mentors).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Set up and run projectsProvide mentorship
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify and host professional development workshops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide professional development opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Begin to facilitate the creation of Fellows' final assignments or share-outs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assign final presentations

Phase 4: Wrap-up

Key activities	Relevant best practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Optional: Host forum for Fellows' final assignments or share-outs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assign final presentations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Host and facilitate 1-2 reflective feedback sessions with Fellows on their experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Beyond the Fellowship
<ul style="list-style-type: none">If applicable, facilitate creation and production of fellowship assets for website and social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Set up and run projects

Best Practices for Running Your Own Fellowship

While the previous section details important context around what the Every Learner Everywhere Fellowship was, this section details our learnings that can be applied to others wishing to create their own fellowships. While we believe that this practical advice is useful for all organizations seeking to create their own equity-centered programs, there may be subtle differences based on the size, capacity, and/or mission of the organization.



Determine fellowship goals

For Every Learner, the Fellowship was both a means to create opportunities for students as well as to improve our work through meaningful student engagement. These goals influenced our approach from the start. It’s important to establish what impact you would like to have early on. This will inform how you build up your own team, how you develop activities and projects, and how you recruit and select Fellows.

Best practice	Reasoning/details
Gather a diverse group that includes representatives from the potential pool of candidates.	Gaining input from folks outside your organization and from the types of people who may apply will help you craft a clearer scope for your fellowship and avoid infusing your own biases about what the fellowship should/should not be into the planning process.
Check your assumptions.	Do some self-reflection to ensure you’re thinking about the fellowship and whom you’re serving in the right way. Avoid tokenizing potential Fellows or defining any part of the fellowship so that it is more well suited for white men than other groups.
Position students as the experts.	As mentioned under “ Our philosophy ,” students should be respected as experts of their own lived experience. This means: giving deference to their input and ideas; listening and being open to learning; providing them with real, tangible, meaningful work; empowering them with decision-making authority; and encouraging them to ask questions and challenge assumptions.
Ensure your goals consider benefits to both the Fellows and the organization.	When you share information about your fellowship to the community, potential applicants will want to know what’s in it for them, but also how their contributions will help you. Give thought to what purpose a fellowship will serve in your organization to ensure the work the Fellows do is meaningful and impactful. Have a concrete plan for the reasons for standing up a fellowship at your organization so that it is not a waste of time for either party.



“ I believe having a diverse group of students is what made the cohorts so special. I got to teach and learn from other students who I would have normally not met. ”



Vickiana Supriana
2021 STUDENT FELLOW
2022 MENTOR



Create contracts and legal documentation

When creating contracts, it is important to think through the implications of employment law, intellectual property law, and more. Engaging a lawyer or an expert on these topics will help in expounding the many considerations that go into contractual agreements.

Best practice	Reasoning/details
Provide a way for Fellows to sign contracts digitally. Let them know where the email may be coming from.	Ensure that Fellows know when such emails will be coming through and who the sender will be. Sometimes emails from unknown senders may be filtered into spam folders.
Each Fellow will need to fill out a W-9 to keep on file in your designated payroll platform. Fellows should be made aware of this up front.	Stipends are considered “income” according to the IRS. Fellows should be made aware that they will receive a 1099 via mail and email by January 31st of the following year. Taxes will need to be paid on this income including Social Security, Medicare, Federal and State Income Taxes.
If applicable, have Fellows fill out media release forms.	This is important if you are creating documentation related to the fellowship such as social media posts, video recordings, or thought leadership pieces.
In the contracts, consider language around the workplace environment, grounds for termination (and related payment), as well as intellectual property and confidentiality.	<p>Guarantee for Fellows a workplace free of harassment, unlawful discrimination, and retaliation which respects the rights of different demographic groups consistent with applicable law.</p> <p>Consider, in the case of termination of the contract by either party, what the timeframe is for notice, and whether or not compensation is prorated accordingly.</p> <p>Include clauses for intellectual property, if your work will involve publishing any assets.</p>
Be clear about the scope of the work and the time commitment.	We encourage Fellowship Leads to do this in the application stage as well. A monthly breakdown that accounts for the hours spent in cohort meetings, projects, mentor meetings (optional) is helpful for Fellows to plan their own time and know what is expected of them. It also helps to remind Fellowship Leads of what falls out of scope.
Consider what kind of employees Fellows will be considered in the contracts.	For temporary (1099) employees, pay can be tied to work. Stipends, on the other hand, aren't dependent on a successfully delivered work product.
If you are planning an in-person convening, ensure that Fellows sign liability waivers.	Consider risks related to travel or in-person activities, if applicable.

Demystify the legal documents. Fellows expressed some confusion over navigating financial and legal documents such as tax forms. It may be worthwhile to write up a “cheat sheet” explaining the purpose behind the different forms, or to include it in your professional development programming.

Compensate Fellows

We believe that Fellows must be financially compensated for their work. As a society we’re often tempted to minimize the work of students or community members, who may not have the titles or accolades that our culture tends to equate with measures of a person’s value (ones which uphold white patriarchal hegemony). In our work, it is important for us to acknowledge that we are benefiting from the expertise of the Fellows — with them they bring their own strengths, perspectives, and approaches to problem-solving.



This helped me a lot as a Fellow when my laptop died on me. [Flexible payments] helped me continue school and the Fellowship.

Christa Elrod
2021 STUDENT FELLOW
2022 MENTOR



Best practice	Reasoning/details
Pay Fellows on a monthly basis.	Fellows in our program were compensated with a stipend totalling \$3,000 each across an estimated 120 hours of work. After running multiple cohorts, we found that paying the amount in monthly installments was the most effective form of compensating Fellows while incentivizing continued participation.
Ask Fellows how they would like to be compensated (e.g., direct deposit, mailed checks).	It’s important to ask Fellows how it would be most convenient to receive payment. Do not assume that all participants have a bank account or permanent address. Payments via gift cards may create inconveniences for the Fellows, so be sure to get their input and approval.
Be flexible and trusting of your Fellows — if your Fellow tells you they need to receive their stipend ahead of schedule, and you are able to accommodate, then accommodate.	Part of being student-centric is giving students the benefit of the doubt and acknowledging that they have complex, busy lives. This stipend might factor into whether or not they can pay tuition or bills on time.
Notify Fellows when they will be receiving payments.	Giving Fellows a heads-up will help them keep track as payments come in and to flag any problems as they come up.
Remember that Fellows will be taxed.	Be cautious about the stipend amount you promise Fellows, as it might be a pre-tax amount. Be clear about this up front and be prepared to answer questions and/or provide guidance to Fellows navigating a payroll system for the first time.



Manage files and materials

Over the course of the Fellowship, Fellows were constantly being sent links to resources, meeting recordings, project work, and more. While we wanted our Fellows to have all of these at their disposal should they need it, one piece of feedback that we heard and acted upon from our early cohorts was that the number of links was overwhelming, especially when they were being sent in separate emails.

Best practice	Reasoning/details
Create a “one-stop shop” for resources Fellows need as part of the cohort or their projects.	Use a platform that is intuitive for both Fellowship Leads and Fellows, such as an organized Google Doc that includes links organized by topic and/or relevant meeting date. What’s important is that Fellows can access what they’re looking for through a single link that they can bookmark, rather than trying to track down disparate resources.
Create a shared drive and personal folders.	This will help to ensure that sharing permissions are consistent across the folder. We also created individual folders for each Fellow, to which only they and Fellowship Leads had access, for personal documents.

Applications and selection

Craft applications

The goal of our application process was to not only recruit students who had previously used courseware or digital learning tools, but also to involve students from diverse academic and personal backgrounds whose voices are often excluded from higher education discourse, which has historically centered and prioritized white, cis-male, non-disabled, middle-class voices. It was critical that the Fellows reflected the students we want to serve in our work. Our guidance in this section is broken up into tips about the set-up and platform used to administer the application and advice regarding the content and questions within the application.

Application set-up / platform

Best practice	Reasoning/details
Put the application in a platform that is intuitive and enables applicants to save their progress as they go.	Applicants may need to revisit their application over multiple days and across different devices before feeling prepared to submit it. Make this easy for them! An example of such a platform would be Jotform, which allows applicants to save answers as well as submit both written or video responses.



Allow applicants to preview the application questions in one place before they begin their work.

For example, you can include a link to a PDF version of the application.

If possible, enable students to send themselves a copy of their application upon submitting and/or otherwise ensure their application was submitted.

Especially if your application process has multiple rounds, applicants may benefit significantly from being able to refer back to the answers they submitted.

Accept responses to open-ended questions in multiple mediums.

Some avenues can include a formal essay, recorded video, or audio clip.



Having an accessible platform is super important. We need to consider students who may have limited access to the Internet or a laptop. ”

Manuella Alarca
2021 STUDENT FELLOW



Application content

It is also important that the questions help Fellowship Leads determine whether applicants are a good fit for the specific topic and goals of the program. The supplemental information included alongside the application is critical to ensure potential Fellows can learn more about the program and the expectations therein (time commitment, compensation).

Best practice	Reasoning/details
Be upfront about time commitment and compensation, considering the demands across the various activities and projects you have planned.	Being clear about expectations will help applicants decide before taking the time to apply whether the Fellowship will work alongside their existing commitments and priorities.
If possible, provide details that give applicants an idea of what their day-to-day work will look like.	In our case, we provided summaries of the different projects on which the Fellows would have an opportunity to work. It will empower Fellows to choose the project best suited to their interests and skills if there are clear descriptions, perhaps even connected to potential career tracks, provided.

Be clear about the technological requirements for the fellowship (e.g., access to the Internet, video conferencing software, online collaboration tools).

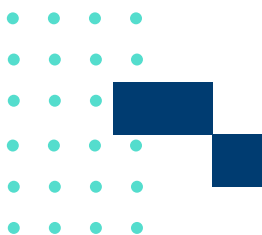
This may include access to the internet, ownership of a specific type of computer or device, or fluency with a video conferencing software. Ask Fellows from the start what they may need, and consider which of these needs you are positioned to satisfy on behalf of the Fellows who do not have direct access. Provide a list of the tools and technologies you may use to empower Fellows to play around in the different tools you will use in order to come into the application and Fellowship more prepared.

Provide multiple avenues for students to learn about the Fellowship.

We chose to create a short video that explained what the Fellowship was, introduce the Fellowship leads, and provide basic eligibility requirements. For future cohorts, we also intend to provide testimonials from alumni in the form of videos, letters, etc.

Include questions about students' professional development interests.

While we interrogate this further once the Fellowship starts (see [*"Provide professional development opportunities"*](#)), gauging their interests in broad terms at the application stage can help with pre-planning.



I liked being able to discuss my own passions outside of school and my career goals. I think that sharing those interests allowed me and others to think about the different perspectives of people in several majors.

Venus Rodriguez
2021 STUDENT FELLOW



Be intentional about the information you request, asking only for things that will help you choose candidates best suited to the role.

Avoid placing a greater time burden on applicants than what is necessary by ensuring you are pointed with your questions and know how you'll leverage each response in your decision-making process.

If possible, remove GPA, other merit-based criteria, and requirements for letters of recommendation.

These questions often put minoritized students at a disadvantage, so using these metrics as criteria to help you make decisions about candidates could automatically infuse bias into your decision-making process.

Ask about time zones.

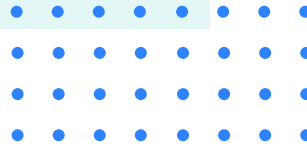
Get a sense of the geographic spread of applicants you're working with to make decisions about groups of students who may be able to more easily find mutual availability in their schedules.



I think that this is extremely important to note and carefully consider when including criteria in the application. **Everyone comes from different walks of life and are all valuable in their own unique ways, regardless of stats.**



Lillian Nguyen
2022 STUDENT FELLOW



Disseminate applications

The application was disseminated on the network's social media channels, other education-related outlets, and by word of mouth from administrators and instructors at institutions.

Best practice	Reasoning/details
Seek out ways to diversify your applicant pool.	Consider who you would like the fellowship to ultimately serve, and who is frequently left out of the conversations that your fellowship addresses. Think about how to account for those in the application and how it is disseminated.
Leverage your network to expand your reach.	When doing so, be aware of what kinds of applicants do or do not fall under this umbrella, and identify ways to expand that reach.
Reach students through their universities' student support programs.	Universities may have Handshake or a platform where internships/ fellowships are posted. Universities may also have a Career Center that could share the opportunity with students.

Running the program



Select Fellows

We evaluated students via their submissions alone, and we thought it was less critical to examine traditional measures of success, such as GPA. Instead, we focused on the following three factors: 1) The applicant's ability to think & reflect deeply, 2) The applicant's ability to communicate, and 3) The applicant's ability to collaborate. For each cohort of the Fellowship, we had from 50 to over 100 applicants; establishing clear criteria was important for us to select only 10-20 Fellows.



I think one of the biggest skills needed in this program is **the ability to communicate and express your thoughts in a safe space.**



Destiny Adams
2021 STUDENT FELLOW



Best practice	Reasoning/details
Establish selection criteria in advance.	Before you gain any bias by reviewing applications, ensure you have clear agreed-upon criteria that all Fellows can be measured against. This will combat the tendency to compare applicants against each other, and ensure that all reviewers are working towards the same standards.
Have a range for the number of Fellows you want to select.	This will help ensure that you can accept your “on the fence” applicant, and make sure you don’t eliminate a great potential Fellow just to meet a rigid headcount.

Hold orientation

Orientation, more than just being an informational session for Fellows, is key to setting the tone and direction of the rest of the fellowship. Building trust between Fellows, Fellowship Leads, and Mentors was an important aspect of how we approached the entire Fellowship, and we tried to do so from the start by establishing inclusive practices that helped us learn about each other and effectively communicate.

Best practice	Reasoning/details
Confirm Fellows’ scheduling availability for orientation early and aim for a time where everyone can make it.	Scheduling meetings, particularly longer ones such as orientation, can be a challenge with Fellows, especially when multiple time zones are involved. When accepted applicants were asked to confirm their participation in the Fellowship, we also asked them to note whether or not they were available at designated times. For longer sessions, it may be harder to find overlap in Fellows’ schedules, in which case you may want to break up the orientation into multiple, shorter meetings.
Schedule make-up meetings for Fellows who cannot make it to the orientation.	While sending meeting recordings is a good practice for all meetings, for orientation it is important to ensure that all Fellows have the opportunity to meet the Fellowship Leads and form a personal connection, and to be provided with an opportunity to ask questions before jumping into fellowship duties.

During introductions, ensure that you know how to pronounce everyone's name and know their pronouns.

Pronouncing someone's name correctly is not only a common courtesy, it is also important for promoting a sense of belonging and acknowledging a person's identity. This may especially be true of individuals whose names don't conform to white American naming conventions and spelling, who may often experience microaggressions with regards to their name.

Proactively including your pronouns when introducing yourself and asking Fellows to do the same is also an important way of creating an inclusive environment for Fellows of all gender identities.



Zaire McMican
2022 STUDENT FELLOW

“ I believe this is especially important because **not addressing someone properly can lead to feelings of isolation and leave Fellows uninspired.** ”

Include time for building camaraderie between Fellows and building trust with Fellowship Leads.

This may be through questions about their interests or, more practically, asking about birthdays — remembering and acknowledging birthdays can be one way for Fellowship Leads to show that they are interested in the Fellows' wellbeing and accomplishments. This can also be through ice breaker activities to help Fellows get to know each other in unique ways. Sometimes, it might be beneficial for Fellows to have some organized but unstructured time to get to know each other more informally.

Give an overview of the key dates and activities of the fellowship and the various people Fellows will interface with.

Especially in a fellowship with a lot of moving parts, it's important to communicate with Fellows about the overall structure of the fellowship, including the cadence and frequency of meetings, important dates or deadlines, and with whom Fellows will interface during the experience.

“ **Developing a relationship and trust among each other made it easier** to bring up sometimes 'controversial' or sensitive topics and have productive discussions about them. ”

Lillian Nguyen
2022 STUDENT FELLOW



Include time in the agenda to bring everyone up to speed on digital tools.

Particularly with fellowships that take place remotely, do not presume that all Fellows will have the same levels of digital literacy. You may need to use part of your agenda to walk through logistical elements, including making sure that everyone has received and knows how to sign their contracts, and that students are able to access or use any digital tools that may be required of them throughout the fellowship (e.g., shared drives, whiteboard apps).

Co-design norms and discuss allyship.

One thing that we prioritized in our sessions was co-designing norms for discussion and engagement with our Fellows. We provided examples for Fellows to look over, let them write their own on a whiteboard tool, and let everyone vote. These will set ground-rules for how Fellows communicate with each other and the Fellowship Leads, and also provide an opportunity to discuss inclusivity and allyship. Revisit these norms often to ensure you are sticking to them and that all Fellows, Leads, etc. remember what they are accountable for in terms of engagement. (See [“Appendix A: Establishing community norms”](#))

See best practices below under “Run meetings” for more advice on how to run this session.



Eeman Uddin
2021 STUDENT FELLOW

“Once we agreed on our norms, our discussions were so much better. I think this should happen as early as possible.”



Run meetings

Fellows had two sets of regularly occurring meetings they were to attend as part of the Fellowship. Twice a month, they met as a full cohort in meetings led by the Fellowship Leads. Every week, they met as project teams with a subgroup of Fellows and their Project Leads.

Best practice	Reasoning/details
Hold regular cohort meetings, but also honor Fellows’ time.	Hold cohort meetings at a regular cadence, whether it’s to provide learning, check in, or create moments of levity. While these meetings are important for community and relationship building, be mindful to not overburden Fellows’ calendars.

Be flexible with video conferencing camera policies, or co-design norms and expectations around camera use up front.

For some people, being on camera is stressful and exhausting. Providing the option and giving advance notice when camera on is expected is good practice.

Assume the best of Fellows. They, too, have busy schedules and may need to take meetings from places where they need to remain off camera or off mic.

Provide meeting recordings for those who can't attend.

This provides your Fellows with scheduling flexibility. Of course, you can be explicit about meetings where attendance is more mandatory and where a recording may not be provided.

Be mindful of how being recorded may influence participation, especially with regards to sensitive subjects. You may choose to turn the recording off at these moments, or have a discussion about it with participants. You can also empower Fellows to request that the recording be paused for any reason.

Do not assume digital literacy or familiarity.

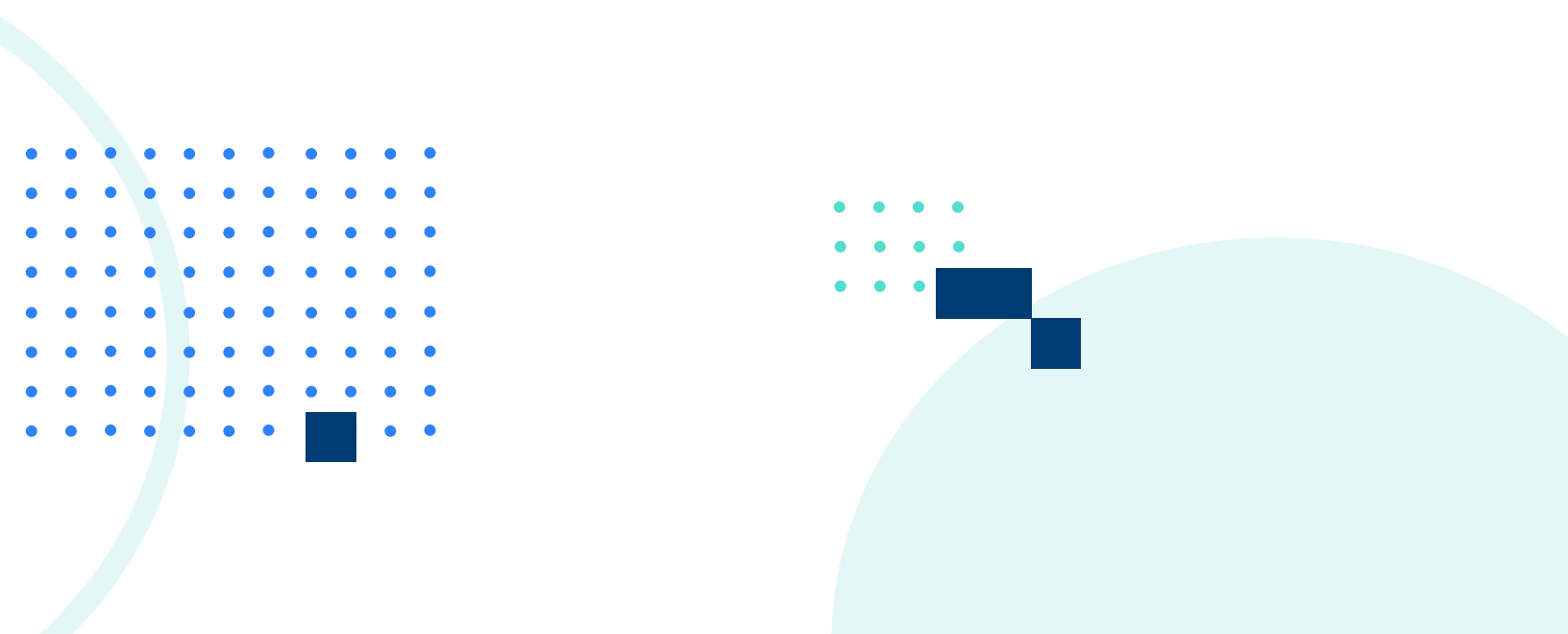
Sometimes, this learning can be provided through videos or asynchronous activities. Other times, you may have to use meeting time to walk through and ensure everyone can log in or use the apps that are needed for your activities. If it was not stated as an eligibility requirement, you need to plan ahead to ensure all Fellows have the resources they need to participate fully.

Think of ways to integrate the Fellows more with the greater organization.

Use different meetings already scheduled to empower Fellows to participate and engage.

Check in with Fellows generally.

It is very important for the basic needs of a Fellow to be fulfilled if a problem arises if you expect them to be able to fully and honestly participate in the Fellowship. Check in and/or provide opportunities for Fellows to provide feedback. (See [“Appendix B: Continuous improvement surveys”](#))





Knowing when I needed to be on camera in advance was helpful. It prevented me from being caught off guard. Explaining to Fellows the reasons for asking us to have cameras on helps us understand. Being on camera is not always possible so I always appreciated flexibility and understanding. ”



Vickiana Supriana
2021 STUDENT FELLOW
2022 MENTOR



Set up and run projects

Projects were run by Project Leads who, in the case of the Every Learner Fellowship, worked at different partner organizations within the Every Learner network. In the case of a single organization developing a fellowship, Project Leads may in fact be the same people who serve as Fellowship Leads.

Projects are one of the primary focuses of a fellowship, given the emphasis on providing Fellows with meaningful hands-on experiences. We've broken up this section into three major steps: planning projects, assigning project teams, and implementing projects.



One of the things I loved about the Fellowship was that while I was there I was not just a Fellow, but also a part of the team. I was treated with respect and was able to meet people within the organization. Making connections was so important to me to create a sense of belonging. ”

Planning projects

Best practice	Reasoning
Employ backward design for project planning.	Starting with the end goal and working in reverse to develop a coherent project plan is the most effective way to ensure all steps are sequenced and scoped correctly.
Present a week-by-week work plan, and make it available from the moment you introduce project options.	This empowers the Fellows to take charge of their work by having the foresight of what's coming in the weeks ahead. This will also help ensure Fellows can manage their schedules and engage in the ways that suit them best.
If possible, provide multiple project options.	This ensures that Fellows can work in small groups that provide individual attention, and can choose projects where they have the most interest. These project options may come from different work streams or from different departments in the organization.

Choose Project Leads who have time to dedicate to their Fellows and will uphold the norms and culture of the fellowship.	If the Project Leads are different from the Fellowship Leads, then make sure they are aware of and equally dedicated to the norms, culture, and values that you wish to uphold within the fellowship. Fellows' experiences are heavily influenced by their project work, and if they are treated by Project Leads as an afterthought, it can be off-putting or harmful.
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Projects should have a clear scope of work.	Create a clear scope for the project so that Fellows are aware of expectations. This also allows Fellows or Fellowship Leads to set boundaries if Fellows are saddled with ever-growing responsibilities beyond their project work. (See "Appendix C: Examples of projects")
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Projects should provide meaningful skill development and/or experiential learning opportunities.	There are many areas of work that can benefit from the insights and perspective of Fellows, if they are given the opportunity. Develop projects that will provide Fellows with new skills, don't just give them busy work. (See "Implementing projects")
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Assigning project teams

Once you have planned out project options, let Fellows indicate which ones they are most interested in in order to assign sub-groups. In our program, project teams consisted of 2–4 Fellows.

Best practice	Reasoning
Give Fellows written descriptions and meet-and-greet opportunities to get familiar with the projects.	It is important to give Fellows clear information to make decisions, and it's best to do this in multiple mediums to increase your chances of Fellows with a variety of learning preferences engaging with the information. In our case, we provided video and written introductions, and hosted a video call where Fellows got to hear from each of the organizations who would be leading projects. In the future, we would also provide an "open house" meet-and-greet virtual meeting where Fellows could move in and out of breakout rooms to talk with the various Project Leads.
Ask Fellows to rate the project choices.	We asked Fellows to rate each project on a scale from 1-10 in terms of their interest in participating in that project. This enabled us to not only get a sense for each Fellow's top choice, but also the degree to which their preferences for the different projects varied.

Implementing projects

Once Fellows have been assigned to their respective project teams, Project Leads should get to know their teams, engaging both in trust-building and project work.

Best practice	Reasoning
Continue creating a safe space for dialogue.	Especially if those responsible for leading projects differ from your core Fellowship leads, it is incredibly important to set the tone and expectations for the culture of work you're trying to create. Fellows should be empowered to raise concerns and share their honest opinions. (See "Appendix D: Project Lead reflection questions")
Empower Fellows to contribute their expertise to their project work.	Expertise can be developed in more ways than just formal education. Of course, Fellows should be encouraged to contribute their discipline-specific expertise wherever possible, but (perhaps even more importantly) it is likely that they have a plethora of lived experiences that is extremely valuable to their project work.
Combine learning activities with generative activities.	This is an effective way to reduce your burden as Project Leads as well as empower the students to take charge over the project and infuse their learnings.
Try to find ways to enable each Fellow to lead a work stream.	Empowering each Fellow to take ownership over a deliverable or work stream will help keep them engaged and empower them to learn more through teaching and planning for others.
Credit Fellows for their contributions.	It is critical to get permission from Fellows to share their work, whether within or beyond your organization. Be clear on privacy and publishing while letting Fellows know where and how their work will be used, even if it's not work directly connected to the Fellowship.
Make sure Fellows know their work is valued and impactful.	Fellows will feel more fulfilled and motivated if it's made clear to them that their work is having a real impact within the organization.



Fellows want to know that people care about our work, are listening to us, and that our time isn't being wasted.



Renee Restivo
2022 STUDENT FELLOW



Provide professional development opportunities

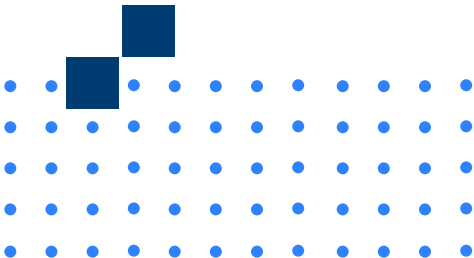
Professional development (PD) opportunities were one of the most highly valued aspects according to many Fellows. These often occurred during regular cohort meeting times or were scheduled separately with those most interested in attending.

Best practice	Reasoning
Ask Fellows what PD opportunities they are interested in. Provide examples.	We asked this in broad terms during the application process, and more specifically through a survey during the orientation phase. We found it helpful to use a multiple-select, multiple-choice format so that Fellows know the range of what is available; provide an “other” option where Fellows can write in their interests as well. (See “Appendix E: Examples of professional development opportunities”)
Bring in guest speakers.	These guest speakers may be members of your own organization, important voices in the field, or from your personal network if they have expertise in a specific area. Fellows from our program told us that this made them feel valued and important. Guest speakers may also be chosen based on the PD topics that Fellows are interested in.
Accommodate individual interests, where possible.	When certain Fellows had very specific interests, or when calendars for the group did not align, we also scheduled PD sessions for smaller groups or individuals.
Where possible, make PD interactive.	This could look like a joint workshop and allows Fellows to get feedback from the person guiding the session. We applied this to PD sessions including working on short bios and resumes.



“It’s nice to know that the leaders within the Fellowship are aware of our individual interests and areas of expertise and care to share even more ways for us to contribute to the organization.”

Manuella Alarca
2021 STUDENT FELLOW



Optional value-add activities



Assign final presentations

Final presentations can be a great tool for synthesizing and celebrating the Fellowship experience. Our first cohort of students delivered culminating presentations related to the projects they worked on during the course of the Fellowship. Here are a couple examples:

- [Intentional Futures project team](#)
- [SXSW project team](#)

At the same time, these final presentations can also be a challenge, as they may coincide with the culmination of the school term as well as project work. This may create a burdensome workload for Fellows, as well as logistical planning difficulties.

Because of these challenges, in our third cohort we decided to use a lighter, asynchronous approach. We tasked the students with co-designing interview questions that they thought should be asked about their experience in the Fellowship or with regards to digital learning. These included questions such as:

- What did you take away from your experience as a Fellow?
- What advice would you give to future Fellows?
- What diminishes your enthusiasm in online learning?
- What does equity in education look like to you?

There were ten questions in total, and Fellows were then asked to choose five to respond to through 1-minute videos (we used a tool called FlipGrid). The content of these “interview” snippets will be used to inform future iterations of the Fellowship, and can also be used by Every Learner to create its own video materials (these purposes were shared with Fellows upfront).

Best practice	Reasoning/details
Think through the purpose of the final presentation.	Before placing a looming deadline or daunting final deliverable on your Fellows’ plates, consider: Do you need one? How will it help the Fellows? How will it help your organization?
Be mindful of Fellows’ academic or work calendars.	Especially when planning a deliverable or project that may increase workload in the preceding weeks, be sure to check in with Fellows about their schedules and assess whether the benefit of the project is worth the added stress for the Fellows.
Leverage small, asynchronous reflections throughout the experience.	Find ways to regularly encourage reflection on relevant topics or on the Fellowship itself. This can ease the pressure that would accompany a formal presentation because a lot of the deep thinking work will already have a foundation.
Get permission to share the Fellows’ work.	Be clear about attribution, as well as where and how their work will be used. This is best practice when disseminating any work that is not your own.

Provide mentorship

While Fellowship Leads did their best to create a safe and trusting environment within cohort meetings, there is an inherent power dynamic between Fellowship Leads and Fellows that might make Fellows uneasy about surfacing concerns or challenges they’re encountering. To create another layer of communication, two Fellows from our first cohort of students stayed with the Fellowship to serve as Mentors to the second cohort.

The Mentors provided the following aspects to the program and to Fellows:

- Aiding the Fellowship Leads in creating a safe virtual environment where Fellows are free to share their perspectives, experiences, and ideas.
- Provide guidance, advice, professional development, and allyship for Fellows.
- Act as a liaison between the Every Learner Fellows and the Every Learner Fellowship Managers. Bring attention to issues related to project work, their cohort experience, or personal challenges that the Fellowship Managers should be aware of.

Mentors were also responsible for co-hosting some cohort meetings. This included a professional learning session on a topic of the Mentors’ choice, in this case, how to leverage the CliftonStrengths Assessment in Fellows’ professional lives.

Best practice	Reasoning/details
Compensate Mentors.	Mentors were compensated \$1000, paid in installments. Like the Fellows, they were provided with a 1099 form for tax reporting purposes.
Establish a clear system for Mentors to elevate concerns from Fellows and to take action.	While we met regularly with Mentors to hear about any concerns that might be coming up, we also developed an intake form (see “Appendix F: Mentor resources”) through which they could elevate concerns or questions as they popped up. On these, we left it up to the Mentors’ judgment on how they wanted Fellowship Leads involved.
Don’t put Mentors in compromising positions when it comes to protecting Fellows’ privacy.	Establishing trust between Mentors and Fellows was paramount. We agreed with our Mentors to always opt for anonymity when it came to Fellows’ questions and concerns. This meant that Mentors would ask Fellows explicitly whether or not they wished to remain anonymous, and that — unless there was a potential danger — Fellowship Leads would not pry.



Having mentors may even help with communication barriers between Fellows and Leads whether it be due to scheduling conflicts, language, accessibility, etc. ”



Manuella Alarca
2021 STUDENT FELLOW

Provide support to Mentors, both professional and emotional.	While Mentors were in a position to support Fellows, they also needed support to do so. Fellowship Leads should provide support to Mentors when it comes to how to talk with students, sample questions they might use, and how to lead meetings. It's also important to teach Mentors to set boundaries to not take on additional emotional labor. Provide them with resources and encouragement to emphasize self-care and to elevate any concerns that are burdensome. (See "Appendix F: Mentor resources")
Think through possible scenarios together and think through or provide resources on how to respond.	Talk through how Mentors might respond to different kinds of concerns from Fellows. These might include problems with project teams, with the Fellowship Leads, or technical difficulties. Discuss how confidentiality factors into each of these.
Introduce Mentors to Fellows so that Fellows understand their position and role as well.	Make sure that Fellows understand who the Mentors are and what their role is, and how this is different from the role of Fellowship or Project Leads. Introduce Mentors in a meeting (for example, orientation), so that Mentors become familiar faces and can reach out individually to Fellows.

Offer supplemental opportunities

By participating in the Fellowship, Fellows were provided with the option to participate in other opportunities within the larger Every Learner network. These included contributions to thought leadership pieces, interviews for research, and participation in panels. Because these fell outside the scope of the Fellows' assigned projects and amounted to additional work, we asked that the organizers of these opportunities provide compensation to Fellows separate from their Fellowship stipend. For examples of supplemental opportunities our Fellows worked on, see ["Appendix G: Choosing supplemental opportunities."](#)



I was very happy to participate in activities such as surveys and focus groups in exchange for incentives we received like VISA gift cards. I think that was one of the coolest perks about this program. **It's a great way to keep students alert and connected about what's going on in the cohort!**



Destiny Adams
2021 STUDENT FELLOW



Best practice

Reasoning

All requests throughout the duration of the Fellowship should go through the Fellowship Leads.

In a large network like Every Learner, if different individuals and organizations reach out to Fellows, it can be confusing as to which opportunities are related to their project work, the fellowship, or other. Having the Fellowship Leads monitor and forward these requests can allow Fellowship Leads to contextualize requests, keep track of who contacts are, and check on clarity with regards to compensation. As Fellowship Leads we served as the middle-person for these requests during the Fellowship, but upon completion let Fellows opt into being contacted directly for similar opportunities.

All supplemental opportunities should be compensated.

As we mention in our section on [Compensation](#), we believe that Fellows should be compensated for their work. Because supplemental opportunities were out of scope for the work Fellows were asked to do as part of the Fellowship, these requests were to be compensated separately.

Those providing the opportunities should be clear about the compensation amounts and payment schedules.

While the logistics and payments for these supplemental opportunities were organized and handled outside of the purview of the Fellowship Leads, it is good for the Fellowship Leads to have visibility into the payment amounts and process so that they can serve as a go-between or advocate, if need be, for Fellows. We encountered one such instance in which, due to an accounting error from the sponsoring organization, the Fellows received invalid physical checks; multiple Fellows had to walk into banks only to be told that the checks seemed fake — this is a potential danger to our Fellows, many of whom were people of color, and resulted in irreparable harm.



This helped me feel valued in my knowledge, my experiences, and myself as a person, especially when it came to being in the same room and doing the same work as other paid professionals.



Kiara Williams
2021 STUDENT FELLOW



Convene Fellows in person

Obstacles of the COVID-19 pandemic aside, the time we were able to spend with the Fellows in-person was some of the most valuable and fruitful of the Fellowship. Here are some best practices for planning any sort of in-person multi-day convening:

Best practice	Reasoning/details
Ensure all costs are covered up front.	Fellows may not have the resources to absorb any costs associated with the trip. To prevent any roadblocks that may inhibit Fellows from being able to fully participate, it is critical to cover all costs related to travel, accommodations, meals, transportation, and participation in any activities you have planned.
Use in-person time to have meaningful discussions.	Sometimes, the feeling of having face-to-face conversations cannot be replaced by virtual connections. There are some topics that you may be able to more deeply explore as a group in person.
Use the in-person time to form closer relationships.	Encourage Fellows to connect with each other as well as the leaders and partners who may be along with you on the trip. While in person, Fellows can connect in ways that weren't made possible in a digital environment.



Potential Challenges

While running the Fellowship was a positive experience, it was not without its challenges. Below are some of the obstacles we encountered across the experience, and how we addressed them.

Scheduling conflicts

Because we were working with Fellows from across time zones with differing demands from school, work, and personal schedules, it often became difficult to find times at which to convene the entire cohort.

➔ How we addressed it:

- Provide meeting recordings and summaries of related to-do's (See ["Run meetings"](#)).
- Be flexible with camera/mic options. If a Fellow is calling in early in their time zone or if they're in the car picking up their kids from school, they might not want to be on camera or might not be able to come off mute (See more under ["Run meetings"](#)).
- Be clear with how Fellows should prioritize their time. We always told Fellows that their school, work, and family life came first. Then, within the Fellowship, projects took priority over cohort meetings.

Disengagement, absences, and attrition

There may be times that Fellows seem disengaged from their work or meetings, or stop showing up to meetings, especially as the academic term progresses.

➔ How we addressed it:

- Don't make assumptions about the cause of their disengagement, and have a one-on-one conversation with the Fellow in question to see if you can help resolve the challenge. If your program includes Mentors, then they can reach out as well. (See ["Providing mentorship"](#))
- Set expectations early on. Be clear with the time commitment and other expectations as early as the application phase so that candidates can consider the fit with their schedule before even applying. This can be reemphasized again in the orientation phase. (See ["Craft applications"](#) and ["Hold orientation"](#))
- Account for all scenarios when drawing up contracts. We recommend that the fellowship stipend be paid in monthly installments to incentivize ongoing participation. And while fortunately we never had to put this into practice, we included termination language in contracts so that either party could terminate the contract and prorate the payment. (See ["Create contracts and legal documentation,"](#) and ["Compensate Fellows"](#))

Digital literacy

Especially in a remote fellowship, digital literacy can be a determining factor for how smoothly the experience goes for Fellowship Leads, Project Leads, and Fellows themselves. Fellows may enter the program with differing levels of ability with digital tools, and that's okay!

➔ How we addressed it:

- Ask potential Fellows about their technological needs on the application (e.g., wifi, devices) and see if you are able to satisfy those needs on their behalf, or can make adjustments in the fellowship design to accommodate. If any required applications or subscriptions cost money, then it should be up to the program to acquire them on behalf of the Fellows. (See [“Craft applications”](#))
- Use orientation or professional development sessions to get everyone on the same page. If there are specific tools that will be critical to successful completion of projects or other fellowship activities, then take the time to walk through them, get everyone logged in (if applicable), and have Fellows try it themselves so you can troubleshoot in real time. (See [“Hold orientation,”](#) [“Provide professional development opportunities”](#))
- Be available to meet one-on-one with anyone who may need more personalized support with handling digital tools.

Sensitive conversations

Especially in a fellowship that often discusses equity, social justice, and identity, there are bound to be sensitive conversations or differing perspectives, and potential disagreements or instances of harm.

➔ How we addressed it:

- Jointly creating norms with the Fellows early on in the Fellowship was a key way to establish ground rules for communication, which played a big part in navigating sensitive topics. Fellows would refer back to these when they felt it was called for. (See [“Hold orientation,”](#) [“Appendix A: Establishing community norms”](#))
- As is the case generally, one-on-one conversations are always a useful tool for communicating with Fellows, whether to check in on how they're feeling or to call them in. If applicable, Mentors can be an additional layer of support. (See [“Run meetings,”](#) [“Provide mentorship”](#))
- Hold others and yourself accountable. One of the great things about this kind of fellowship is that it provides an opportunity for learning for all parties. Problematic language or behavior should be addressed, including if it comes from Fellowship and/or Project Leads. Fellows' feedback should regularly be solicited through continuous improvement surveys, and when problems arise, Fellowship Leads should be transparent with involved parties about how they are addressing problems. (See [“Appendix B: Continuous improvement surveys”](#))

Concluding Thoughts

Beyond the Fellowship

At the close of the fellowship, Fellows should have come away with new skills, knowledge, connections, and opportunities. It's important to provide the space for Fellows to reflect and provide feedback about the experience, and also to celebrate their accomplishments. You can aid in this process by putting into perspective who their contributions have changed your work, or point to concrete deliverables they helped with.

Furthermore, open the door to staying in touch with Fellows Alumni. Provide an opportunity for Fellows to share their contact information (beyond their school emails, if they transfer or graduate) and opt into whether or not they would like to continue hearing about news or opportunities from the organization.

Lastly, it is up to the Fellowship Leads to follow through: act on the feedback you receive, and continue to show up for Fellows even once they have left the program by being available as a reference or to write recommendations.



Key takeaways

Creating an equitable fellowship in large part means challenging our own assumptions about who students are, being open to feedback, and adapting to the strengths and interests of the group. While this document is framed within the context of the development of the Every Learner Fellowship, its learnings can be applied more broadly to any application-gated program that is seeking to be more equitable in its work and its approach to working with Fellows.

Some key takeaways to consider:



Fellowship Logistics

- Trust that the Fellows have unique and valuable skills and expertise, and compensate them accordingly.
- Make the experience as easy as possible through clear communication and the setting of expectations.



Applications and Selection

- From the content to the dissemination of the applications, consider how you can reach and accommodate diverse audiences.
- Provide as much information about the activities, time commitment, and constraints of the Fellowship as possible so that Fellows can evaluate their level of interest and ability to participate.



Running the Program

- Build trust by learning about the individual interests of your Fellows and how you can support them. Be adaptable and flexible in your approach.
- Make sure the work the Fellows are assigned is meaningful and concludes in a way that lets them realize their contributions.



Optional Value-Add Opportunities

- Be mindful of Fellows' capacity when adding further time commitments to their schedules, and provide additional compensation if there is optional work outside the scope of the fellowship.
- Consider whether these optional opportunities add value, for example, by providing further support, stronger community, or increased learning for Fellows.

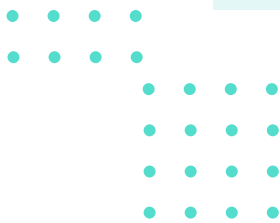
Learn more

To see more work by Fellows, visit these links:

- [2021 Cohort video playlist \(includes final presentations, participation in summit panels\)](#)
- [Toward Ending the Monolithic View of “Underrepresented Students”](#)
- [What Our Best College Instructors Do](#)



I have a special place in my heart for this Fellowship. It has propelled me into other opportunities, helped improve my access to education, and presented me with an opportunity for my voice to be heard and considered. I am grateful for my time in the program and the big impact it made on me. I have been able to use the tools I learned throughout the Fellowship in other leadership programs, which has enabled me to be able to take charge and explain why these kinds of things are important in Fellowships like this. It is something bigger than myself and my capabilities alone that I hope to stay involved with or be a part of in the future. ”



Renee Restivo
2022 STUDENT FELLOW



Appendices

Appendix A: Establishing community norms

Agreeing on norms together is a critical step in establishing safe and healthy working dynamics for the group, especially when the group may discuss sensitive topics such as racial equity. As a starting point we provided Fellows with examples of norms and then used an online whiteboard (e.g., Miro, Padlet) for Fellows to add their own ideas, examples they liked, and respond to others. Fellows then voted on their favorites, which became cemented as the group norms.

It's not just Fellows that should be beholden to norms; Fellowship Leads should have their own norms as well, to which Fellows can hold them accountable.

Examples of norms we provided for Fellows as inspiration:

- [Anti-oppressive Facilitation for Democratic Process](#)
 - [Beginning Courageous Conversations About Race](#)
-

Norms of our 2021 cohort

Fellows-created norms

We discussed these as a cohort; many are iterations of norms from Courageous Conversations.

- **Stay engaged**, whatever that looks like for you. Stay present, do not multitask, and stay with the topic.
- **Speak your truth**, sharing thoughts in whatever way is most comfortable for you. Consider how to help others best hear you, and allow others to experience their own emotions. Make “I” instead of “we” statements, and ask clarifying questions instead of making assumptions.
- **No fixing**: Allow others to experience and work through the source of their own discomfort. In general, assume that people will reach out if they want support working through something. In the meantime, if you feel like “fixing,” re-focus on your own feelings.
- **Embrace discomfort**. Don't confuse safety with comfort, and remember that prioritizing your own comfort instead of leaning into other peoples' truths is a form of privilege.
- **Embrace opportunities to learn**, taking calculated risks when you feel it's appropriate. You can start small, but keep in mind that conflict avoidance may mean sacrificing opportunities for authentic engagement.

- **Listen for understanding.** Try to avoid comparing your experience to others', and don't prepare your own response while others are talking. Positive intent may not be enough, so listen to learn rather than satisfying your own need to explain.
- **Expect and accept non-disclosure.** Reconciling differences may not always be possible, and some conversations will result in self-reflection and change. Stay focused on the process, as greater awareness leads to future change.

Fellowship Lead norms

Our commitments with regards to conduct and participation during our time together in the Fellowship.

- **Focus on racial & socioeconomic equity.** The Fellowship and project leads will center the experience for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, South East Asian, Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian, first-generation, and poverty-impacted students.
- **Commit to lifelong learning.** We will accept this is a lifelong journey, on both a personal and professional level. We aren't striving for perfection because it can't be reached. We strive for continuous growth.
- **Center minoritized voices.** The Fellowship and Project Leaders will consciously center minoritized voices, both within and outside of the network. But, we will not ask minoritized voices to speak on or represent their entire communities.
- **Embrace silence and reflection.** We recognize power dynamics are very real. We will ask that we all be conscious of the space we take. We will embrace silence and refrain from immediately reacting. Remember: WAIT (Why Am I Talking?).

Appendix B: Continuous improvement surveys

In prioritizing the experience of Fellows, it is important to establish a culture of continuous feedback to allow for adjustments throughout the fellowship experience and to improve for future cohorts. We recommend soliciting feedback through a variety of methods to accommodate different communication styles and comfort levels. This means using different mechanisms through which to solicit and capture feedback, as well as a mixture of both anonymous and non-anonymous feedback opportunities.

Here are some of the tools we used to collect feedback:

- [Miro board](#) survey where Fellows could anonymously drop post-it notes
- [Google Form](#), [Airtable](#) surveys where Fellows could share individual feedback that only us as the program administrators would see
- [Padlet](#) to generate collaborative ideas and solutions on the spot
- [Zoom](#) polls for quick anonymous group surveys
- Zoom chat short answer real-time surveys
- Facilitated discussion (and letting Fellows know that they can share things via private message or email if they don't feel comfortable sharing with the group)

We recommend with all survey tools that you make it explicitly known who will see the feedback and how it will be used.

Examples of questions we asked:

- **KEEP:** What have we been doing that you want us to continue doing?
- **START:** What are some things you wish we would do to make your experience better?
- **STOP:** What have we done that's been harmful or uncomfortable or otherwise should be eliminated from our process/practice moving forward?

Appendix C: Examples of projects

Below are a few examples of proposals for projects that were included in our program, which spanned a variety of skills, approaches, and deliverables.

Workshop development and research

Achieving the Dream

Project description

Achieving the Dream (ATD) is one of the best organizations in the field when it comes to applying equity-minded teaching and learning theories in higher education. Fellows matched with ATD will work alongside the project team to support the design, development, and facilitation of professional learning opportunities for faculty across the country, teaching them to create equitable learning experiences using digital tools. Fellows will have the opportunity to:

- Conduct 1-on-1 interviews with college and university faculty, instructional designers, and digital learning experts
- Develop interview guides and analyze qualitative responses for key takeaways
- Design and facilitate student-led panels and discussions
- Design, develop, and facilitate faculty development workshops around topics of equity and social justice, and digital learning
- Learn and apply foundational instructional design principles

Onboarding resources

Any materials listed below will be provided to each Fellow. These materials will be referenced throughout your experience on this project.

- *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* — Zaretta Hammond
Chapters 4, 5, and 9
- *Adding Some TEC-VARIETY* — Curtis J. Bonk and Elaine Khoo
Pages 1-18; Skim principles 1-10

Leveraging the Student Voice in Media Content Strategy

Every Learner Intermediary (leadership) team

Project Description

The Every Learner Everywhere Backbone team offers Student Fellows project work on content development and management for an Every Learner Student Voice Video Asset to be leveraged for Every Learner's Instagram account content calendar strategy. The asset and social media content are to highlight the student voice in digital learning. Social media content will include photos, infographics, and video reporting. The video asset will be planned, recorded, edited and delivered to Every Learner. Student Fellows will also develop the promotional toolkit for the final video asset amplification plan.

The benefits to the Every Learner Everywhere network include:

- Adding new voices and ideas to our social discussions and planning
- Raising the profile of Every Learner on Instagram and other social media platforms.
- Gaining insights on various college experiences, particularly during this time of heightened use of digital learning due to the pandemic — including how students are experiencing digital learning, evidence based teaching practices, and equity and racial justice in education, and then telling that story on social media.
- Supporting students in a more direct manner than we have previously
- Accountability to our processes, style guidelines, and public goods through sharing, collaborating and expectation setting with student fellows.

Every Learner Backbone Student Fellows will learn how to:

- Develop comprehensive social media content strategy
- Develop social media content for Every Learner including but not limited to photos, infographics, and videos.
- Review Every Learner resource library to identify opportunities to leverage the student voice.
- Develop a video asset from start to finish.
- Develop a promotional toolkit and understand all components involved.
- Create and deliver virtual presentations.
- Representing Every Learner in virtual events such as network meetings and conferences.

Research and Survey Design

Digital Promise

Fellows matched with Digital Promise will engage in a project around research, survey design, and data analysis. Digital Promise is known nationally for their rigorous approach to data analysis, and their team has helped many institutions uncover trends in student outcomes that were previously unseen due to the lack of disaggregated data across the institution. Students will learn from the Digital Promise team how to identify opportunities for disaggregating data to reveal statistically significant and actionable insights for higher education institutions.

Activities will include:

- Survey design and development
- Aligning evidence-based teaching practices with survey items that are translated to ways students can understand / relate to via their experiences
- Pilot Survey testing
- Cognitive Interviewing

Students with an interest in data analysis will have the opportunity to shadow Dr. Julie Neisler as she processes data using R Studio. This is an optional professional development opportunity for students who want to gain a more thorough understanding of why data analysis is important and how it can be leveraged to inform and guide future research.

Appendix D: Project Lead reflection questions

Project Leads were provided with the following questions to reflect on their engagements with Fellows. These served multiple purposes: to provide transparency for Fellowship Leads who, in our Fellowship, were not present at project meetings; to call out any need for support for the Project Leads; and for continuous improvement efforts during and after the Fellowship.

Phase	Prompt
Kickoff and Onboarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How was your kickoff meeting with your Fellows team? What went well? What could have gone better?• What questions have students been asking you?• What could we have done to better prepare you and the students to kick off the project experience?• What activities were included in your onboarding process with the Fellows?• What activities and/or processes went well during project onboarding?• What can be improved in the future when onboarding students to projects?
Projects	<p><i>Briefly outline what the Fellows have done since our last meeting together.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have the Fellows had an opportunity to connect with other people in the organization?• What additional activities or meetings have you invited the Fellows to participate in?• How have these additional activities for meetings been beneficial to this project overall?• Has there been any point where you have found yourself struggling to identify how the Fellows can meaningfully engage with the project? How did you resolve it?• Has the backwards plan remained a helpful tool for your team as you navigate the week-to-week activities of your Fellows?• What have you been doing that you would recommend we incorporate in future iterations? Are there any things you would not recommend we keep in future iterations?• Additional thoughts and reflections?
Wrap Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As we near the final presentations, what are you doing to help your students prepare? What do they need? What could we do to support you and them better?• What have the Fellows done to set themselves up for success in their final presentations?• How have you used the last remaining weeks of project time with your teams?• Any other comments, reflections, etc.?

Appendix E: Examples of professional development opportunities

Sample Survey

Ask your Fellows to help identify the most valuable Professional Development opportunities. One approach is to give Fellows some examples of PD topics and ask them to rank them, as well as include any that aren't mentioned.

What do you want to explore in fellowship professional development sessions?

- Changemaking / Activism
- Collaborating with a Team
- Continuing Education (undergrad and grad school, applications, funding, etc.)
- Cover Letter Writing
- Critical Thinking / Problem Solving
- Design Thinking / Accessibility in Design
- Effective Communication
- Entrepreneurship
- Financial Literacy
- Fostering and Practicing Solidarity
- Identifying Strengths, Skills, and Competencies
- Interviewing
- Mental Health / Work-Life Balance
- Networking
- Presentations
- Public Speaking
- Research
- Resume and LinkedIn Workshop
- Salary Negotiation
- Soliciting Letters of Recommendation/References
- Workshop Design and Development
- Writing
- Other: _____

Example professional development activities

Below are examples of some of the sessions we did end up doing:

- **Design thinking + ECD**
Engage in a workshop on what Design thinking + ECD are, and how they may apply to your future career(s).
- **How to: Resume workshop**
Fellows engage in a resume workshop specifically designed to highlight Fellowship engagement.
- **How to: LinkedIn profiles**
Fellows engage in a workshop on creating and updating their LinkedIn profiles.
- **How to: Networking**
Workshop on how to leverage the expertise and professional connections of the Every Learner network.
- **Informational interviews + guest speakers**
Invite guest speakers (inside or outside of the partners) to discuss their field, trajectory, and personal stories; pair Fellows w/partners or other professional connections for 30-minute informational interviews.
- **Blog/vlog writing**
Write a blog for the Every Learner Everywhere website.
- **Data analysis**
Fellows learn data analysis tools and techniques that can be applied beyond the Fellowship.
- **Interviewing + Fellows experience**
Fellows engage in a PD session on relaying the skills and lessons they learned from Fellowship participation.
- **Media training**
Training on social media tools to use for professional promotion; possible “day in the life” takeover.
- **Digital learning focus groups**
Students participate in and/or lead focus groups on digital learning experiences
- **Writing/editing resources for the field**
Assisting Every Learner network partners in centering student voice in the resources we publish giving guidance to faculty and support staff.

Appendix F: Mentor resources

In our program, Mentors were an important bridge for communication between Fellows and Fellowship Leads to create more open dialogue by minimizing hierarchy. This may differ from how other organizations may define mentors with a more specific professional emphasis. We found it important to set Mentors up for success by providing them with scaffolding and resources.

Mentors' intake form

This form was designed for Mentors to flag any questions or concerns that might be coming up in their conversations with Fellows, and to do so in a way that honored Fellows' desire for anonymity and flagged potential next steps.

Intake form questions:

1. **Input type (select one):**
 - a. Feedback
 - b. Question
 - c. Concern
 - d. Other
2. **Which Fellow(s) does this input relate to?**
If this feedback should stay anonymous from Fellowship Leads, say "Anonymous."
3. **What is the feedback/question/concern?**
4. **If applicable, what action would you like the Fellowship Leads to take?**
Example: "Fellowship Leads to share anonymized feedback with Project Leads."
5. **If applicable, would it be okay for us to follow up with the Fellow directly?**
Revisit best practices on sharing Fellows' input.
 - a. Yes - follow up with the Fellow
 - b. No - do not follow up with the Fellow
 - c. N/A - not applicable to this scenario
 - d. Not sure (Mentor and Fellowship Leads to decide together)
6. **Would you prefer to meet with the Fellowship Leads to discuss directly via phone/Zoom?**
If the matter is urgent and requires immediate attention, please send us an email/text to ensure a timely reply.
 - a. Yes - let's put time on the calendar
 - b. No - that's not necessary
7. **Submitted by**
We will use this to determine which Mentor to follow up with, if there are further questions.

Excerpts from the Mentors' handbook

Guidance for Mentors

- **Be open.** Mentoring typically involves openness about your ideas and experiences with your mentor. You get to determine what parts of yourself and your experiences you feel comfortable sharing, and your openness may shift and develop over time.
- **Set expectations and boundaries early.** Have a clear idea of what your boundaries and expectations of the mentoring relationship are. Maybe you are totally comfortable with a mentee texting you, but maybe you are not comfortable with them trying to call you at 1 am. Maybe you are comfortable with them adding you on LinkedIn, but maybe you aren't comfortable with them following you on Instagram. Or maybe none of these examples are applicable to you, but, the point is, know your boundaries and your mentees boundaries. Spending some time reflecting on what those boundaries are is key so that you can communicate them clearly and ensure everyone feels respected and comfortable.
- **Practice self-reflection.** Before you meet with a mentee, take time to remember your experiences in the Fellowship, reflecting on what you learned, what you found challenging, and what you wish you had known. An ongoing practice of self-reflection is also important. Reflect on your conversations with your mentees. Consider what went well and what could be improved. The goal isn't to be overly self-critical, but to enlist self-reflection as a tool to grow and create a stronger mentoring relationship. If you are comfortable, you can always ask a mentee for feedback, too.
- **Ask questions and listen.** Giving advice can be an important part of mentoring, but resist the temptation to jump in, immediately try to fix a mentee's problems, or quickly turn to talking about your experiences. It is important to make sure a mentee is given the space to speak and share first. Listening to understand is such an under-rated skill that is important in mentorship (and life). One way to make sure you are actively listening is to ask questions and paraphrase back what you heard a mentee say. Sometimes giving advice may be appropriate, but other times it may be more helpful to listen and ask questions that allow the mentee to self-reflect and arrive at their own solutions.
- **Don't try to be the expert.** No one knows everything, and you are here because you have experiences and strengths that qualify you to be a mentor. At the same time, you may not have all the answers, and that is okay! Be honest with a mentee when you don't know something. Be willing to learn, including from a mentee, and you can always ask for help or resources if you don't know something.
- **Be present.** When you are meeting one-on-one with a mentee, do your best to give them your full attention. While distractions and interruptions are sometimes unavoidable, a productive mentoring relationship is often dependent on a mentor creating a space where the mentee knows they will be heard and understood. So as much as is possible and realistic, try to create an environment where you will be able to be present.
- **Be an encouraging and affirming voice.** As you have probably experienced at some point, being a student can be disempowering. Educational and work environments often reproduce white supremacy, ableism, sexism, and classism, making them hostile environments that are especially harmful for racially-minoritized students, disabled students, poverty-impacted students, and first-generation students. Your relationship with a Fellow can't fix a system, but you can be a voice that affirms their experiences, that names their strengths, that honors them as a whole person. Be generous and quick to praise when you see something positive.

Boundaries and self-care

Mentorship can often involve a lot of emotional regulation and labor. For example, when a mentee shares something with you, you may have an emotional response that you can't fully acknowledge in your role as a mentor. Maybe their experience brings up feelings of anger, hurt, or sadness from a similar experience you had, for example. Maybe what they share with you creates stress and anxiety for you about not responding correctly and potentially making the situation worse. Roles that require a lot of emotional labor can quickly lead to burnout, so it is important to give yourself room to process your emotions and to care for yourself. If you can, take time to do things you enjoy, spend time with people you care about, and reflect on what you are feeling and what you need. However, self-care can only go so far, especially if you are being asked to take on more than is reasonable. This is one reason why it is so important to maintain boundaries.

- **Remember, you are a mentor.** You signed up to be a mentor, not a therapist, not a social worker, not a parent, not an all-knowing fount of knowledge. You do not have to have all the right answers and solutions. Your responsibilities are clearly defined, and if you find that more time, expertise and resources are needed than you have to give to address something a mentee shares or needs, then it is not your responsibility. You are not being unkind or a bad mentor by setting and enforcing boundaries of what work you can do. Even people who are paid care workers cannot do that work in all of their relationships because it would be actively harmful to themselves and their relationships. You can be a kind and supportive mentor and say no to unrealistic expectations.
- **Reach out for support.** If a mentee shares that they are experiencing something serious (for example, a mental health crisis, abuse/violence, housing and/or food insecurity, or a traumatic experience), you should alert your contact at iF about the situation immediately. You can share with your mentee that you are looping us in if that feels best to you. We will maintain confidentiality and make sure we either provide or connect a Fellow with the proper support/resources. We will also provide support for you.

Resources to draw from

Availability, Active Listening, Analysis, Affirmation

- [What Are the 3 A's of Mentorship?](#)
- [The Best Mentors Think Like Michelangelo](#)

Questions Over Answers

- [Three Things Great Mentors Always Ask](#)

Building Relationships

- [Guide for Mentors](#)

Clarity, Communication, Commitment

- [The Key to Successful Mentoring Programmes](#)

Traditional and Peer Mentorship

- [Peer Mentor Handbook](#)
- [What the Best Mentors Do](#)
- [Resources For Mentors Around Race, Inclusion, & Cultural Respect](#)
- [Inclusive Mentoring](#)
- [Recommendation for Promoting Equitable Mentoring in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences](#)
- [The Power of Peer Mentoring in the Workplace \(now and post COVID-19\)](#)

Appendix G: Choosing supplemental opportunities

Criteria for judging supplemental opportunities

By participating in the Fellowship, Fellows were also provided with the option to participate in other opportunities within the larger Every Learner Network. This may happen in other contexts as well, in which other staff may want to leverage Fellows' insights or capabilities in their own work.

Examples in our Fellowship included contributions to thought leadership pieces, interviews for research, and participation in panels. Because these fell outside the scope of the Fellows' assigned projects and amounted to additional work, we asked that the organizers of these opportunities provide compensation to Fellows separate from their Fellowship stipend.

While the logistics and payments for these supplemental opportunities were organized and handled outside of the purview of the Fellowship Leads, it is good for the Fellowship Leads to have visibility into the payment amounts and process so that they can serve as a go-between or advocate, if need be, for Fellows. Below are some of the considerations we took as Fellowship Leads when forwarding opportunities to Fellows.

Required actions (Fellowship Leads):

- Ensure that all Fellows are given the opportunity to participate
- Do the grunt work to understand what the opportunity is and what work would be required of Fellows prior to announcing it to them
- Insist to all potential folks who may interact with the Fellows that you be the channel through which they communicate with them
- Ensure that the person initiating the need has resources to fairly compensate the Fellows for their time and efforts

Evaluation criteria:

- Does the opportunity empower the Fellows to share their experience and have a voice?
- Has the opportunity been carefully planned to ensure the Fellows are not being tokenized?
- Will the opportunity provide Fellows with the chance to learn new skills or bolster existing ones?
- Is the opportunity adequately compensated?

Some examples of supplemental opportunities our Fellows worked on

Participation in student panels (a couple of examples below):

- [Engagement & Impact: A conversation with students](#)
- [ASU Remote Summit 2022: Students share the most impactful inclusive teaching strategies](#)

Reviewing and authoring reports (a couple of examples below):

- [Toward Ending the Monolithic View of “Underrepresented Students”](#)
- [What Our Best College Instructors Do](#)
- [Getting Started with Equity: A Guide for Academic Department Leaders](#)

Authoring blog posts on the Every Learner Everywhere website:

- [Student Voice: Zaire McMican Takes a Long-Term Perspective on Equity Work](#)
- [A Muslim Student’s Advice on Making College Classes More Inclusive](#)
- [How Do Systemic Inequities of High School Education Affect College Performance?](#)

Participating as interviewees in qualitative research:

- [Toward Ending the Monolithic View of “Underrepresented Students”](#)
- [What Our Best College Instructors Do](#)