

## UC Berkeley: ELPP Spring 2021

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# 1. Executive Summary

Mentor.me is a mentoring service provider for high school students making a college major decision that recruits college age mentors and cultivates through an online ecosystem a premium mentor/mentee dialog to help with the college major choice. Data shows that the decision of a college major is difficult and in many cases can be unsatisfying with almost two third of students feeling overwhelmed in the college major selection process. These result in more than half of college students changing their major at least once, and 61% of college graduates who would change majors if they could go back. With expensive college costs in the range of \$200,000-350,000 for 4 years this investment and future career path choice is an important investment and life decision that can become more costly in time and money if more college time is needed due to a change in major when at school.

The competitor to Mentor.me in providing valued guidance and mentoring on the college major choice is a private college counselor (PCC). With the estimated \$10,000/yr PCC charge and the typically large PCC/student age gap we anticipate Mentor.me's lower cost, larger college age mentor pool, and more focused online mentoring platform (vs PCC+zoom) will be very competitive in this underserved market. Mentor.me's online platform provides matchmaking (highschool students with college age mentors), scheduling, video hosting mentoring sessions, feedback streams for mentors and mentees, and training material.

Mentor.me is a monthly subscription service of \$200/month or \$1,980 per year with options for \$50 per extra session. With an estimate of \$780/month from each of our student subscribers our revenue projections are: \$3.7 million Phase I (1% applicants top 10 universities), \$117 million Phase II (3% applicants top 100 universities), and more potential for growth in the international Phase III. The anticipated major costs include personnel, hourly rate for college student mentors by \$25 per 60 min session, mentor recruitment/management, app development, app support, and advertising/outreach.

The initial mentees/mentors will be family and friends through word of mouth. If the feedback is positive we will have an invitation only period to hone the mentor/mentee experience, work through unanticipated issues, and test the pricing model. As Mentor.me gains traction and becomes a trusted name we hope to stay competitive as others enter the market through a philosophy of continually improving the mentor/mentee relationship through state-of-the-art matchmaking, mentor/mentee feedback, online learning tools to help mentor and mentee

maximize their sessions, automated mentor/mentee monitoring, and continually training and curating a highly rated mentor pool. Mentor.me wants to be a trusted partner in a very important decision in a high school student's life.

## 2. Problem Statement

Imagine the future, every high schooler knows what they want to study in college, what professions they want to pursue. The reality is most high schoolers don't. And it is not easy for them to find a right person who can give personal advice on finding an appropriate major or college to go to. According to a survey published by Ellucian, the world's leading provider of software for higher education:

- 51 percent of students are not confident in their career path when they enroll in college.
- Almost two-thirds of students feel overwhelmed by the process of selecting a major.
- More than half of students change their major at least once.

Another survey conducted through YouGov shows 61% of college graduates would change their majors if they could go back. As the college cost is expensive which 4 years costs between \$200,000 to \$350,000, changing major or college results in delayed completion dates and increased costs.

For high schoolers and college students who need to decide a major or college to go to or to transfer to, it is not easy to find the right person who can give personal advice on finding the best suited major and college for them. College students rely on advisors for support when they need more attention when transferring.

- 57 percent of students turn to their school advisors most often for helpful advice when registering.
- However, 64 percent only met with their advisor 2 times or less during the most recent academic year.
- One in three students did not receive advice from their two-year school on what courses were eligible for transfer.
- 54 percent of transfer students did not get advice about on-campus resources from their four-year schools.

Students are finding value in pathway approaches and technologies that provide structure, clarity, and personalization. The survey shows students are highly interested in new, personalized technology to help them stay on track. Strong advisor support and intervention can help students get, and stay on the right pass to success. Our target problem is how students can get continuous and personalized advice on from finding a right major and college to the enrollment process in their college exploration journey.

### 3. Proposed Solution

The solution that we are going to implement for our product is a set of mobile experiences for students, their families and mentors. The 2 main pieces of functionality that our mobile experience must deliver are: (a) the ability to match the right student with the right mentor, and (b) facilitate real-time as well as offline interactions between the student and the mentor.

The technology portion of our solution is going to be simple to implement by using off-the-shelf components on the public cloud. The main feature of the technical solution can be broken up into the following functional categories:

- Sign-up for the service for both mentors and students
  - Setting up matching preferences by both mentors and students
  - Matching students to mentors
  - Enabling students and mentors to interact by offering functionality such as: calendaring, Text/Video Chat
  - Ratings and Review System
  - Billing

All of the functionality that is described above is readily available in pre-built packages for a number of web and mobile platforms. Our solution is going to be mobile-only, and we don't anticipate any significant cost or technical hurdles in getting our solution built, deployed and scaled.

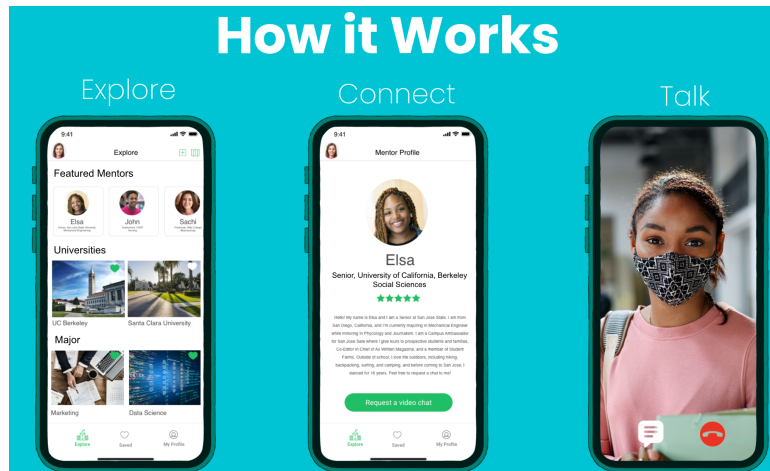


Figure 1. Mentor.me mobile application

A subordinate benefit for high schoolers and their family is they can get personalized tours from remote colleges through the mentors of college students without flying there. Without spending costs of time and money, they can feel the culture and atmosphere at each college.

## 4. Target Customers

The first target customers for Mentor.me are high school students with the following criteria:

- Member of a high income family ( > \$400,000/year )
- Applying to a 4 year college with an acceptance rate < 10%

Given our target student demographic, we can quickly infer that our Mentors should be from the same set of schools that our target student customers are applying to.

Here is a persona of ideal target customer:

Amelia Parker - she goes to Los Altos High School which is a high income neighborhood. Their family makes around \$400,000. They spend \$12,000 per year for SAT. She is interested in Social Sciences, biology, business and computer science but she has no clear vision of what her future career looks like. They are considering hiring a college counselor by paying \$10,000.

Here are two personas of college students as a mentor:

Mia Bains - she is a Junior at Princeton University. She is from California as well and majoring in Social Sciences which Amelia is interested in. GPA:3.67. Loves teaching and advising.

Elsa Tayler - she is a sophomore at UC Berkeley. She is from San Diego and applied for 10 colleges inside and outside California. GPS: 3.88. Good listener.

Amelia can get a different perspective from different college mentors who have similar backgrounds and interests. The mentor college students can share real experiences and knowledge, as well as what culture and atmosphere in their college life. Through continuous sessions with multiple college students, Amelia will be able to get a better, practical sense of their career path and college/major selection with confidence. Once she is confident on deciding college and major to apply, her mentors from those colleges and majors will continue to support and keep her motivated throughout the application process until she successfully is accepted and enrolled.

## 5. Business Model

The business model of Mentor.Me is designed to offer students a better quality of service than they can get from Private College Counselors at a much lower cost. The value proposition for Mentors in our application is very straightforward -- we are offering them a higher hourly rate than their universities are currently offering.

For students, our package is \$200/month or \$1,980 per year. Our pricing model also has built-in flexibility to offer students extra sessions with their mentors at \$50/session if they feel that they require it.

For mentors of college students, we compensate them the average of \$25 per an hour session. Mentor.me is a new opportunity to make money for college students in a flexible way. They can work in their spare time even between classes, they can work anywhere, and they can work on their mobile phone. Compared to the \$14.50 hourly rate of student assistant III(Workleader) at UC Berkeley, or \$13.75 hourly rate of Tutor(Undergrad) at Harvard University, Mentor.me is a competitive opportunity for them. We define a mentor grade system which a mentor can start from \$20 hourly rate. Based on the ratings from high schoolers and length of experiences on the

platform they worked, the grade will be upgraded up to \$30 hourly rate. In this way, we can motivate college students to provide better mentoring sessions to high schoolers.

We defined this pricing based on our research about how much parents would pay for a mentoring session. Research data shows wealthy parents spend \$45-\$100 per hour for SAT tutoring. Assuming \$100 of 1-2 hours per week, the annual cost of SAT tutoring would be \$5,200. We can have a similar pricing option but strategically set \$50 per hour to be highly competitive and much affordable to private college counselors considering mass target customer segments.

With this business model, we are expecting to generate \$780/year or \$100/month net revenue from each of our student subscribers.

## 6. Competition

The competitor to Mentor.me in providing valued guidance and mentoring on the college major choice is a private college counselor (PCC). It is estimated that PCCs charge \$10,000/yr. The age gap of PCC to students can cause low engagement on the part of the student, as well as less trust in the advice, and reluctance of the student to discuss everything on their mind. The experience would be similar to a school counselor via Face2Face or Zoom.

Through Mentor.me's \$1980/yr service high schoolers can pick and choose their favorite mentors throughout the year based on peer reviews. The matchmaking can also give the mentee access to mentors attending colleges they are considering. Mentor.me closes the age gap between mentor/mentee by recruiting heavily within the peer group of the mentees and from schools the mentee's are considering. The mentor is given tools to improve their ability to mentor through training material available on the platform and feedback of their past efforts. Mentor.me's mobile platform provides a more engaging entry point to the service than a general zoom session from PCCs with tools for successful mentoring at the students' finger tips.

As for other services offering college guidance, there is a service called Naviance ([www.naviance.com](http://www.naviance.com)) where high schoolers can get information about colleges. Naviance is an American college and career readiness software provider that partners with high schools and other K-12 institutions to provide students with college planning and career assessment tools. Another service is Unibuddy, a peer-to-peer platform for students recruitment for higher education. The service helps high educations recruit and

engage prospective students by building meaningful connections through chat, live events and top-tier partnerships. Those are B2B business models but Mentor.me is a B2C business model, allowing prospective students to control when/who to connect to.

## 7. Go-to-Market Strategy

### 7.1 Research Stage

We begin with providing experimental demos to observe how it works. We recruit 10 clients from a circle of family and friends through word of mouth in the bay area. By understanding the desired universities and majors from the 10 clients of high schoolers, we will recruit college students from those universities and majors through job posting on each college board. Then we manually schedule a weekly mentoring session for clients and college students for 8 weeks, then ask both for ratings and feedback. As this is an experiment, we only charge half the price of the original \$200 monthly service fee. And we pay each college student \$25 per 60 min session, so there will not be net revenue for us. After the 8 sessions in the 8 weeks (2 months), if 90% of clients are satisfied with the series of mentoring sessions and willing to continue for \$1,980 of annual subscription or \$200 monthly subscription, we can say Mentor.me can be a scalable business. If less than 90 % of clients are satisfied, we will try to understand what's missing, and conduct another 4-8 weeks mentoring sessions with the same clients for free.

### 7.2 Pilot stage

This phase is for acquiring first customers. We do not invest any engineering resources to develop the app yet. We pitch our solution to potential customers in the Bay Area and acquire 10 waiting lists. Our co-founder, Harsono's daughter will be the first customer, then through the circle of her friends and families and word of mouth from our parent networks, we aim to acquire 10 customers. Once we get our KPI 10 subscribers waiting list, we begin to recruit and hire 30 mentors from the top 10 universities through job posting on each college board. Those would be Stanford, Harvard, MIT, Columbia, Princeton, Yale, The University of Chicago, Brown, and UC Berkeley, and UCLA. The mentors from college students are required from the top 3 popular majors in each college and highly selected through interviews and training to become a good mentor.

We provide a simple website for the first 10 customers of high schoolers to show all mentors



and allow them to make a weekly appointment for mentoring sessions. Mentoring sessions will be held on a video conference service such as Zoom.

Our KPI will be over 90% customer satisfactions, Net Promoter Score above 51 which is the benchmark average in the higher education industry.

### **7.3 Go-To-Market stage**

From this phase, we invest in engineering resources to develop the mobile app for scaling the business. The app allows high schoolers to explore mentors from different colleges in different majors, make an appointment, and have a video chat mentoring session on a high schooler's mobile device anywhere even at school after classes. The app notifies high schoolers of upcoming mentoring sessions, tips on exploring colleges and majors so that high schoolers can keep motivated and engaged on the app. We also develop an app for college student mentors so that they can work from anywhere using their mobile phones.

We expand a more diverse selection of college students from a variety of majors. To keep the mentoring session quality, new mentors are invitation-only from existing mentors of college students.

Sales and marketing to mentee subscribers will be the key to the growth of the business. We target high-income families of over \$200,000 household income. There two strategies to reach out to the target customers. The referral program allows existing customers to get additional free mentoring sessions as well as new customers to get discounts on annual subscription. Another strategy is to have a partnership with high school counselors by offering free mentoring sessions to their students, which also reduces the school counselor workload. We deploy sales members in target regions in the US to reach out to high potential high schools for building partnership with their school counselors. By hosting a series of college exploration events which their students can freely join with their parents, we can present our solution there and offer free trial sessions.

Our KPI in this phase is to get subscribers from 1% of total applicants of the top 10 universities we support on our platform. And keep 90% customer satisfactions and Net Promoter Score above 51.

### **7.4 Scale Customer Segment stage**

Being successful in the Go-To-Market stage will give us a new opportunity to expand customer segments and college list. We hire more mentors from top 100 colleges leveraging student ambassadors. For mentee, we target high-to-middle income families of over \$100,000 household income.

Our KPI is 3% of total applicants from the top 100 colleges. Even though the overall satisfaction rate and Net Promoter Score could be reduced as we cover mass new customer segments, we will keep Net Promoter Score over 33 which is the benchmark average of technology companies.

## 7.5 International Stage

International market for college selection is growing. According to a report published by Unesco, in the 14 year period between 2000 - 2014, the number of students in universities globally doubled. This acceleration continues. The total number of students in higher education is expected to reach nearly 380 million by 2030, 472 million by 2035, and more than 594 million by 2040.

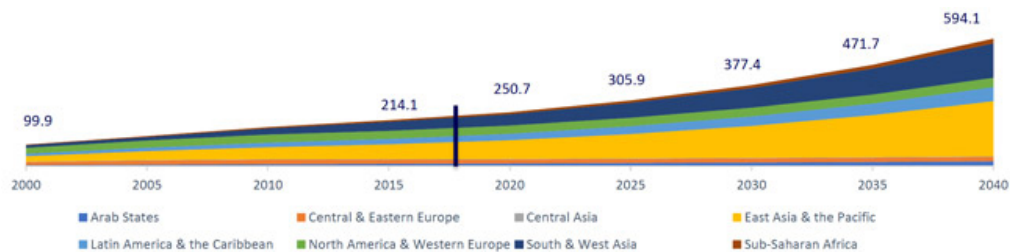
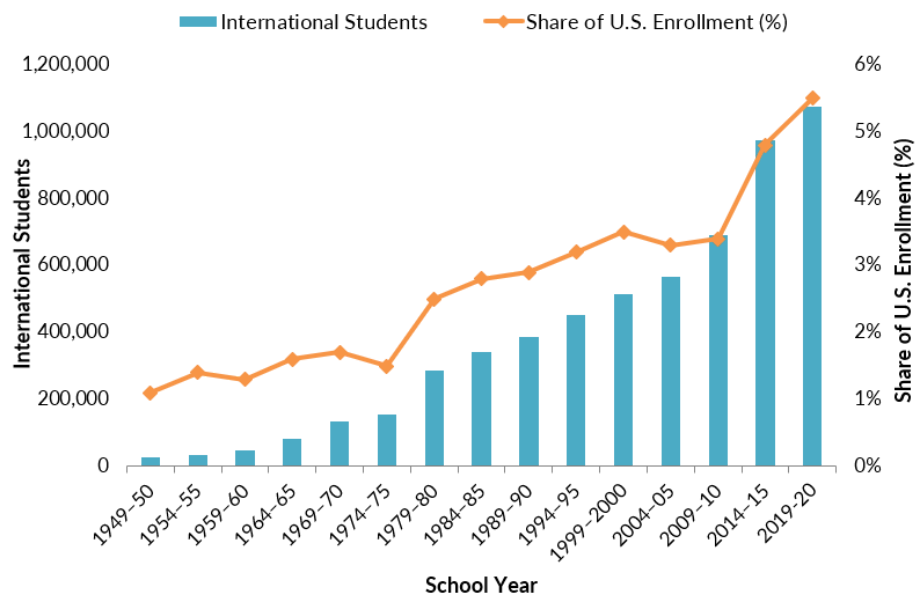


Figure 2. Worldwide higher education enrolment by global region, actual from 2000 to 2015 and projected to 2040. Source: Calderon, UNESCO

The Figure 3 chart shows that the number of international students in the US also increases every year.



Future 3. Source: Institute of International Education (IIE), "Enrollment Trends: International Student Data from the 2020 Open Doors Report," accessed January 11, 2021

Mentor.me will be valuable for international students, allowing them to explore different universities and students from their home country by talking to real college students. The potential of total addressable market size is significant globally and growing in the future.

## 8. Revenue Projection

We project the 3 phases of the Revenue Path.

- Phase 0: First Customer Acquisition (2021-2022)
- Phase 1: Go To Market (2022-2024)
- Phase 2: Scale Customer Segments (2025-2027)
- Phase 3: Go International Market (2027-)

### 8.1 Phase 0: First Customer Acquisition

Through this phase0, as we described in the previous section of the Pilot phase, we aim to at least obtain 10 annual subscribers. Our Service Addressable Market as Net Revenue would be at least \$7,800, by calculating \$780 / year times 10 customers.

### 8.2 Phase 1: Go To Market

Our KPI in this phase is to get subscribers from 1% of total applicants of the top 10 universities we support on our platform. The Service Addressable Market as Net Revenue would be \$3.7 million, by calculating  $\$780 \times \text{about } 480,000 \text{ total applicants of the top 10 universities in 2019} \times 0.01$ .

### **8.3 Phase 2: Scale Customer Segment**

Being successful in phase 1 will give us a new opportunity to expand customer segments and college list. We hire more mentors from top 100 colleges leveraging student ambassadors. For mentee, we target high-to-middle income families of over \$100,000 household income. KPI is 3% of total applicants from the top 100 colleges. The Service Addressable Market as Net Revenue would jump to \$117 million, by the following calculation:  $\$780 \times 5,000,000 \times 0.03$ .

### **8.4 Phase 3: Go International Market**

As described in the previous session about the potential of the international market, the Total Addressable Market is multi billion US dollars.

### **8.5 Turning Profit Projection**

The following tables show the summary of revenue projection paths on a yearly basis. Considering the fixed costs summarized in the following table below, we will be able to make this business profitable in the Year Three. From the year we make profit, we pledge 1% revenue to provide free service for underprivileged students, to promote equity in education.

Table 1. Mentor.me Revenue, Cost, Profit Projection

Simplified Projections					
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five
# of clients	10	1,200	4,800	28,800	150,000
Net Revenues	\$7.8K	\$936K	\$3,744K	\$22,464K	\$117,000K
FIXED COSTS	\$620K	\$1,460K	\$3,434K	\$17,504K	\$58,086K
CSR from 1% Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$37K	\$225K	\$2,471K
NET PROFIT	-\$612.2K	-\$524K	+\$273K	+\$4,735K	\$56,443K

Table 2. Mentor.me Fixed Costs Projection

Fixed Costs					
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five
CEO Salary	\$150K	\$150K	\$150K	\$150K	\$150K
CTO Salary	\$120K	\$120K	\$120K	\$120K	\$120K
Operations Salary	\$120K	\$180K	\$240K	\$300K	\$360K
Sales Salary	\$0	\$180K	\$360K	\$3,600K	\$10,800K
Engineers Salary	\$110K	\$330K	\$1,650K	\$9,900K	\$19,800K
Designers Salary	\$100K	\$200K	\$300K	\$900K	\$1,800K
Personnel Costs	\$600K	\$1,160K	\$2,820K	\$14,970K	\$33,030K
General & Admin	\$20	\$200K	\$240K	\$288K	\$346K
Sales & Marketing	\$0	\$100K	\$374K	\$2,246K	\$24,710K
FIXED COSTS	\$620K	\$1,460K	\$3,434K	\$17,504K	\$58,086K

## 9. Team



### **CEO**

#### **Kengo Yoshii**

15 years of experience in software engineering and project management. Used to be an International Student who really wanted Mentor.me like platform. Dad of a son.



### **CMO**

#### **Harsono Simka, PhD**

20 years in semiconductor R&D, sponsoring university research Dad of 3 HS & college-age children.



### **COO**

#### **Fakir Nooruddin**

25+ years of experience in technology. Has held leadership positions at Fortune 500 companies like: Yahoo!, American Express, Gap, Verizon Media. In addition to working for large companies, FS has founded 1 startup, and been instrumental in building and scaling 2 other companies.



### **CTO**

#### **Phillip Stout**

Many years experience in software engineering, with expertise in internet security, cloud computing and mobile app development.

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