



Developing and Implementing a Successful Student Mentorship Program

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Learning Objectives

- Understand the key concepts of mentorship and leadership
- Learn how to create and personalize your own peer mentorship program
- Learn how to utilize student mentors to ease the load on instructors

Mentorship

- Definition: the influence, guidance, or direction given by a mentor, typically someone experienced in a specific discipline.
 - Wikipedia
- Someone who has been there, done that, and can help you succeed

Qualities to look for

- Empathy
- Adaptability/flexibility
- Good listening skills
- Encouragement and motivation

Leadership

- Definition: the ability of an individual or group to influence, direct, or guide other individuals or organizations towards a common goal
 - Wikipedia
- Someone who can empower others through guidance and listening

Qualities to look for

- Confidence
- Knowledge
- Respect from (and to) others
- Good listener

Our why?

- Retention
- Encourage positive student relationships
- Promote and develop leadership
- Improve mental health
- Workforce preparedness



How do I make it happen??

- Solicit and recruit mentors
- Structuring groups
- Training/expectations
- Check ins
- Activities/events
- Utilization of mentors
- Surveys



Solicit and Recruit Mentors

- Determine enrollment
- Ratio: 1 mentor per 2-4 mentees
- Elicit input from faculty, staff, and former mentors



Qualities to look for:

- Above average GPA
- Leaders in their class
- Involved in the program
- Mature
- Good role models

Solicit and Recruit Mentors

Reach out to selected mentors with recruitment letter detailing goals and requirements

Allow the option for them to decline



Solicit and Recruit Mentors

Ensure mentors understand the goals of the program:

- Serve as role models for incoming freshman
- Be a voice of encouragement
- Offer guidance and advice
 - ie. study tips, extra assistance with hands-on tasks, how to apply for classes, how to apply for scholarships, what to look for in employment
- Be a kind and listening ear and voice of reason



Structuring groups

- Survey incoming freshman
 - Introverted vs extroverted
 - Passive vs direct
 - Hands on or hands off
 - Areas of interest in vet med
 - Any past clinical experience
 - Preferred communication style
 - Study habits
 - Dietary restrictions



Set expectations/guidelines

Fall semester:

- Week 1: Mentor meet and greet
 - Intro groups, share contact info, campus tour
- Week 2: Check-in lunch
- Monthly check-ins
- Midterms encouragement
- Semester event/activity
- Finals week note of encouragement

Spring semester:

- Week 1: Return to campus check-ins
- Attend campus career fair
- Monthly check-ins
- Midterms encouragement
- Semester event/activity
- Sharing experiences
- End of year survey

- Graduation thank you notes from mentees

Set expectations/guidelines

- Maintain open 2-way communication with mentees
- Maintain a sense of confidentiality*
- Foster a positive and uplifting environment, celebrating successes
- Be open and receptive to feedback
- Cultivate and encourage collaboration as well as independence
- Provide support tailored to each mentee's needs, modeling professionalism and extending kindness
- Continue to be a source of support even after you complete your studies
 - Emphasize to your mentees that the professional relationship can extend beyond graduation



Training

<https://www.aaha.org/resources/2023-aaha-mentoring-guidelines/>

Share resources available through your institution

ie. TimelyCare, emergency funding, reduced lunch programs

Conflict management styles

How to give feedback



Training

Outline ways to recognize signs of mental health decline

*Inform mentors if at any time they are concerned with their mentees well-being to alert faculty/staff!

Tips and advice on active listening

TABLE 4.2 Warning Signs of Mental Health Conditions¹

Excessive fear, anxiety, or worry
Feelings of depression or extreme sadness
Confusion, issues learning, and/or difficulty concentrating
Extreme changes in mood
Intense or prolonged anger or irritability
Avoidance of friends, loved ones, and social activities
Changes in sleeping or eating habits
Exhaustion
Delusions or hallucinations
Overuse of substances (e.g., alcohol or drugs)
Physical issues without an obvious cause (e.g., unexplained headaches or stomach aches)
Suicidal thoughts
Unable to carry out daily activities or cope with problems and stress

Check ins

Important that mentorship program coordinator checks in with the mentors regularly to offer support and receive feedback

One large meeting early in each semester and occasional texts or emails to mentors with reminders about upcoming tasks to complete and dates to remember

Ensure mentors are checking in with mentees regularly and sharing feedback, mentors are a liaison between instructors and freshman



Activities/events

Activities/events are meant to foster the mentor-mentee relationship

Examples:

- Pizza party

- Pumpkin painting contest

- Movie lunch

- Easter egg hunt

- Tye dye party

- End of year recognition luncheon

Ask for student recommendations



Utilization of mentors

Instructors should be encouraged to refer students to their mentors often for help and advice

- Study help

- Hands-on skills practice

- Repetition of material (will help mentors retain information as well)



Utilization of mentors

Task list added to spring semester to hone in hands-on skills pre-externship

Mentors initial when task is
completed sufficiently

	IV catheter placement
	IM, SQ, IV injection
	Jugular venipuncture
	Restraint, HR, physical exam (dog and cat)
	Drawing up drugs (0.04mL, 0.4mL, and 4 mL)
	Radiology (measuring, using technique chart, positioning, and collimating using stuffed animal. DO NOT FIRE THE MACHINE)



End of year surveys

Survey both mentors and mentees

Mentors:

- Rank how beneficial program was
- Rank how utilized they felt
- Ways to improve
- Ways to utilize mentors more
- Recommendations for future mentors

Mentees:

- Rank how beneficial program was
- Rank how much they utilized their mentor
- Ways to improve, things they liked
- Ways to utilize mentors more
- Would you like to be a mentor yes or no



Impact on our program

Increased retention

Increased confidence

Improved skills

Improved peer relationships

Improved student-instructor relations

Increased participation in club events and community service outreach

Huge selling point!



Looking to the future

Add in task list for Fall semester for core skills prior to assessment

Require lab techniques practice sessions prior to practicals

Expand program to include distance education students utilizing zoom technology

Each year the program will improve and grow on its own





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Easy as pie right?!

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