

University Studies Program

General Education, done better

Instructor Expectations for Quest I Peer Mentors

Peer Mentors can be a valuable lifeline in the classroom, serving as another set of eyes and ears on your students, and helping you to ensure that all students are engaged to the maximum extent possible. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you construct your Peer Mentor's role and put the finishing touches on your Quest I course.

Boundaries: While many are familiar with the role of a student tutor or peer educator, it is important to note that *Quest I Peer Mentors serve in a different capacity*. Unlike a peer educator, your peer mentor is *not* responsible for course content; he/she is *not a tutor*. While we will make every attempt to match peer mentors to courses with which they have some experience, in some cases that may not be possible due to student schedules. You should think of your assigned Peer Mentor as primarily a *connection point* between you and your students, and between your students and the greater campus community. The Peer Mentor enhances the whole first-year student experience—not just your course.

Expectations: What will your Peer Mentor do in your Quest I classroom? You should feel free to call upon your Peer Mentor to inform students about campus resources and on- and off-campus events, and to help your students build community in your classroom and beyond. Although they are not tutors, to a certain extent you can rely on your Peer Mentor to help students build connections between what is happening in your course and the rest of the campus. Well before the beginning of the semester, you and your Peer Mentor should discuss the nature of your Peer Mentor's role and develop a set of shared expectations. Note that Peer Mentors are paid to work between 3-5 hours per week. After you work through the details, **you and your Peer Mentor must complete the Peer Mentor Contract, sign it, and return it to the University Studies Program Office in Pollock House.**

Here are some points that should be worked out in advance to ensure that you and your Peer Mentor are on the same page:

- ✓ What information about your Peer Mentor will you include in your syllabus?
- ✓ How will you introduce your Peer Mentor on the first day of class? What would you like him/her to say?
- ✓ How often will your Peer Mentor be in the classroom? The schedules may vary widely by instructor. You might choose, for example, to have your Peer Mentor attend class once a week and report back to you about activities/work with students outside the classroom. We recommend that your Peer Mentor attends, or is with your students in an academic setting at least one full hour per week. Whatever the case, the Peer Mentor's role should be collaboratively constructed and communicated before the semester begins.
- ✓ Which campus events will your Peer Mentor attend with your students, and what do you want the students to get out of attendance? How should your Peer Mentor track student attendance at these events? How can the Peer Mentor help make connections between the activities and course content?

- ✓ When will you meet with your Peer Mentor? Every week? Every other week? After each class? Do you want email check-ins?
- ✓ How would you like your Peer Mentor to communicate with you about issues students may be having in your class?
- ✓ How will you provide feedback to your Peer Mentor?

Communication: As soon as you know who your Peer Mentor is, we recommend that you contact him/her. Your Peer Mentor will be eager to learn more about the class, even if it is months away. An email is a good way to start, but you may wish to set up a meeting with your Peer Mentor well in advance of the first day of class so that you can get to know one another. **You should also add your Peer Mentor to your class D2L page as soon as you are able.**

Feedback: If at any time you are concerned about your Peer Mentor or feel that he/she is not adequately performing his/her duties, please contact Debbie Gray Patton (graypatt@uwosh.edu or 424-1402). Naturally, if you are having a GREAT experience with your Peer Mentor, we want to know that, too!