

# **Peer-Mentoring Program**

## **Orientation & Info**

Program Website: <https://goto.unm.edu/peermentoring>

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

1. Brief Program description
  - a. Program runs every fall and spring since Spring 2020
  - b. Approximately a one semester commitment; options after to stay - either with the current set of mentees, or with new matches.
2. **Connecting:** Name, Major, Year; What motivated you to be a mentor in this program? What is your experience with mentoring (including being mentored)?

### **BRAINSTORM**

1. What makes a mentoring relationship effective?

### **PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS & TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

1. **The Goal of the Program/Relationship**

It is not to have something specific to work towards, but to build a relationship. Establish trust and support. Once this is done, you can have a goal to work towards. This goal should come from your mentee, while you help keep them focused and on task.
2. **Your Roles and Responsibilities**
  - You are expected to maintain a high level of confidentiality. Refrain from discussing incidents regarding your mentee unless there is a legitimate reason to share such information.
  - As a Peer-Mentor, you should expect to be a positive role model to your mentee. The relationship to be one-directional, at least to start. Be ok with change. Support your mentee as best you can. Do not expect to “save” your mentee, let them find their own way, but share your story/journey with them.
  - Model behavior, focus on the positive, and encourage your mentee (help them build healthy self-esteem and self-confidence). Be friendly, but professional.
3. **Connecting with Your Mentees**
  - a. I will send an introductory email with you included introducing myself and the program to your mentees. You should then reply to your mentee through this email to introduce yourself. a bit of your background and how you want to connect.
    - i. Some of the mentees will respond, others may not. Focus your efforts and energy on those that engage. Do not become discouraged at those that do not.
  - b. . Reach out to ALL of your mentees minimally once a month. But, more frequent communication is highly encouraged, for example bi-weekly. More details will be provided in your introductory email.
  - c. Use the Discord group!
  - d. For those that respond, try to set up an in-person meeting.
    - i. If you need a meeting space, we have a conference room you can reserve here in the Engineering Student Success Center. Please visit our site for the reservation form: <https://ess.unm.edu/services/room-reservations/index.html>

- ii. At your first in-person meeting, introduce yourself with confidence and a smile. Make sure you ask how to say their name correctly. Tell them about yourself and ask questions about your mentee. Be patient, nonjudgmental, and open.
  - iii. Encourage goal setting, but most importantly, **just be there to support them as they need you**. Ask them how they are adjusting to the university, what they love, and where they are struggling.
- e. From that point forth, at the beginning of each meeting, reflect on the previous. At the end of each meeting, plan for the next.
- f. Mentoring activities: These can range from meet up for coffee or tea, study breaks, to attending events together (of course we encourage them to be Engineering Student Success Center events in the mix!), going for a walk or a hike, and much more! Not everything has to be planned out, and you can discuss options with your mentee. Let them tell you what they like to do.
- g. Complete and share the “Get to know your match – Questionnaire” from the program website with your mentees. Encourage them to do the same.
- h. Use the “Conversation Starter” document to help get conversation flowing (either you prompt questions, answer some, or save for your live interactions).

#### 4. Setting Goals

- If your mentee decides they want to move beyond just making a connection and having somebody to talk to, you can establish formal goals. Let your mentee’s needs guide this and use the S.M.A.R.T. Goals handout to help guide this.
- If you are lost for meeting topic ideas, let’s chat more.

#### 5. Communication

- a. **Logistics:** Discuss how you will communicate with each other and how frequently you will communicate. Is email, phone calls, or texting best? But, you also need to set your own boundaries. To reach them in a non-email way, I encourage you to look up their information in the [directory.unm.edu](http://directory.unm.edu) for a phone number you can try. And, provide them with your phone number (for texting) or social media handles, as you are comfortable.
- b. **Practice professional communication + check your email and phone every day:** Respond to important emails/calls from your mentee, the Peer-Mentoring Program staff, your professors, your boss, etc. within two business days. You are encouraged to use your UNM email for all communication with your mentee as this is your professional account. You can link your UNM email to another client (e.g., Google) that responds from your UNM email. Add “away” messages to your UNM email account if you will not check it (e.g., Spring break, holidays, summer, family emergencies, etc.). See professional email handout on the program website for more details.
- c. **Communication Tools:**
  - **Ask open ended questions.** These are questions that do not allow for a quick one-word response. Instead of “did you have a good day” or “how was your day,” you can say “tell me about your day.”
  - **Careful Listening.** (rather than active listening). Make them feel seen and heard. That means you show that you are listening by responding, paraphrasing, and respecting what is said. You can do that by asking questions related to what they said, and don’t do anything but listen, try not to think about what you’ll say next, just be in the present. Make sure you allow time for reflection, and don’t use questions that start with “why” but questions that start with how or what. Why asks for justification.

- **Body Language.** Body language accounts for 70% of all communication. So, send the right message. Pay attention to your posture and stay open and relaxed, arms uncrossed and loose. Look at the person who's talking, and allow for one person to talk at a time.
- **"I" Statements.** Starting your opinions or experiences with this focus helps ensure that you don't offend anyone by speaking for them. For example, instead of "You hate math" try saying "I noticed that you seem frustrated while doing math, do you want to tell me about that?"
- **Give Feedback.** Be honest and respectful. Make observations, not evaluations. Provide empathy. Be timely.

## 6. Commitment

- a. **Keep your commitments:** Put your peer-mentoring meetings on your calendar. Attend meetings you say you will attend. Show up to meetings on time or early if possible. This sets a good example of professionalism to your mentee.

This includes your commitment to the program. We ask for a one semester commitment, but you can continue beyond that as you find beneficial. We have fewer students in need of mentors for the Spring, but welcome mentors to join during either semester.

- b. **Let me know if you are leaving the program:** No hard feelings if you want to leave, but please let me know. This way I can find a new match for your mentee. I also worry about you if you stop communicating. I won't stop reaching out to you until I hear from you. You do not have to leave forever. You can return to the program when the timing is a better fit.
- c. **Being late, no shows, and cancellations:** People are coming to meetings *with you*. Please do not disrespect the other person by arriving late or letting them show up when you do not show up. Provide as much notice of running late or a cancellation as possible. Twenty-four hours is generally the minimum acceptable notice of a cancellation except in case of emergencies. Apologize when you must cancel, and send 2-3 times that you could reschedule your meeting for.
- d. **Support:** I will check in with you a few times throughout the semester to see how things are going. But, don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions, concerns, brags, or want more support. Yadéeh Sawyer, [yadeeh@unm.edu](mailto:yadeeh@unm.edu).

## 7. Cultural Diversity, Self Identity, and Respect

- a. Take time to think about your **cultural and identity**. This can include your age, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion/personal philosophy, where you have lived, socioeconomic status, the size and structure of your family, traditions, your hobbies and passions, and much more!

Share some of these with your mentee, but make sure to remain inclusive and respectful of any differences that may arise. Explore the differences, but also find commonalities.

- b. **Expect respect:** Just as you are expected to show up on time, communicate, respect people's time, and be kind-- your mentees should do the same for you.
- c. **Discrimination and harassment is unacceptable** in all academic, professional, and personal settings and will not be tolerated from mentees or mentors. All people should

feel valued and safe so that they can participate fully in school, a meeting, program, job, etc. UNM prohibits all forms of discrimination in relation to many protected identities, such as age, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender/sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, medical condition, physical or mental ability, pregnancy, etc. If you feel that you have experienced discrimination in relation to any of these identities, you are encouraged to report the incident to the UNM Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). I am also happy to meet with you to discuss discrimination, but I am a mandatory reporter, which means I must tell OEO about discrimination. You can talk to staff at Lobo Respect, the Women's Resource Center, and the LGBTQ Resource Center without them needing to tell OEO. More information on filing discrimination claims with OEO at: [https://oee.unm.edu/forms/pdf/-new\\_claims.pdf](https://oee.unm.edu/forms/pdf/-new_claims.pdf)

## 8. Common Challenges

Again, your role is not to solve these challenges, but to talk and support your mentee as they find a way to work through it. Some of the common challenges are below, but by no means are these all of the challenges your mentee may encounter.

- Missing family
- Living in a new place
- Making new friends
- Organizing school material
- Following their schedule
- Being punctual
- Understanding teacher directions
- Paying attention in class
- Being their own advocates
- Acting in a socially appropriate manner

## 9. Handling Tough Issues

Your mentee may or may not open up about tough issues. But, if they do, encourage them to be open and honest in a way that helps you understand what the best course of action might be. Your role is not to solve the problem or provide personal thoughts, but to **direct them to the appropriate resource**. This can be a referral to a professional, or sharing a good news article. But most importantly, remain calm and nonjudgmental. Offer support, but do not make promises.

**Know the warning signs.** If you decide the best approach is to report the problem, tell your mentee BEFORE doing so and talk to them about your decision. Make sure they know you are on their side and you want what is best for them. The following list can help you identify whether or not your mentee has a problem that should be discussed and/or reported.

*General warning signs – a change in their normal behavior*

- Harm to self or others (verbal or non-verbal)
- Violent acts
- Intimidating behavior
- Suicidal Ideation
- Indirect references may include feelings of worthlessness, Hopelessness
- Risk behavior such as drug and alcohol abuse

*Some other signs include:*

- Loss of interest in school
- Spending a lot of time alone
- Severe mood swings
- Sleeping a lot or very little
- Eating a lot or very little
- Turning away from adults for support
- Increase in behavioral problems at school
- Engaging in risky behaviors

*Signs of Substance abuse*

- Irrational, clumsy, or “spaced out” behavior
- Lying
- Secretiveness

*Signs of Abuse, violence, and bullying*

- Injuries that can't be accounted for
- Physical defensiveness; getting jumpy or nervous
- Sudden onset of compulsive or self-destructive behavior

*Signs of Mental health issues*

- Becoming withdrawn
- Talking about death or dying
- Prolonged sadness; expression of hopelessness
- Prolonged nervousness or anxiety
- Severe insecurity
- Inexplicable and irrational behavior
- Unhealthy coping mechanisms – sexual activity, drug use, self-harm, etc.

#### 10. Need a Resource or Support?

There are many FREE resources on campus to support students. Look at the Survive & Thrive sheet on the program website, and the advice from our peer-mentors.

If you are not sure where to send your mentee, please encourage them to reach out to me so that I can connect them to the appropriate people/places. You can also call or email me to brainstorm about your particular mentee.

### **COMING UP**

All are optional, but remember, you get out of this program what you put in.

1. Introductions to mentees or program update – No later than the first Wednesday after the program deadline (Feb 5 & Sept 5).
2. STEM Mixer – first Friday following the program deadline, typically 3:30 – 5:30 pm – Centennial Engineering Center - STAMM Room (1044). For specific details, visit [our events page](#) or check out our [succESS web-ap](#)

**THE ESS CENTER IS HERE TO HELP YOU! WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU.** No problem is too big or too small. If I cannot help you, I will find someone who can. Whatever the issue is, we can solve it together.