IU-SEEK
Peer Mentor Manual
2009-2010

Peer Mentors:

Lighting the Way to Student Success at IU Kokomo
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Icebreaker

Leadership Team Vision Statement

As a Peer Mentor, you will be expected and want to work with other Peer Mentors to help make this a better experience for you and your students. Therefore, you will have to learn a little about each other so you can learn how your teammates work best. In this exercise, please write 3 Individual Statements about what you hope your Leadership Team experience will be like.

1.

2.

3.

Now, with your group, come up with a collective LEADERSHIP TEAM VISION:
Peer Mentors

Description of Duties

The position of Peer Mentor for IU-SEEK will require energetic, enthusiastic and motivated students from IU Kokomo. The students must be able to demonstrate interpersonal communication skills and be willing to commit to this activity for the length of the academic year (Sept 2009-May 2010).

Duties to be Performed

• Coordinate, and report to program Director on, one social activity/team-building event per month for Team Members and Faculty Member(s)
• Maintain Team email list, and send a weekly email to all Team members to maintain active communication within the group
• Provide information about IU-SEEK activities to all Team Members and Faculty Mentor(s) through this list as needed
• Help students become familiar with university resources; advise and refer residents to appropriate university resources, as the need arises
• Attend a monthly meeting with the program Director and other Peer Mentors to update Director on plans and activities, and to receive feedback and supervision
• Attend a monthly Peer Mentor meeting to discuss issues and plan activities
• Meet individually with each Team Member at least once each semester
• Record observations (written and photos of activities), and submit monthly reports to the Director
• Get cleared to conduct human subjects research, and assist with data collection activities
• Participate in service learning project in December of Fall Semester, with all other Mentorship Teams
• Assist in planning IU-SEEK April Bash to celebrate success of year’s participation
• Participate in training prior to the beginning of fall semester and throughout the semester as needed

Tasks Needing Regular Attention

• Communicate with your Team members (students and Faculty Mentors) as well as with the Program Director
• Attend all required meetings (1 with PMs, 1 with PMs and Director, 1 with Team and FM)
• Complete all relevant documentation (timesheets, monthly reports)
Characteristics of a Role Model

1.

2.

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Characteristics of a Peer Mentor

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10.

Do these fully overlap? Why or why not?
Guidelines for Peer Mentors...

The Role of the Mentor

Remember that the Peer Mentor’s role is there alongside other college support services. Therefore, the mentor is not:

- A teacher, a counselor, a social worker

And the mentor will not:

- Do Team Members’ work for them
- Give advice based on personal opinions
- Take advantage of Team Members in anyway

The Mentor might:

- Help new learners to settle into IU Kokomo and their courses
- Help to establish good communication between new learners, University faculty and staff, and other learners
- Provide support for individuals who might be isolated or lack support and self-confidence
- Provide support in getting to know rapidly changing environments and the use of new technologies
- Offer appropriate advice and guidance
- Help new learners see the way ahead – progression opportunities and career pathways
- Give and receive constructive feedback

The Mentor should be aware of the following resources for Team Members:

- Student Services and Dean of Students – Umbrella over a number of important student supports listed here
- Office of Admissions – for testing out of courses
- Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid – for any issues related to grants, scholarships, FAFSA, etc.
- Office of the Bursar – for paying tuition and fees, and questions about this
- Office of the Registrar – for any questions regarding student academic records, including grades, credits, progress towards degree, and student information changes
- Office of Disability Services – for students with documented disabilities
- Office of Student Success and Advising – for specific info about courses to be taken to achieve degrees in each area; also houses the Testing Center (contact info on next page)
- Office of Career Services – assist students in making informed academic and career plans, using assessments, job shadowing, practicum experiences, and resume reviews
- Department of Information Technology – provides technical resources to support student work
- Office of Research, and Center for Research and Creative Activity – support student engagement in assisting with and conducting research, with faculty mentoring
- Office of Student Activities – supporting student participation in clubs and organizations around campus
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<td>Cheryl Schlemmer</td>
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<td>Morris Starkey</td>
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Common Adjustment Issues for Incoming Students

Adapted from Iowa State University’s Peer Mentor Handbook.
http://www.lc.iastate.edu/PMhandbook.html

Personal Challenges
- Moving to a new environment
- Leaving family
- Living with family during college
- Living with a roommate
- Meeting people
- Making personal decisions every day
- Facing new peer pressures (sex, drugs, alcohol, etc.)
- Conforming to behaviors that conflict with personal beliefs

Intellectual/Academic Challenges
- Speaking up in class
- Communicating with professors
- Managing course demands and schedules
- Developing semester course schedules
- Seeking academic assistance when problems arise
- Balancing academics and social life

Physical Challenges
- Coping with weight loss/gain
- Forming positive health habits and breaking problem habits
- Becoming self-reliant in managing health/stress
- Finding lifetime hobbies and activities

Interpersonal Challenges
- Connecting with new friendship groups
- Starting and managing romantic relationships
- Learning how to show emotions in appropriate ways
- Managing conflict situations
- Recognizing/deciding to act on sexual orientation

Career/Lifestyle Challenges
- Choosing an academic major
- Changing a major
- Deciding on participation in internships and other work experiences
- Deciding to leave/change schools
- Making decisions related to future issues (marriage, income, etc.)
Some Challenges You May Encounter as a Peer Mentor

Adapted from Iowa State University’s Peer Mentor Handbook.  
http://www.lc.iastate.edu/PMhandbook.html

Motivating/Encouraging
- Getting students excited about school/activities
- Students not wanting to participate in planned activities
- Trying to make everyone happy
- Dealing with apathy
- Students not meeting expectations

Role Perceptions
- Being viewed as a teacher or a parent
- Not being viewed as a peer
- Students wanting you to solve their problems
- Not being seen as an authority figure

Time Issues
- Getting students to show up for meetings
- Working with multiple schedules when trying to plan events
- Finding time to build relationships
- Balancing activities with mentoring
- Having consistent contact with individuals

Personal Issues
- Giving advice without personal morals/values getting in the way
- Dealing with roommate issues
- Confrontation issues
- Possible communication barriers

Programming/Activities
- Program planning
- Breaking the ice
- Being inclusive
- Getting everyone involved

Addressing Questions
- Helping others understand their major
- Not being able to handle certain questions
- Not giving too much advice, but empowering the student
- Reaching out to those who need assistance but won’t ask for it
Policies for Team Membership

1. All scholarship-receiving freshmen in the 2009-2010 academic year will be invited to participate in the Program. Applications for Program participation will be accepted from other freshmen as space allows, up to the Welcome Bash on Sept. 18, 2009.

2. Team members are expected to participate in a minimum of 1 activity per month, and to be generally responsive to Peer Mentor efforts to communicate with them.

3. Team members who fail to respond to emails, phone calls, and other efforts to communicate, and who miss more than 2 activities in the Fall 2009 semester, will be advised to increase participation or risk being dropped from the program. These members will be considered probationary Program participants at that point.

4. Probationary participants who do not participate in activities in January and February will be removed from the Program. The aim of policies 2, 3, and 4 is to prevent any student from claiming membership in IU-SEEK “in name only,” and to clarify the expectation that students who are placed on Teams will be expected to participate actively.

The Activity Requirement

As you know, each of you is required to plan Team activities that you think will be enjoyable to the students and to you. These activities exist for several reasons.

First and foremost, it allows the Peer Mentors, Faculty Mentor, and the students to get to know each other in an environment where questions can be asked without anxiety or pressure. Students are more likely to ask questions and get to know each other in this kind of environment than in standard classrooms.

Secondly, these activities allow students to have some control over their own university experience. They will take part in the decision-making process about what activities to do, and thus will feel more personal investment and appreciation of the program.

Lastly, it greatly helps to foster relationships that will be helpful and gratifying to all.

In order to get the ball rolling, a casual meet-and-greet activity must be planned within the first two weeks of the semester beginning. This is the hardest time for many new students. It is crucial that these students become familiar with their Peer Mentor as a person, and a resource for any questions that they have at the start of the semester. While our first full-group activity will not take place until September 18, it is very important that freshman students have the chance to meet you before that.

Tips that will make for a good activity

1. Think of cost.

There is a small amount of money allotted to each Peer Mentor. It is really a supplement for a group activity. Therefore, each Peer Mentor will have to come up with activities that are inexpensive, but enjoyable. For example, Student Activities offers all kinds of events that have discounted tickets, many of which are actually
free. Always reference the list of activities published by SA. The web-based Events Calendar is linked to
http://www.iuk.edu/~kosact/

2. Location

Getting to the activity is also a concern. **Peer Mentors are not allowed to organize activities at their places of residence.** Be sure to communicate with your Team members to see what is most convenient for them, and try to accommodate that to the best of your ability.

3. Time of Day

This will be a major obstacle for everyone. At least one person will always have a conflict with what you are planning. However, there are obvious times to avoid planning something. For example, days before tests are not a good time to plan things, unless it is a group study session or similar activity. Also, work schedules and commute times will impact planning. Get your Team members schedules and do your best.

4. Try to plan activities of interest to all backgrounds

This goes without saying. Talk to some of your friends to see if they have any suggestions. Remember that the activities are not about your interests, but in connecting the students to you and each other. The activities are merely a vehicle for doing that.

5. Possible Ideas: Let’s Brainstorm!
General Principle: Assess your Team’s needs

Each Team has a different set of needs, expectations and skill levels. Being blunt and asking your Team the types of programs or event they would like to see helps create ownership and build on areas they may struggle in.

Academic Needs
- Create a peer proof reading group for written work.
- Create study groups.
- Discuss test taking tips and study skills.
- Discuss picking/pursuing a major or minor.
- Communicate often with your Faculty Mentor for information, advice, and support.

Co-Curricular Needs
- Create resources that highlight various student groups and activities on campus.
- Have social outings.
- Talk about social outings that are positive and don’t involve problem/dangerous behaviors.
- Talk about making smart choices, and if you feel comfortable, share some personal experiences.
- Involve your Faculty Mentor in activity planning and implementation.

Co-Curricular Planning
- Make sure you plan for times that most, if not all of the Team can work with.
- Advertise and remind Team Members regularly! Doing this a substantial amount of time before the activity will help to ensure attendance.
- Know your resources: utilize the funding we give you! Additionally, don’t hesitate to contact the Director, Leadership Team (PMs and FMs) or other offices on campus for potential ideas or assistance.
- Early in the semester create a list of possible activities with your faculty member, this way you will be able to get a head start on events.
- If you need transportation, please communicate your needs to the Director well ahead of the scheduled event.

Remember this when using funds:
- Each Team is given $100.00 to use towards these events. Funding can NOT be provided for the following, however...
- Vehicle rentals
- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal items
- Gifts (this includes donations)
- Hazardous chemicals or materials
Working With Your Faculty Mentor

IU-SEEK Peer Mentors are not required to meet individually with their Faculty Mentors on any specific basis or schedule. However, the following tips may be helpful for you and your FM to discuss together, to decide what kind of mentorship relationship you would like to develop with your FM.

1. Initiate a conversation early in your working relationship in which you and your faculty member discuss:

   - How frequently might you meet face-to-face?
   - What kind of activities is your FM most interested in participating in?
   - What kind of scheduling issues may make it hard for your FM to attend your Team activities?
   - What problems does your FM see freshmen encountering most often in their academic area? What ideas can you share about addressing these ideas proactively, and as specific difficulties arise?
   - What other efforts on campus are your FM involved in that might be useful for students (e.g., faculty advisor for student club? Involved in any cultural activities?)

2. Be the active, responsible party in initiating and organizing one-on-one communication: set meeting agendas, prioritize issues you want to discuss, be a leader in your discussions.

3. Work with your faculty member to set goals for your IU-SEEK experience.

4. Always express your thanks after the faculty member has taken the time to meet with you and your Team. Send a thank-you note or an email stating what you gained from the interaction and how you will move ahead in your plans.
Research: Tracking IU-SEEK’s Success at IU Kokomo

An important task that you will undertake as a Peer Mentor will be to assist with some basic data collection activities. That is, gathering specific information about our Team Members, and comparing that information to data about freshmen students not in the IU-SEEK Program, will help us assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Program. This is very important to the continued development of the Program over time.

To assist with data collection, you must do the following:


   Scroll down, and you will see a section of the webpage entitled “Tutorials.” Click on “Protection of Human Subjects in Research” tutorial, and read the PDF’s housed there. The Office of Research at Indiana University has designed these documents to train people new to human subjects research on the standards held by IU regarding data collection and publication on human subjects.

2. Pass the Protection of Human Subjects in Research certification test. To do this, click the link at the website above listed under “Test.” You can take the test as many times as necessary in order to get a passing score (minimum passing is 70%).

3. Forward your test results to Dr. Downey. The website automatically generates an email listing the date and time of testing, your name, and your score. Make sure I receive a copy of this confirmation email, as I will be including it in my research approval applications to the IU Kokomo Institutional Review Board (IRB). You cannot engage in data collection activities until you have sent me proof that you have passed this test.

4. Be conscientious when assigned data collection activities, particularly regarding research instructions and due dates. For example, if you are informed that your Team members need to receive and complete a short survey by a particular date, you should consider that a HARD DEADLINE. I will give you adequate time in every case to distribute and collect back materials as these tasks arise.
Activity Report: To be submitted to Program Director

Peer Mentor:  
Date and Hours of Activity:  
Title of Activity:  
Location of Activity:  
Cost of Activity to come out of Team Budget:  

Activity Information:

1. Please check off the nature of your activity:
   _____ Academic
   _____ Social

2. Please list 3 things you accomplished during the activity:

Attendance:
3. Please list the names of those that attended, including your Faculty Mentor(s):

Outcome:
4. What was your group’s response to this activity?

5. Did you consider this a successful activity?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No
Activity Report: To be submitted to Program Director

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   ______ No
1. You are a first year Peer Mentor. You are on an activity with your students and they start making negative comments about one of their instructors, who you also had when you were a new student. It is quite apparent that most students in the group feel this way and negative comments continue to arise. Then, one student asks your opinion about that instructor. How do you handle the situation?

2. You and a student on your Team are having a social discussion outside of team activities. Among other topics, you are discussing the joys and frustrations of living in Kokomo, finding out some personal information about the student, providing some of your own and also answering some questions that pertain to upcoming classes. Then, the student lets you know that they are really bored in their Learning Community and don’t understand why they have to take it all year. What would you say?

3. One of your Team Members comes up to you looking very depressed. They have had two exams in a class that you have completed already and have bombed both of them. The student has made comments that maybe IU Kokomo isn’t for them. The student thinks that the work is too hard and is contemplating transferring or dropping out altogether. How do you handle the situation?

4. As the year moves on, you are starting to feel a bit overwhelmed. For the first time in your academic career, you are really starting to feel that you are unprepared because of the fact that there are only so many hours in a day. The duties of being a Peer Mentor keep you pretty busy, and your Team Members seem to need your time more than you anticipated. How do you handle this?