

Mentoring Partnerships

Becoming A College Peer Mentor

As IWU becomes more diverse and accessible, the need for the development of both formal and informal resources to support students with a variety of needs exists. A peer mentor is someone who can assist students who may still be developing the skills for independence, such as a student with a disability. This assistance can be in the form of an academic tutor, a study partner, and a friend.

What is Mentoring?

The term mentor means to be an advisor or supporter. For peer mentoring on a college campus, we think mentoring means more than that. It is about developing meaningful relationships that benefit all who are involved and should be considered a two-way street. Although we might refer to one person as the mentor (the one who provides support and guidance) and the other as the mentee (the one who receives the support and guidance), in actuality both parties learn from one another, creating more of a mentoring partnership than an unequal mentor/mentee relationship. That is what we hope to develop by pairing college students with peers on campus who need additional support due to characteristics of a disability. Both will learn from the other, improving the quality of life for all involved.

How to Get Started

At the beginning of the partnership, mentoring partners should plan to meet and discuss what the mentee feels she/he might need. Things to discuss should be your schedules, your interests, your goals for mentoring, your concerns, and what you are both hoping to gain from the experience. In addition the mentee should discuss what types of supports he/she would like to have both in and out of class.

What Are My Responsibilities?

Each person in the mentoring partnership has a specific set of responsibilities. As you will see in the lists below, some of the responsibilities are the same for both parties.

Mentee Responsibilities

- Follow your class schedule and attend each class at the correct time, place, and day.
- Know or have available at all times your student ID card and number, email address, email user name, and password.
- Carry with you at all times an agenda or notebook for documenting assignment due dates, etc.
- Carry with you at all times a copy of your course syllabi.
- Contact the scheduled mentors ahead of time if unable to make it to campus. It is helpful for each mentee to have and know how to use a cell phone. Mentor phone numbers can be programmed in to the phone for easy access when needed.
- Check emails and blackboard regularly

Levels of Prompts

When providing support to someone, there are a variety of ways that you can give hints or reminders to guide the person toward participation or completion of an activity. Always try to provide the least intrusive support first, moving to a more intrusive form of support if necessary. Your goal should always be to fade the amount of support provided, fostering the independence of your mentee.

Independence: This is the ultimate goal for any activity. The student would require no prompts to initiate, continue, or stop an activity. All actions would be self-initiated.

Gestural Prompts: A physical motion that reminds the student to begin, continue, or stop an action. Prompt can range from a head nod, to a tap on the desk, to touching one's own body to signal the student to do something (pointing to one's temple to remind the student to think. Or placing a finger in front of the lips to signal to the student to be quiet).

Verbal Prompts: Provide a quick verbal reminder to the student such as "Okay, let's get started." Or "You know this answer. Raise your hand."

Physical Prompts: Touching the student and providing a soft nudge or tap to get the person started on the activity, or to encourage continued participation.

Hand over Hand: Place your hand over the student's hand and guide her/him through the steps giving physical assistance.

Maintaining Safe Relationships: Mentoring partnerships are supportive relationships in which both parties understand the boundaries of a friendship. Mentoring partnerships are not sexual relationships or boyfriend/girlfriend relationships. It is the expectation that mentoring partners honor one another and treat each other with the utmost respect. If you become uncomfortable with some aspect of the relationship, please contact the mentoring coordinator immediately!

Confidentiality

Maintaining trust is crucial in every relationship. Whatever your mentoring partner tells you, or whatever you learn about your mentoring partner should be treated as confidential. Please avoid sharing stories about your mentoring experience or your mentoring partner, unless you have permission from your mentoring partner. However if either of you become concerned about the safety of your mentoring partner based on something you were told or observed please contact one of the GWA staff.

If a Problem Arises

If a problem does arrive please contact either Jamie Westgate (jwestgate@marion.k12.in.us)

765-618-8142 or Renee Areinbar (drarenibar@marion.k12.in.us) **765-618-4144.**

Mentor Application

The GWA Program (Giant Wildcat Academy) is a fully inclusive college experience for students with intellectual disabilities.

Mentors enable students in the GWA to have a true college experience. Mentors will share student life activities such as attending community and sporting events, hanging out, going to lunch or dinner, working out or just being there as a friend. Mentors commit at least two hours of time per week to their mentees. They invite mentees into their lives to give mentees a chance to interact with a variety of other people.

Apply to be a mentor today:

Name: _____ DOB: _____ Gender: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Expected year of graduation: _____ Hours Enrolled: _____

Major: _____ Minor: _____

Where are you from?

Do you have any peer mentoring experience?

If yes, please describe your duties.