



Peer Mentoring: Helping Students with the Transition to College

**California University of
Pennsylvania
University-Wide Mentoring**

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Outline

- Background Information
- Mission and Goals
- Staffing
- Planning Process
 - Recruiting
 - Training
 - Matching
 - Facilitating
 - Assessing

Background of Cal U's Program

- Started in 1997 in our Elementary Ed. Dept.
 - 38 mentors
 - 47 protégés
- The University-Wide Mentoring Department was established in October 1999
- Additional staffing occurred in August 2006
 - Assistant director, clerical, graduate assistant and work study positions

Comparing Cal U's Program to other programs

Cal U

- Funded by the university
- Offered to all incoming students
- Mentors are all volunteers
- 99% of mentors are students
- Departmentally-based
- 2008: approximately 1600+ students involved (mentors & protégés)
- Mentors assist one to two students

Other universities

- Grant-funded
- Offered to specific populations
- Mentors are paid (via the grant)
- Mentors are faculty, staff and/or peers
- Matches are based on various attributes; major isn't a top priority
- Fewer mentors & protégés
- Mentors may assist 10 or more students

Mission Statement

The Mentoring Program promotes and ***supports caring relationships*** between peer mentors and new Cal U students. Peer mentors ***extend the orientation process*** for these students by providing the necessary information to them throughout their first year at Cal U. We strive to assist new students in ***achieving their academic and social goals*** by encouraging ***involvement*** in the Cal U campus community.

Goals

- Facilitate *caring mentoring relationships* between new students and upper-division students within the same academic department.
- *Extend Orientation* by providing the necessary information to Cal U's first semester students when they actually need it. This process will help make the new students' transition to Cal U easier.
- Encourage and support new students in achieving student success through their *academic and personal goals*.
- *Promote involvement* in the Cal U campus community.

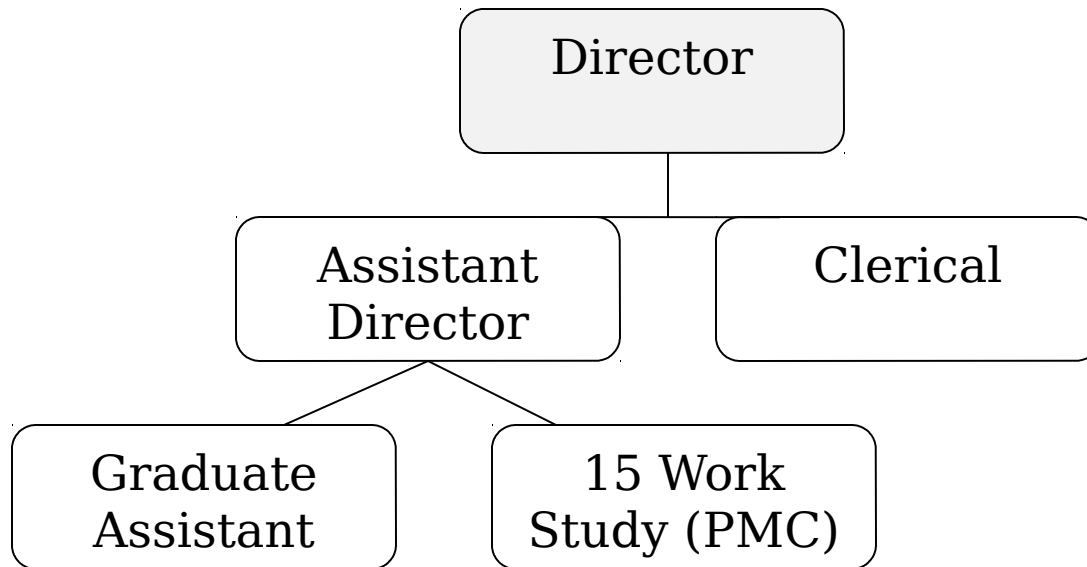


How do we achieve goals?

- Appropriate staffing
- Two-way communication
- Planning

Appropriate Staffing

University-Wide Mentoring Program Organization Chart



The **Director** of the program provides leadership and vision on the development of the program. The director works collaboratively with various departments on campus to refer students and develop methods to improve the program. The director also provides direction to the assistant director, by meeting weekly to discuss problems and identifying methods to resolve problems.



The **Assistant Director** provides organization and direction for the Mentoring Center and gives guidance to the 15 student Peer Mentor Coordinators (PMCs). She meets weekly with PMCs as a group and individually with each, as well. In group meetings, the Assistant Director provides leadership; in one-to-one meetings, she diagnoses problems and determines a resolution with PMC.



The **15 Peer Mentor Coordinators (PMC)** facilitate approximately 70 to 80 mentor/protégé relationships:

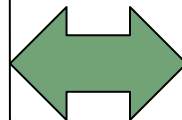
- *ensure that communication is occurring between mentor and protégé
- *provide additional support to the protégés (serve as back-up mentor).
- *identifies problems and brings to assistant director (example, two different stories)
- *provide possible solutions, often after conferring with Assistant Director.



Each of the over **650 peer mentors** assist one to two new students who are typically within the same major.

- Help with transition to college
- Provide friendship
- Serve as resource person

Peer mentors contact their assigned PMC to give regular updates (inform PMC of any concerns or problems with their



Each of the over **1000 protégés** engage in the mentoring process by receiving guidance and support from their mentors. However, the mentoring relationship is a two-way street; it is also the responsibility of the protégé to ask questions and seek out assistance when needed. Protégés are also asked to keep PMCs informed on the status of

Support Staff's Role

- **Clerical**

Conducts general office management procedures including overseeing budget, timesheets, supplies. Provides clerical support by completing data input, maintaining detailed databases to track participants in the program, assists with contacting participants, serves as a receptionist, and maintains filing systems.

- **Graduate Assistant**

Provides additional support to protégés who are at-risk, assists with recruiting, training and supervising mentors, and writes weekly email to all mentors, and oversees mentoring email account.



Planning Process

Recruiting Mentors and Protégés

Marketing Procedures for Mentors

- Returning mentors
- Email announcements to all students
- Classroom settings (Presentations to students in classrooms)
- Advertise in the school paper
- Recommendations from faculty (Students are very pleased when faculty members recommend them to serve as a peer mentor for freshmen in their academic department)
- Recruit current protégés (One of the largest groups of new mentors comes from the previous year's protégés. These students know exactly what it is to have someone provide assistance and are eager to help new students.)
- Informational table located in student union

Marketing for Protégés

- Open houses, Accepted student receptions, Placement testing, Mailings, Orientation, First week of school

Recruiting Mentors and Protégés

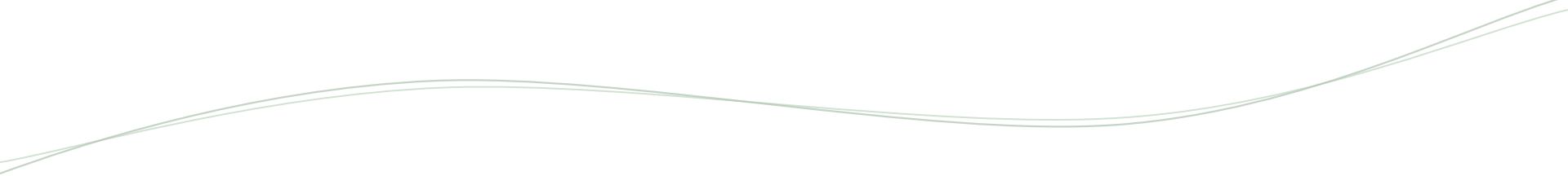
Qualifications to serve as a peer mentor

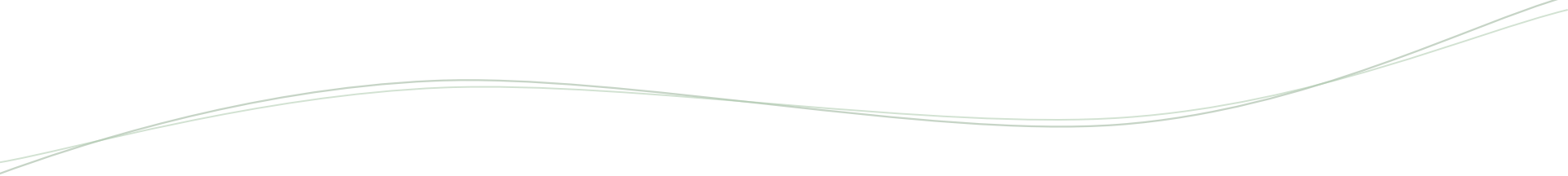
- A minimum 2.3 QPA is required, however, we prefer the students to have a 2.5 or above QPA (Some academic departments have higher standards than the university's academic standings. For example, all education majors must have a 3.0 QPA to continue their major; therefore, they require that their mentors also have a 3.0 or above QPA)
- In good disciplinary standing at the university
- Approved by academic department to serve as a mentor in their department
- Sophomore, Junior or Senior status (some graduate students)

Training Mentors

- What a mentor is...
- The role of the Cal U mentor...
- Confidentiality
- Resources
- Communication skills

- Activities
 - What a mentor means to me
 - Top things I wish I knew when I came to Cal U

- 
- What a mentor means to me?

- 
- What are the top 10 things I wish I knew when I started Cal U.

Training Mentors

- All mentors must attend a required, two-hour training session in the spring semester
- Review goals & expectations of the mentoring program . Examples of expectations include:
 - DON'T say “Call me when you need me” and wait for them to call you. They won't do that, so check in with them regularly (weekly).
 - Don't give up on your protégé if he/she becomes withdrawn. Keep trying through all contact methods & notify the Mentoring office.
 - Email your Peer Mentor Coordinator quickly (within one week of send date) & answer their questions *truthfully*.
 - Use & check your Cal e-mail daily and be sure your protégé knows how to check their e-mail frequently as well. Be sure to send the weekly e-mail, with your personalization!
 - Meet your protégé as often as possible (ideas include: eating lunch/dinner together, going shopping, being involved in same club, introducing to your friends, etc.).
 - Anything your protégé tells you is considered confidential.
 - Let us know as soon as possible if you are not able to keep your commitment to the mentoring program and your protégé(s), so we may reassign them.

Training Mentors

- Additional ongoing training will occur via weekly emails to mentors.
 - Information to Mentors
 - Monthly concerns and how a mentor can help
 - Information to share with protégés
 - Academic information
 - Campus activities for that week
- One of our main goals in training is to let them know that our office can help the mentors with their relationship, answer questions, provide referrals, etc.
- Currently, we do not have a training program for the protégés, but we hope to begin an “educational process” for the protégés beginning in the Fall 2009 semester.

Training Peer Mentor Coordinators (PMCs)

- PMCs attend one-hour weekly group training sessions which include discussions about general concerns and on campus resources available to students (resource labs, career services, internship center, counseling center, etc.).
- PMCs also attend weekly one-to-one meetings with the Assistant Director of Mentoring to discuss each of the mentor/protégé relationships they are facilitating. The Assistant Director works with the PMC to diagnose the problem and identify a resolution, if needed.

Matching Mentors and Protégés

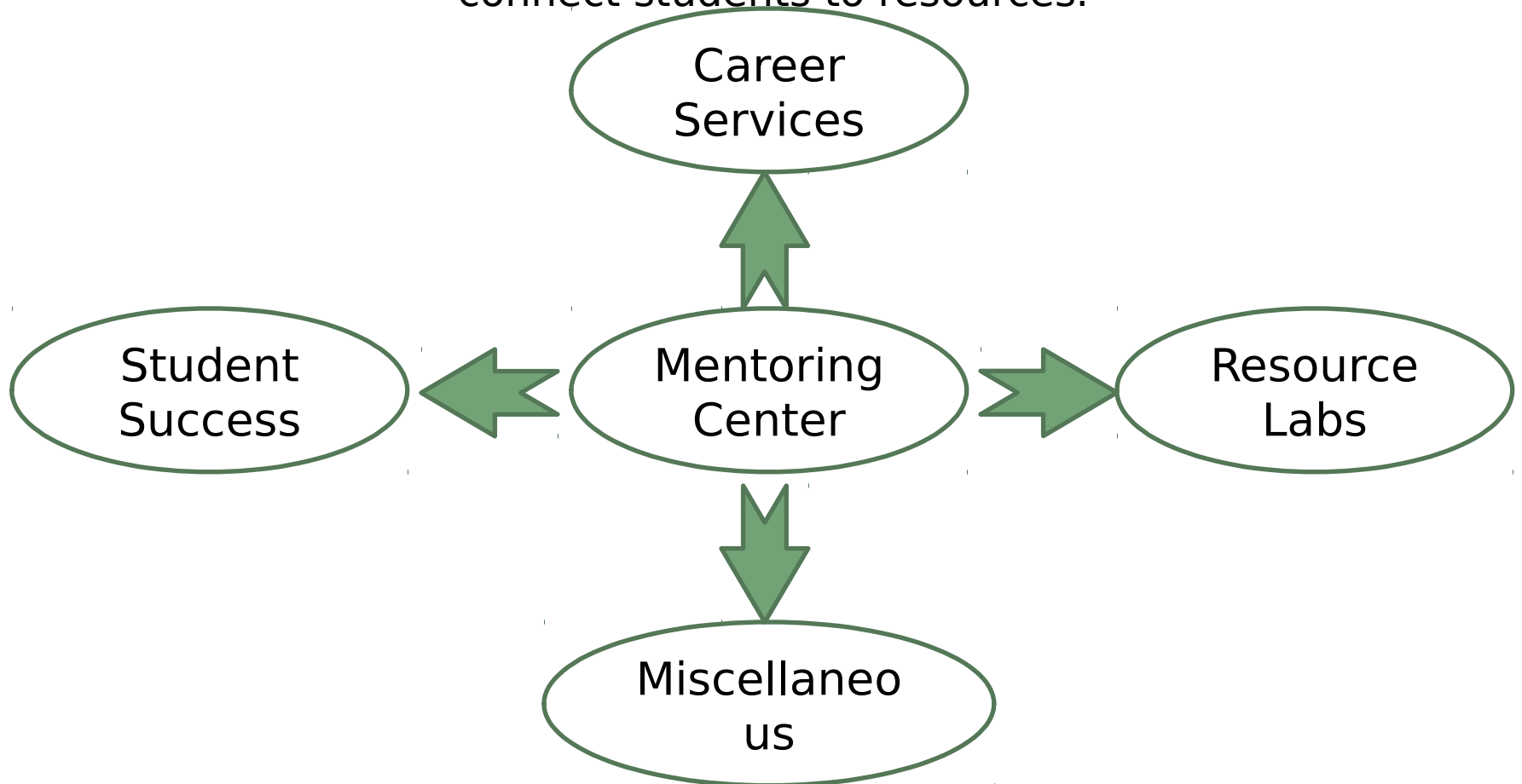
- Match early!
- Matches are based on (in this order)
 - Major
 - Living Arrangements
 - Hobbies and Interests
- Mismatches
 - What happens then...

Facilitating relationships

- The PMCs maintain constant communication with their assigned mentors and protégés.
- The PMCs provide guidance and support to the mentors and help the mentors in their efforts to ease the college transition.
- PMCs also act as a “back-up” in case a mentor is unavailable for any reason or is not engaging with his/her protégé.

Diagnosing and Referring

Mentoring Staff members help to diagnose freshmen's concerns and refer them to various offices on campus. Basically we help to connect students to resources.



Possible problem for PMC

- **Mentor is not emailing the protégé**
 - Try to contact mentor via email, then phone, to find out the problem. If mentor does not respond, we reassign the protégé to another mentor and remove current mentor from the program.
- **Protégé is not emailing the mentor**
 - Try to contact protégé via email, then phone to find out the problem. Make sure mentor has correct contact information. If protégé does not respond, we remove protégé from the program, inform student retention office, and send a letter to protégé's home informing them of their dismissal from mentoring program.
- **Mentors and/or Protégés not keeping PMC informed on the status of their relationships or conflicting stories**
- **Depression/Suicide risks**

Growth of the Program

(federal and non federal cohorts)

	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008
Mentors	164	153	160	252	349	380	508	597	673
Protégés	215	241	292	531	505	556	650	722	1071

Assessment

- First to second year retention numbers (Federal Cohort)
 - Federal cohort students are first time, full time, four year degree seeking students

	Fall 04	1st year retention	Fall 05	1st year retention	Fall 06	1st year retention	Fall 07	1st year retention
Mentored	314	82%	416	79%	417	86%	468	81%
Non-mentored	561	71%	591	69%	463	72%	438	67%
Overall retention rate	875	75%	1007	74%	880	79%	906	74%
Difference between mentored and non-mentored		11%		10%		14%		14%

Participation rate

	Fall 04	Fall 05	Fall 06	Fall 07	Fall 08
Total Federal Cohort	875	1007	880	906	933
Mentored	314	416	417	468	668
Non-Mentored	561	591	463	438	265
Participation rate of Federal Cohort	36%	41%	47%	52%	72%

Assessment

- Impact on Mentors

- Better relationships with faculty
- More involvement in clubs and organizations and greater Likelihood of taking on leadership roles
- Increased awareness of resources on campus

- Ideas for the future

- Percentage of protégés that become mentors
- Number of protégés we forward to student success office
- Percentage of incoming students who join program
- Compare QPAs of mentored to non-mentored students

Benefits

● **To protégés**

- A supportive environment with role models
- Increased knowledge of resources

● **To mentors & PMCs**

- Leadership development
- Improved communication and problem solving skills

● **To department**

- Stronger connection of mentors and protégés to academic department
- Better informed students

● **To university**

- Strong ties to the university
- Increased student involvement
- Higher retention rates

You need buy-in from all stakeholders...

Administration & student affairs

Current students

Faculty

- Encourage participation of upperclassmen & new students
- Assist with department-specific events
- Recognize mentors' contributions to department



Recognizing the mentors

- Activities Transcript
- Gifts
- Certificates

Areas for improvement

- Improve training (include more communication-type materials)
- Follow up trainings (blackboard, etc.)
- Assess why students who are in good academic standings withdraw
- Try to decrease % of those who do not matriculate by building relationships earlier

Resources that have been helpful

- IMA – the International Mentoring Association
 - <http://www.mentoring-association.org/>
 - Books
 - Mentoring in Higher Education: Best Practices by Dr. Marcia E. Canton & Dr. David P. James
 - Mentoring: How to Develop Successful Mentor Behaviors by Gordon F. Shea
 - How to Build A Successful Mentoring Program. Using the Elements of Effective Practice by National Mentoring Partnership



Resources that have been helpful

- Other schools that have similar programs
 - University of Michigan
 - Ferris State University
 - University College Dublin
 - San Diego State University

Contact Information

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