About the Mentor Project

The peer mentor relationship is designed to foster a network of support for first-generation and low-income first-year and new transfer students within Student Outreach Services.

The year-long program pairs first-year students with sophomore, junior or senior level mentors. The mentors serve as peer support and campus guides as well as share program goals and responsibilities aimed at ensuring the retention of these particular student groups.

Program Objectives

• Actively and intentionally develop a strong and safe support network for first-year students
• Increase academic achievement opportunities, retention of, and persistence among first-year students by encouraging the use of resources and supporting students as they navigate the campus.

Number of Mentees Retained:
Fall 2015 to Fall 2016

- Retained: 133
- Not Retained: 26

Overall retention rate from Fall of 2015 to Fall of 2016: 84%
Assessment Objective and Rationale
The Mentor Project was under review to determine strengths, weaknesses, effectiveness and viability of the program. Equally important to Student Outreach Services was the student experience of both the mentor and mentee in determining next steps for this program.

Methodology
Mixed methods, informational interviews with mentors, focus group with mentors, and an online survey to all mentees was implemented.

Mentees were able to identify:
- Reasons why they do or do not currently participate
- Strengths of the program
- Challenges and barriers to the program
- Ideas for improvement

Mentors were able to identify:
- Challenges and barriers to being a mentor
- Strengths of the program
- Areas for program improvement

The Academic Support Coordinator was able to:
- Develop interventions for gaps in the program
- Identify and streamline program elements that are successful
- Analyze and identify ways to support mentors in their outreach efforts and expectations with mentees
**Question:** Please share any ideas for making this program better

**Mentee Responses:**
- Program structure: transportation help, planned meetings for SOS, using text vs email, program expansion for more students, better communication to transition mentees to their mentor
- Mentor/mentee arrangements: more meet ‘n greets to meet the mentor

**Question:** What keeps you involved in the Mentor Project?

**Mentee Responses:**
- Good mentor/dedicated/loving
- Guidance/help/support/advice—when needed—in tough times
- Connections and relationships with mentor/peer mentees; making friends

### MENTOR FEEDBACK

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MENTOR FEEDBACK</th>
<th>ACTION STEP</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Mentors wanted to feel valued in their roles within SOS; have a transparent</td>
<td>• Beginning Fall of 2016, SOS staff met new mentors at the first training</td>
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<td>and good relationship with the administration</td>
<td>session, at a meet ‘n greet, and at their staff meetings.</td>
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<td>• Mentors expressed communication with so many mentees was overwhelming and</td>
<td>• The ratio of mentees to mentors reduced from 10:1 to 5:1</td>
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<td>difficult to connect 1-1; communication thru emails/texts was time consuming</td>
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