



WARREN COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

EOF Program

**PEER MENTORING
HANDBOOK**

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE EOF PEER MENTORING PROGRAM!

WHAT IS PEER MENTORING?

“**Mentoring** has been defined as a relationship, which has mutual benefits for all parties involved, and is generally used to help a less experienced person achieve their goals by being receiving assistance and guidance from a more experienced person.

Peer mentoring aims to enhance supportive relationships between two people, sharing knowledge and experience and providing an opportunity to learn from different perspective” (*Peer Mentoring*, 2010).

“At its core, being a mentor is being a trusted advisor. Being a mentor involves making yourself available to support and advise someone when they need it, delivering that support in a way that makes sense to them, and always keeping that person's best interests in mind” (Cox, 2016).

THINK ABOUT THAT

Being a peer mentor isn't just about checking in with someone periodically to talk about their problems. Being a peer mentor involves being an active part of your mentees' lives, being there when they have questions they can't answer, uplifting them when they need it, and being an ally as they go through their college experience. It is important to understand what it means to be a peer mentor, but it is also important to know what a peer mentor is not.

A Peer Mentor is a...

- Advisor
- Role Model
- Resource
- Person to talk to
- Trusted ally or advocate

A Peer Mentor is NOT a...

- Social worker
- Parent
- Professional counselor or therapist
- Career or college counselor
- Solution to all problems

YOUR ROLE AS A PEER MENTOR

Above we've told you what a peer mentor is. At WCCC, we do have some specific requirements for our EOF peer mentors.

1. Attend the peer mentor meeting at the beginning of each semester
2. Communicate with your mentees at least once per week
3. Report mentee contacts to EOF Admin for tracking using the Peer Mentor Reporting Tool

4. Develop and facilitate an EOF Chew & Chat Workshop with the help of the Peer Mentor Coordinator
5. Lead small group discussions

BULIDING MEENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

An important component of mentoring is building sustainable relationships with your mentees. Here are some of the important components:

1. Establish Roles

When you first meet your mentee, it is important to clarify roles and agree on boundaries. This also helps to create expectations. Your mentee needs to know what they can expect from you and what your boundaries are. This includes setting up times to talk and/or meet, depending on both your and your mentees' schedules. It is expected that you will either meet or talk with your mentees once a week, so figuring out times and days will work for both of you. Also, you should decide what method of communication works best. Phone calls, video chats, meetings, email, etc.

2. Identify Goals

At the beginning of the semester, you will need to help your mentees establish some S.M.A.R.T. goals for the semester. These do not need to be complex, but they should satisfy all the components of S.M.A.R.T. goals. Through establishing these goals, you have an idea of what you need to help your mentee with throughout the semester and how you can encourage your mentee moving forward.



(S.M.A.R.T. goals, 2018)

3. Establish Trust

This may be the most important part of your relationships with your mentees. Trust is invaluable to the peer mentoring process. What helps to establish trust is to reflect in your actions that you value your mentees. In your role as a peer mentor, you are not their advisor or counselor, but perhaps a friend or a classmate.

- Keep your appointments with your mentees. Cancelling and rescheduling pre-established meeting times sends the message that you don't value their time or your relationship.
- Come to meetings prepared. You should review any notes you've taken from previous meetings so that when you start talking you can refer to past concerns and questions.
- Follow up with your mentees if you've given them a referral to ensure that they've gotten what they needed.
- Be a good listener. We will discuss this more later, but it is important that you practice good listening and communicating skills with your mentees. Again, this reflects not only that you hear them, but that you care enough to do so.
- Put yourself in their shoes. How would you want your mentor to act with you? What would inspire you to trust your mentor? And remember not to judge anyone because they do things differently than you do. Respect is very important to any relationship.

4. Treat your mentee as a peer

Time and time again, mentoring relationships are soured by a mentor who treats their mentee as inferior just because they think they know more. Remember, these are your peers! You have identified yourself as a mentor because you like to help others and because you want to learn leadership skills. Being a leader does not mean being superior. Being a good leader involves compassion, understanding, commitment, passion, and integrity. It also means being a good example to others. Through being a good leader, you can naturally inspire others around you. Leaders should always uplift those around them and never puts down those around them. Again, put yourself in your mentees' shoes. How would you want your mentor to treat you?

MENTORING & COMMUNICATION

Mentoring programs are designed to be a safe place where scholars can talk about the challenges they face, their feelings, their questions, their opinions and their successes with their peers. In return, their peers are tasked with the responsibilities of being empathetic and learning to understand other children, to see things from their perspective and reason with their opinions. At the same, while participating in a mentoring program, scholars need to be mindful of how they share their feelings, opinions, challenges, and successes. With a bit of practice and training, both the mentor and mentee can improve their communication skills by learning to talk and share with their peers without being demeaning or hurtful. We believe that most scholars never intend to communicate poorly with their peers, however, a mentoring program can help them develop more effective communication skills.

(Compass Charter Schools, 2019)

The importance of communication skills cannot be understated. One of the many benefits of being a mentor is that you will learn better, stronger communication skills. You will also learn that not everyone communicates the way you are used to, so it gives you the opportunity to learn more techniques for communication.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS

1. Use open-ended questions as much as possible.

Open-ended questions lead to longer responses, where as close-ended questions are usually answered with one word, such as “yes” or “no”.

Open-ended questions can lead to deeper conversations as well as your mentee’s opinions and thoughts on the topic.

2. Use active listening skills.

Active listening is a method to let your mentee know that you are truly listening to them. This means making eye contact, responding appropriately with both verbal and non-verbal cues. Body language is important when listening in demonstrating how you are responding to what your mentee is saying. If you think about it, you all know how to tell if someone isn’t really listening to you. You want your mentees to feel that they are being heard and that what they are saying is important. A way to demonstrate active listening is to sum up what your mentee has said after they have finished talking. If you appear distracted or that you’re not hearing them, it can harm the trust you’ve established with your mentee and be destructive to your relationship with them.

3. Carefully employ “I” statements in your conversations.

“I” statements start with an expression of your personal opinion or experiences. This prevents you from trying to talk for someone, which can be offensive.

Example

A mentee is talking about their struggles with their math class and it becomes clear to you that the student really doesn't like math. Instead of responding with “**You** hate math!” you could respond with something like “**I noticed that you** seem frustrated with your math class. Can we talk about that some more?”

“I” statements can be really useful when you could face conflict with your mentee.

Example

One of your mentees skips a prearranged meeting time with you. Rather than say “**You're** so irresponsible and disrespectful! **You** really let me down!” you could respond with an “I” statement that conveys your perspective such as “**I** was really looking forward to meeting with you the other day and **I** was upset that you didn't show up. What happened?”

“I” statements can go a long way toward learning more about your mentee and not making assumptions or trying to put words in your mentee's mouth. It can also diffuse situations that could become heated (Peer Mentoring Handbook, n.d.).

However, there are times when you want to be careful about “I” statements. Remember, the focus of your role as a mentor is to put your mentees first in conversations and to talk about that. If your “I” statements turn into you talking about yourself, that focus is shifted and you are not accomplishing your mission to help your mentee.

4. Give appropriate feedback.

The feedback you give to your mentee is very important to the peer mentor process. You want to ensure that the feedback you give to your mentee is constructive and useful to them. Here are some guidelines on how to do that:

- **Be honest and respectful**
- **Make observations, not evaluations** – You should provide examples of what you have observed with your mentee which should be non-judgmental. Remember, it is not your job to “fix” things for your mentees, but to help them.
- **Be empathetic** – Think about how it would feel to be in their shoes and what would be both encouraging and helpful in their situation.

(Peer Mentoring Handbook, n.d.)

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Warren County Community College prides itself on the diversity of our student body. We try to create an environment that is respectful to everyone, no matter their background, culture, nationality, religion, sexuality, experiences, gender identification, socioeconomic status, or disability. As an EOF peer mentor, you are representing the values of WCCC. What this means is that it is important that you are inclusive, which involves being respectful and welcoming of the differences you may encounter. You will have mentees who have different culture, identities, and experiences that are different from you. Feel free to respectfully explore these differences with your mentees. We hope that EOF peer mentors can learn to appreciate and value the cultural diversity of everyone they meet in college. But, specifically, EOF peer mentors need to be open to the diversity of others and not let that diversity be a stumbling block in your relationships with your mentees.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

The EOF Peer Mentoring Program at WCCC provides peer mentors with the opportunity to explore and develop leadership skills. This is done in several ways.

1. Developing leadership roles with your mentees.
2. Participation in developing EOF programming initiatives, such as workshops and group meetings.
3. Participation in the summer EOF program, where peer mentors will be expected to help develop and run workshops with new EOF students.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

(908) 835-2310

You go here if:

- You have questions and/or concerns about your classes (not scheduling) or professors
- You need to drop off items for your professors (papers, etc.)
- You need to see Tiffani
- You're having issues with Cengage

People who work in this office:

Dr. Marianne Van Deursen (VP of Academics)
 Tiffani Warren (Dean of Learning & EOF Director)
 Jeanette Schinstine (H.S. & Comm. Outreach Coordinator)
 Elizabeth Uporsky (Executive Administrative Asst.)
 Barbara McFarlane (EOF Administrative Asst.)

vandeursen@warren.edu
 twarren@warren.edu
 jschinstine@warren.edu
 euporsky@warren.edu
 bmcfarlane@warren.edu

BUSINESS OFFICE

(908) 835-2328

You go here if:

- You have a question about your bill
- You need to pay your bill
- You want to set up a payment plan
- You have questions and/or need to apply for veteran's benefits

People who work in this office:

Barbara Pratt (VP of Finance & Operations)
 Michelle Guarriello (Accounting Tech. & Accts. Payable)
 Mindy Marinelli (Student Accounts Manager)
 Sara McGuire (Financial Analyst/Veterans Coordinator)

pratt@warren.edu
 mguarriello@warren.edu
 marinelli@warren.edu
 smcguire@warren.edu

FINANCIAL AID

(908) 835-2456

You go here if:

- You have questions about your financial aid
- You need to turn in requested documentation to complete your financial aid file
- You are having problems with your EAGLE account

People who work in this office:

Jacqueline Daly (Director of Financial Aid)
 Ashleigh Fox (Financial Aid Associate)

jdaly@warren.edu
 afox@warren.edu

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(908) 835-2320

You go here if:

- You are having problems with your Network/Email account
- You have general questions about technology
- You want to get the free Microsoft 365 package

You can email IT at support@warren.edu

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT CENTER

(908) 835-2354

You go here if:

- You have questions about tutoring
- You want to set up a tutoring appointment for the first time
- You need to take a test outside of class
- You need help with things like note taking, reading textbooks, time management, etc.

People who work in this office:

Rose Lynch (ISC Coordinator)

lynchr@warren.edu

LIBRARY

(908) 835-2336

You go here if:

- You need help with research, including through the databases
- You need help with citations and citation formatting in MLA/APA
- You need help with Cengage
- You need help with usernames/passwords (except EAGLE)
- You have questions about plagiarism
- You have questions about using webpages

People who work in this office:

Lisa Stoll (Library Coordinator/Librarian)

lstoll@warren.edu

SECURITY

(908) 835-2455

You go here if:

- There is an emergency
- You've lost something
- You have seen or experienced something that has made you feel uncomfortable
- You have seen or experienced something that you know is inappropriate

People who work in this office:

Melvin Warren (Coordinator of Public Safety)

mwarren@warren.edu

STUDENT SERVICES

(908) 835-2300

You go here if:

- You need to see an advisor
- You have questions/concerns about your class schedule
- You need to schedule classes
- You need to add, drop, withdrawal, etc. from a class
- You need to speak to the disabilities coordinator
- You need to apply for graduation or need transcripts
- You have questions about transferring
- You need to request accommodations
- You need to change your name or address with the college
- You need to change major
- You need a confirmation of enrollment

People who work in this office:

Jeremy Beeler (VP of Student Services)

jbeeler@warren.edu

Sharon Adams (Student Services Assistant)

sadams@warren.edu

Cherie Hoops (Executive Administrative Assistant)

choops@warren.edu

Rebecca Mellinger (Academic Advisor & Disabilities Coordinator)

rmellinger@warren.edu

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

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