



2015-2016 PEER MENTOR DESCRIPTION

Overview

The Peer Mentor program is a one-year student leadership development opportunity; the on-campus commitment consists of consecutive fall and spring semesters (Fall 2015 and Spring 2016), including all pre-semester preparation periods.

The Peer Mentor program has two purposes:

- To engage Peer Mentors, upper level students, in assisting first-year students with their acclimation to college, including providing them with tools and insights needed for their meaningful academic engagement; and
- To engage Peer Mentors in critical reflection on higher education, student development, interpersonal communication, and social justice, and to provide experiential learning opportunities that promote their academic, personal, and professional development.

Peer Mentors are scholar-practitioners whose personal, academic, and professional development is enhanced through an integrated curriculum of classroom readings and discussion paired with the practical experience and reflections on working with first-year students and with the Peer Mentor team.

Program Structure

Peer Mentor program consists of the following four components:

1. Summer Online Foundation Building

During the summer 2015, Peer Mentors will receive online materials to set a foundation for effective academic mentoring. Summer materials will include self-guided tutorials, videos, and short readings. Students may also engage in online discussion with classmates in order to process materials and begin team building.

2. In-Person, Pre-Semester Preparation and Peer Mentor Team Development

In-person preparation for each semester will consist of approximately one week of intensive classroom work to build the Peer Mentor team and ready the Peer Mentors for the arrival of first-year students.

3. Two-Semester Course

Peer Mentors will enroll in a one-credit Peer Mentor course during Fall 2015 and Spring 2016. The class will be structured as a seminar that meets for 50 minutes per week. Seminar sections will be offered at various times during the week to maximize Peer Mentors' ability to register for a section that fits into their academic schedules.

4. Practicum Work

The practicum component is the opportunity for Peer Mentors to apply and practice their classroom learning and skills with first-year residents. Peer Mentors will devote 15 practicum hours per week on average to face-to-face engagement and active mentoring activities with their first-year students. Examples of practicum work:

- one-on-one and group mentoring;
- connections with faculty/instructors, advisors, tutors, help centers, study locations, libraries, etc.;
- referrals and connections to academic and other campus resources; and
- activities and programming to cultivate a climate of academic support.

On-site supervisors, in consultation with course instructors, will observe, guide, and support Peer Mentors in their practicum activities.

Evaluation

Peer Mentors will be evaluated based on the following: summer online learning modules; classroom participation (discussions and exercises); written reflections on readings and peer mentoring practice; on-site supervisor's assessment of practicum work. Detailed course and practicum requirements and expectations will be determined by the Peer Mentor course instructor and on-site supervisor. Peer Mentors' performance will be assessed through regular communications between the Peer Mentor course instructor and on-site supervisor.

Residential Commitment

All Peer Mentors are required to be in-residence and to participate fully in all pre-semester practicum preparation activities, which commence prior to the opening of the residence halls. Peer Mentors are expected to stay through the last day of classes in the Fall and Spring semesters.

- All Peer Mentors will return on Friday, August 28, 2015, for Fall pre-semester practicum preparation and remain until December 19, 2015.
- All Peer Mentors will return on Sunday, January 10, 2016, for Spring pre-semester practicum preparation and remain until May 5, 2016.

Compensation

The Peer Mentor role includes a paid practicum that is valued at \$7,500 for the 2015-2016 academic year. Peer Mentors will receive \$1,200 (\$600 per semester) of that amount as a double-single surcharge waiver. The remainder of the practicum compensation will come in the form of a cash stipend totaling \$6,300, distributed bi-weekly.

Requirements

- ❑ Peer Mentors must be University undergraduate students enrolled full-time in degree-granting programs. A 2.75 cumulative GPA is required at the time of application and commencement of the Peer Mentor year, however a 3.00 cumulative GPA or higher is preferred. Peer Mentors must maintain a 2.75 semester and cumulative GPA during the 2015-2016 academic year. Peer Mentors' semester and cumulative grade point averages will be reviewed at the end of every semester.
 - ❑ For Peer Mentors selected to live in the Commonwealth Honors College Residential Community (CHCRC), a 3.40 cumulative GPA is required at the time of application and commencement of the Peer Mentor year, as well as being in good standing as a member of Commonwealth Honors College. Peer Mentors in Commonwealth Honors College Residential Community must maintain a 3.40 semester and cumulative GPA and their Honors status during the 2015-2016 academic year. CHCRC Peer Mentors' semester and cumulative grade point averages and Honors status will be reviewed at the end of every semester.
- ❑ At the time of application, Peer Mentors must have lived in a residence hall for at least one full semester at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- ❑ Peer Mentors must be cognizant of and abide by all University and State regulations, together with all course and practicum requirements stated within the Peer Mentor course syllabus and related materials.
- ❑ Peer Mentors may not be enrolled in more than 18 credits per semester unless permission has been granted by the Vice Provost or designee.
- ❑ Peer Mentors must be eligible to receive a practicum stipend.
 - ❑ Peer Mentors must abide by any and all regulations of the Student Employment and Financial Aid Offices pertaining to stipend eligibility, including the requirement of being enrolled in a degree-granting program and carrying a minimum of six credits.

- ❑ If selected, it is the Peer Mentor's responsibility to consult with the Financial Aid office to determine what impact the Peer Mentor stipend may have on his/her financial aid package.
- ❑ If a Peer Mentor is granted a Work-Study Award, the Award **must** be used to fund the Peer Mentor practicum stipend. If a Peer Mentor's Award has been encumbered by another department, it is the Peer Mentor's responsibility to immediately consult with the Student Employment Office to have his/her Award released. Additionally, it is the Peer Mentor's responsibility to contact the Vice Provost's office upon the release of my Award.
- ❑ If a Peer Mentor is not a U.S. citizen and does not hold an F1 or J1 Visa, s/he is most likely not eligible for a practicum stipend. For questions regarding stipend eligibility, Peer Mentors should contact the International Programs Office or Student Payroll.
- ❑ University policy allows students to work a maximum of 20 hours per week on campus; the Peer Mentor practicum accounts for 15 of those hours.
- ❑ Additional leadership, involvement or employment schedules cannot conflict with Peer Mentor course or practicum requirements. Peer Mentors may establish other co-curricular schedules and activities only after the Peer Mentor practicum hours have been accommodated.
- ❑ Peer Mentors must be free of current conduct sanctions at the time of and throughout the 2015-2016 academic year, including all pre-semester preparation periods. Peer Mentors' conduct history will be reviewed each semester.
 - ❑ Peer Mentors are responsible for resolving any pending student conduct charges two weeks prior to the 2015-2016 academic year and pre-semester preparation period, in order to be eligible to commence the Peer Mentor role.
- ❑ As residents within an RFYE residence hall, Peer Mentors are required to uphold the university's Student Code of Conduct and Residential Life community standards throughout the 2015-2016 academic year, including all pre-semester preparation periods. Conduct violations committed during the 2015-2016 academic year or pre-semester preparation periods may render the Peer Mentor unable to fulfill the required conditions or complete the Peer Mentor program.
- ❑ A Peer Mentor who is unable to fulfill or complete the Peer Mentor program must move to another room when directed to do so and will be responsible for any additional charges that result.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS OUTLINED IN THE PEER MENTOR DESCRIPTION.

Name

Date