**BENEFITS OF PEER MENTORING**

* Graduate students who have good mentors are more likely to remain in school until they graduate and are also more successful.
* While nothing can replace good faculty mentoring, peer mentoring can contribute to the retention and graduation of our students in a number of ways.
* A peer mentor can help an incoming student become established in the community (with advice on housing, shopping, finding campus health, childcare, leisure-time activities, etc.).
* A peer mentor can help students understand program expectations or policies.
* A peer mentor can accompany new students to events hosted by the department (whether academic, such as speaker events, or social).
* A peer mentor can help new students identify faculty whose interests might be aligned with theirs.
* A peer mentor can direct new students to campus resources (Writing Center, Delphi, SIGS, PLAN events, Graduate Student Council).
* A peer mentor can answer the questions new students sometimes feel are too small or silly to ask a faculty member.
* A peer mentor can continue to mentor students after they are no longer new, by providing advice about academic progress, projects and papers, comprehensive exams, writing research proposals.

*Why Be a Peer Mentor?*

* Peer mentors increase their own social and professional networks.
* Peer mentors increase their opportunities to collaborate with new students and with faculty who support the peer mentoring program.
* Peer mentors gain some important professional development opportunities as they attend meetings or workshops with their mentees.
* Peer mentors get the opportunity to develop mentoring skills that are essential in both academic and other careers.

**STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS**

*Contact/Communication*

* Meet with your mentee at least once a month.
* Be available via email with a 24 hour response window except on weekends.
* Attend an event sponsored by your department with your mentee.
* Take the initiative, you’re not bothering them
* Give gentle reminders
* Set deadlines and MEET them
* Schedule meetings
* Be explicit about your needs
* Identify the best ways to communicate (e.g. phone, email, text, etc.)

*Discuss/Negotiate Expectations*

* Avoiding assumptions
* Taking initiative
* Being explicit
* Asking questions
* The whole is more than the sum of its parts
* Choose your battles

*Mentoring Network*

* Mentoring Map
* Where are the gaps
* Reflect on your needs
* Multiple Mentorship
* Help mentees identify, introduce and suggest them
* Identify them for yourself
* Adapt your support to the needs of your mentee, which may depend on academic, social, national and other backgrounds and prior experience.
* You don’t have to be everything/you don’t have to meet every need/style

*Relationship Building & Reciprocity*

* Include the personal
* Get to know other aspects of your mentor/mentee
* It’s not just about you (asking questions, etc.)
* Support your mentee with developing community connections (introduce them to community channels such as student groups, clubs, churches, etc).
* Work collaboratively on a project such as a presentation, a workshop, or a publication.
* Share ideas and resources about professional development.
* Check in on your mentee’s morale and academic progress/goals.

*Resiliency*

* Don’t take things personally
* There will be missteps
* You are not your mentor/mentee
* The best dissertation is a done dissertation/ABD is not a degree
* Learn from your mistakes/fail quickly

**RESOURCES**

* **MentorCenter:** [**www.louisville.edu/graduate/mentorcenter**](http://www.louisville.edu/graduate/mentorcenter)
* **List of Mentoring Resources from PLAN*:*** [**louisville.edu/graduate/plan/resources.html#mentoring**](http://louisville.edu/graduate/plan/resources.html#mentoring)