

Memo

To: University Connections (Univ 1020 or Equivalent) Instructors
From: Allen Mullis, Director, Orientation and Student Success
Date: April 29, 2016
Re: University Connections (Univ 1020 or equivalent) Peer Mentor Application & Selection

This information will be split between undergraduate and graduate students, and then further divided by minimum requirements and then best practice suggestions. In order to best serve you and our Peer Mentors, **August 1, 2016** will be our deadline for Mentor applications. This will allow time to appoint Mentors and complete all necessary paperwork with Human Resources.

Undergraduate Students Serving as Peer Mentors

Minimum Requirements:

1. In order for a student to serve as a Peer Mentor, he/she must complete and submit an application to our office. The application covers the list of expectations the mentor must adhere to, and we will maintain and monitor (along with instructors) that mentors are meeting those expectations. Applications can be found at www.tntech.edu/univ1020.
2. In addition to #1, Peer Mentors must be enrolled at the University for both Fall and Spring semesters (or Spring and Fall semesters if paired with an instructor in the Spring) in order to be a mentor. Therefore, mentors cannot be graduating at the end of the same semester they are paired with an instructor.
3. Mentors can *only* serve a maximum of two (2) appointments. This requirement follows the Human Resources policy limiting adjunct faculty who also currently serve as a university faculty or staff member to teaching two courses per semester. Most UNIV 1020 sections contain at least twenty students, and having a mentor paired with two sections means he/she is responsible for maintaining relationships with upwards of forty to fifty students. Adding a third section would be a detriment to both the mentor and first-year students/freshmen.

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Best Practices:

1. Try and find a mentor that is from your discipline. Not only will he/she be able to aid the students from simply an upperclassman's perspective, but he/she will also be able to assist freshmen in your specific discipline. This is a best practice, but not a hard and fast rule. If there are no mentors available in your discipline, we still highly recommend you select a mentor from the list of available students for your section. Having a Peer Mentor for your freshman seminar class is a proven best practice, so please consider selecting one regardless if none exist within your discipline.
2. You are encouraged to recruit and select the mentor for your section. We only ask that you share that student's information with our office, so that we can follow up with him/her about submitting the application and attending the training session(s).

Graduate Student Serving as Peer Mentors Minimum Requirements

1. All of the minimum requirements for the undergraduate mentor are applicable to the graduate student.
2. A graduate student who also has a graduate assistantship **cannot** serve as a Peer Mentor. Per the Graduate Studies office, "Students on a graduate assistantship may be granted approval to work an extra 10 hours a week during the school year but that can be approved for only four (4) weeks out of the entire year. So the student with a graduate assistantship would not be able to work as the first-year experience Mentor as that requires working for two semesters."
3. If you select a graduate student as a mentor for the semester your University Connections course meets and he/she then is awarded an assistantship during the following semester, he/she are no longer eligible to serve as a Peer Mentor.

Best Practices:

1. The same best practices as for the undergraduate student remains true for graduate students.
2. Since there is no restriction on selecting a graduate student as a Peer Mentor as long as he/she does not have a graduate assistantship, our best practice recommendation for selecting a graduate student is to select a mentor that you strongly feel your freshmen will be able to identify with. Remember, this is a peer mentor, so we should attempt to select mentors who are able to connect with incoming freshman students.