

Peer Mentor Program Overview

About

After receiving a Title III “Strengthening Institutions” grant in 2019, Auburn University at Montgomery established the Experiential Education and Engagement Center (EEEC). Part of the EEEEC’s charge was to develop a Peer Mentoring Program (PMP) to help improve student success and retention. The PMP provides peer mentors who assist students in the First-Year Student Success Course (UNIV) and core classes with higher DFW rates.

For year three of the grant (Fall 2021, Spring 2022, and Summer 2022), the program supported 187 courses with peer mentors including UNIV, English, Biology, Economics, History, Psychology, Theatre, Communications, and Finance.

Program Goals

- Embed a peer mentor into the classrooms of first and second-year courses that have presented a challenge to the academic success of AUM students
- Improve the pass rate within these courses
- Offer a rewarding experience for both peer mentors and their mentees
- Have a positive impact on student retention

Role of a Peer Mentor

Peer mentors help professors by offering a way of bridging the gap that can sometimes develop between professors and their students. Some students develop a hesitancy to ask for help from their professors but may feel more comfortable reaching out to a peer. Because peer mentors have already completed the course they are assisting with, they can translate assignment expectations from a firsthand perspective that is at the level of the student. This makes them more approachable for some students.

The role of a peer mentor can be compared to that of a teaching assistant without the responsibility of grading assignments. We do not allow our peer mentors to assist with grading. Grading diminishes the peer relationship.

Duties of a Peer Mentor

- Build community within the classroom
- Provide explanations of course subject matter
- Connect students with AUM resources and services
- Organize study and other educational activities as requested by their instructor
- Contribute to the design of the course by providing suggestions for topics, presentations, sequencing, and course assignments
- Lead meaningful and engaging class activities/discussions (implementing active learning strategies, scheduling presentations/guest speakers, planning out of class activities (service-learning/study groups)
- Hold office hours (two hours per week) to answer students’ questions about course material and other concerns
- Maintain open communication with the instructor of the course to discuss the needs and concerns of students
- Provide tutoring in-class or during office hours (Math and Biology courses only)

Benefits to Students

- Students have an automatic support system in their peer mentor
- Students feel more connected to the campus community and establish a sense of belonging and support
- Peer mentors help students make a more successful transition to AUM
- Peer mentors can identify the appropriate campus resources and opportunities that can contribute to the student's success
- Students can get help and advice about their courses from a peer's perspective

Selection Process

The EEEEC posts job openings for Working Warhawk II- Peer Mentors. Once the application deadline is reached, all complete applications are forwarded to the candidate's department(s) of interest. The hiring of a peer mentor is up to each department head. The EEEEC will help walk them and department administrative associates through the selection and onboarding process.

Eligibility

Students interested in becoming a peer mentor must be a current AUM student who has completed the course in which they are to be a mentor with a B or higher. They must also have a GPA of 2.75 (minimum) and must have completed two full-time semesters at AUM.

Cost

There is no cost to your department. Salary and all additional costs for the peer mentor including costs associated with the hiring process and training are covered by the grant.

Students will receive \$10.00 per hour for:

- Five (5) hours of work per course section up to 20 hours (2.5 hours in class, and 2.5 hours outside of class)
- Peer mentors deemed to be a Peer Mentor + Tutoring (Math and Biology mentors) will be compensated for 6.5 hours of work per Math or Biology course section up to 20 hours

Departments will determine who approves time for each peer mentor.

Peer Mentor Training

All peer mentors are provided training by the EEEEC. This training provides peer mentors with the foundational knowledge they need to be successful. It prepares peer mentors for scenarios they may encounter while working with their mentees and provides resources peer mentors will need to successfully aid their mentees.

Experiential Learning	Leadership
Title IX & FERPA	Aiding Distressed Students
Time Management & Goal setting	Study Strategies & Test Preparation

Faculty/Staff Professional Development

Although we will schedule some professional development opportunities each semester, we encourage you to let us know if you have questions. The EEEEC offers support through online resources and training sessions. We are also glad to meet with you individually to discuss any questions you have.