

# Mentor Messenger

A message from the peer mentor subcommittee

The peer mentor subcommittee was organized to support the needs of mentors and their coordinators. We hope that you will find the tips and information shared in this newsletter useful as you begin working with your Learning Community students. We also invite you to share tips or to make announcements.

Please send information or comments to [jenl@iastate.edu](mailto:jenl@iastate.edu).

## Important Dates to Remember

- January 12—  
Spring 2009 classwork begins
- January 19—  
University offices closed and classes recessed for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday
- January 22—  
MLK celebration; 4 p.m.; Great Hall, Memorial Union; Free.

## 5 Ways to Show Your Mentees that you are...

### Actively listening

1. give your undivided attention to the student
2. maintain eye contact and good posture (crossed arms and slouching may convey lack of empathy or lack of interest)
3. paraphrase occasionally to show understanding
4. request more information when appropriate
5. summarize key points of conversation to avoid confusion before providing feedback

### Interested in their well-being

1. ask open-ended questions about classes, family, learning community experience, etc.
2. follow-up on student issues as needed
3. remind them that you can be reached by email, during office hours, phone, IM, etc.
4. schedule one-on-one meetings with the mentees
5. plan a wellness activity (go sledding outside then discuss the importance of staying active)

### Motivated for the spring semester

1. schedule a semester kick-off or get-together activity
2. ask for student input for suggested activities
3. create a calendar of LC events for the semester
4. plan for optional study sessions around major exams, mid-terms and finals
5. know what campus activities are available to students and get your LC involved

### Responsible and dependable

1. answer student inquiries in a timely manner
2. maintain confidentiality (see <http://www.lc.iastate.edu/PMhandbook.html> for details)
3. provide accurate information and stay on the same page as the coordinator
4. follow through with any plans made at the beginning of the year but didn't accomplish in fall
5. model good student habits (studying, talking to instructors, going to campus events)

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## Setting the Agenda for the Spring Semester

Here are a few quick tips to ensure you start the semester on the right foot:

- ◆ have a clear and realistic goal in mind for what you want to accomplish this semester
- ◆ write things down: make a list or use a planner to set some concrete dates and timelines
- ◆ look at online calendars of activities to avoid conflicts