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 work 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.

Important Dates to Remember
- August 23—Fall semester class work begins
- August 28—Last day to return textbooks for refund to University Book Store.
- September 6—University holiday; offices closed, classes recessed.

Best Practices for Kicking-Off the Fall Semester

The first week of the semester is very busy and can be overwhelming for new students. Your mentees will spend the next few weeks figuring out what it means to be a college student, as well as acclimating to the campus.

Last year we asked peer mentors to share a few of their best tips for engaging learning community students at the beginning of the semester. As expected, we received several great suggestions.

Here are some semester kick-off ideas you may want to consider:

- Meet over pizza or ice cream on the Sunday before the first day of classes; provide time so that everyone can introduce themselves
- Host a welcome picnic with group activities and games
- Do an on-campus scavenger hunt highlighting the locations your students will go for classes, learning community events, and campus resources
- Take your students to a campus exhibit, or local field trip
- Provide an ice breaker activity at the start of the LC meetings; ideas are online at http://www.lc.iastate.edu/PMhandbook.html
- Schedule a group game like capture the flag or ultimate Frisbee
- Plan a movie night
- Go on a trip around Ames together on Cy-Ride

Remember that many of your students are new to Ames. It may be helpful to share some suggestions for places to shop, eat and take care of errands off-campus as well.