

Peer Mentor Handbook

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Appendices

- A. Adjustment to College and Readjustment to Home Culture
- B. Program Planning Checklist
- C. Calendar of Common Student Issues by Month
- D. Blank Weekly Schedule
- E. Learning Community Socio-Gram Activity

Additional materials available for download at
<http://www.lc.iastate.edu/PMhandbook.html>

- Resource List of Offices/Services
- Icebreakers and Teambuilders
- Force Field Analysis

Learning Communities Characteristics

At Iowa State University, learning communities are small groups of students who share some courses in common or share similar academic interests, and may live together in the same residence hall. Other characteristics are listed below.

- Contact with students who have similar academic goals
- Common courses
- Common place of residence
- Career exploration
- Introduction to university resources
- Peer mentoring and/or tutoring
- Participation in department club or other organization
- Leadership development
- Exposure to international and/or diversity issues
- Collaborative learning environment

You can find more information about Learning Communities
at:

<http://www.lc.istate.edu>

Skills for Effective Mentors

Many skills are vital for mentors to develop in order to perform and serve their students effectively. In most cases you will deal with issues related to academics, but as your relationship grows with your students, they may come to you with issues of a more personal nature – these issues will often have an impact on their success as a student. The most important thing to remember in any situation is that you're not a counselor. Know your limits – sometimes the best way you can help others is by referring them to someone else with more experience.

Keys to Success

- Listen
- Ask open-ended questions
- Attend and respond to both content and feeling
- Let the student solve the problem
- Refer to/use your resources

Ask open-ended questions - Any question that elicits a "yes/no" answer won't be as helpful as a "what, when, how, who" question. "Why" questions seem like they would get more information, but keep in mind that they can sometimes imply criticism and cause defensiveness (i.e., "Well, why didn't you go to all the study sessions?").

Attend and respond to both content and feeling - Often there are two things going on at once – there is an issue, and the person has some kind of feeling or reaction to that issue. You need to attend and respond to both. Consider this: "I'm so mad about my Chem test!" What is the content (performance on the Chem test)? What is the feeling (anger)? It's important to attend to both. Remember that issues presented to you could have some underlying themes and might even be symptoms of a larger problem.

Let the student solve the problem - It's easy to want to try to solve things for people, but that's not really as helpful as it might seem. Usually, the student knows the answer or knows how to solve the problem but just needs someone to ask the right questions and encourage their processing.

Refer to/use your resources - You are not a trained counselor. Don't expect yourself to be. But know your resources (CAs, HDs, other Res. Life staff, your Learning Community Coordinator, Dean of Students Office, etc.) and help people make use of those individuals and services. It's OK to say, "I don't know" as long as you get the information for the person.

Self-disclosure - Use it as long as it's helpful to the person and not just a story. "I was in a similar situation and I did this which helped," vs. "I was in that situation, too, and it sucked and no one helped me and blah, blah, blah." How helpful was that? Not at all!

Communication skills include

- Listening – fully participate in a conversation by being an active listener and utilizing some simple counseling skills such as reflecting, encouraging and asking questions. Be aware of how your body language can affect a conversation.
- Observing – be aware of how the student is presenting the message or ideas through body language and unspoken words.
- Communicating – be very clear in your presentation of facts and opinions.
- Decentering – try to understand what the student is saying, not by how you hear it, but in how they are approaching and thinking about what they are saying. Communicate with them in ways they will understand.

Personal skills include

- Availability – even if a student does not need to seek you out, they see you as being a helpful mentor when you are present and available to them.
- Seeking – seek students out, especially at the beginning of the year. Students are less likely to seek you out initially, so waiting for them to come to you may be wasted time.
- Being an example – students will observe you closely, especially if they are first-year students who are new to campus. Your role is one of responsibility; make good decisions in what you say and how you act when you're interacting with them. Remember that you are a role model.



Importance of Confidentiality

There must be a mutual understanding between the peer mentor and student that conversations are protected between the two of them. A bond of trust is formed when a student comes to share something with you. It is important that you give them your attention and ensure them, if possible, that what they tell you is kept in confidence.

Information shared between a mentor and student cannot always be confidential. In some specific instances, maintaining that bond of trust means that you need to share information with others. If a student discusses with you a situation that could result in self-harm or harm to others, it is your responsibility to report that information immediately to the appropriate persons (Learning Community Coordinator, Hall Director, CA). If the student has a condition that is beyond your ability to assist with (serious neurosis, alcohol, drug problems or depression), it is in the student's best interest that you share that information as well.

People you can share information with

- Your supervisors
- Relevant professional staff (Student Counseling Center, Dean of Students Office, Hall Directors)
- Those who would already have access to confidential information without your assistance

People you cannot share information with

- Parents (because of privacy laws; refer parents to your supervisor)
- Significant others
- Friends
- Roommates

Helpful website on confidentiality

<http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/policies/adv-conf>

Ethical Considerations for the Peer Mentor

As you perform your duties as a peer mentor, it is critical to understand and practice ethical behaviors. You were selected for this position because you possess the ability to establish strong rapport with students. The interpersonal skills that made you a prime candidate for the position can also place you in challenging situations. As you serve in your role, it is important to adhere to some guiding principles of the helping profession.

Ethical standards

(Excerpted from *Student Helping Students*, Ender, S. and Newton, F., 2000, Jossey-Bass Publishers)

- Peer mentors will have knowledge and act consistently with the standards that are appropriate to the agency in which they are employed.
- Peer mentors will respect the autonomy and individual dignity of the students they serve.
- Peer mentors will avoid acting beyond the scope of the service for which they were selected and trained and not attempt to offer professional services requiring more extensive qualifications and training.

Standard 4 is particularly compelling. Adhere to the following practices to ensure that you act in a way that benefits and serves the welfare of students.

- Consult with your supervisor when you face a situation that makes you uncomfortable or when you experience a conflict or dilemma.
- Act appropriately when working with persons for whom you feel attraction. Establishing intimate or strongly personal relationships with your mentees compromises your helping role.
- Remember that as a mentor you are a role model. You are obligated to maintain congruence between what you say to fellow students in your role and how you act in other facets of your life where you can be seen (or heard).
- Avoid over familiarity with mentees by maintaining a degree of professional distance.

Common Issues for Students

Many new students have similar adjustment challenges when they come to college. While everyone transitions differently to the new environment, there are some situations that are relatively common. Below are listed some issues you may encounter.

When assisting students with these issues, be sure that you utilize the resources available to you. Sometimes the most important pieces of information you can provide are the names/locations of others who are trained to assist students with these concerns.

Talk with your Learning Community Coordinator about addressing issues such as these as well as other concerns you may encounter.

Personal challenges

- Moving to a new environment
- Leaving family
- Living with a roommate
- Meeting new people
- Making personal decisions everyday
- Facing new peer pressures (sex, drugs, alcohol, etc.)

Intellectual/Academic challenges

- Speaking up in class
- Communicating with professors
- Developing semester course schedules
- Seeking academic assistance when problems arise
- Balancing academics and social life

Physical challenges

- Coping with weight gain/loss
- Forming positive health habits and breaking problem habits
- Becoming self-reliant in managing health/stress
- Finding lifetime hobbies and activities

Interpersonal challenges

- Connecting with a new friendship group
- Starting and managing romantic relationships
- Learning how to show emotions in appropriate ways
- Managing conflict situations
- Recognizing/deciding to act on sexual orientation

Career/Lifestyle challenges

- Choosing or changing a major
- Deciding on participation in internships and other work experiences
- Deciding to leave school/change schools
- Making decisions related to future issues (marriage, income needs, etc.)

(See Appendices for more detailed information about first-year student development and common student issues by month.)

Transfer Students

Some of you will have the opportunity to work with transfer students. While transfer students are “new” to the university, they are not “new” to college. However, they may have some similar issues as first-years in terms of transitioning to a new environment. Such issues as becoming familiar with Ames and the Iowa State University campus as well as adjusting to large classes may be challenges they face. In addition, many of their peers already have established their “friend groups.” Finding where they fit may be something you’ll discuss with them.



Common Issues You Will Assist Students With

Be sure to know and use the resources on campus that will help you assist your students. Never be afraid to refer a student to someone else – there are many people on campus who are trained to assist students with just these issues listed below!

Academic

- Scheduling/registering for classes
- Changing majors
- Grading policies/procedures
- Interacting with instructors
- What to do about missed classes or late assignments
- Questions about classes and what instructors to take, upcoming projects, class work, writing essays, and what to expect from instructors

Studying-related

- How to study
- Time management issues
- Test taking
- Resources to utilize

Personal/General

- Career questions
- Finding internships/work experience
- Finding the right major
- Roommate conflicts
- Weekend activities

Time management

Time management is one of the adjustment issues with which first-year students are confronted when they come to college. As a mentor, you will provide the most beneficial advice to your mentees in explaining how you handled the task of balancing all of your activities.

A few steps to make time management simple include:

- Set priorities along with major goals that need to be accomplished within the next month, the next few weeks and the very near future.
- Keep a log of how you currently spend your time – this helps you identify time wasted, time that may be better used in other ways, etc. It can be an eye-opening experience.
- Keep a master schedule that lists activities that occur every week (classes, work, meetings, etc.).
- Make a list of assignments due for each week and post it on your desk, near your computer or somewhere else prominent so you'll see it many times during a day – check things off as they are completed.

- Get organized so you can easily find supplies and resources when you need them.
- Check out the Time Management information available from the Academic Success Center at <http://www.dso.iastate.edu/asc/academic/handouts.html>.
- A blank weekly schedule is available for download at <http://www.lc.iastate.edu/PMhandbook.html>.

Troubleshooting issues

There will be times when students will come to you soliciting assistance for a number of issues. The following are just a few to be considered to give you some assistance with specific actions you can take when these issues arise.

Roommate Issues: Before saying anything else, ask the student if they've discussed their problems/issues with their roommate. This is where the communication needs to be. If they haven't, encourage them to do so and get back to you if there is no resolution. You can help them role play that interaction. If they have talked with their roommate and still need additional assistance to address the issue(s), be sure to use trained staff as resources such as the CA and/or Hall Director for on-campus students, or Student Counseling Services for off-campus students.

Academic Issues: If a student is having academic problems, feel free to talk to them about what they're going through and assist them in seeking assistance. They can request help from the Academic Success Center on campus or an academic advisor. Some people to keep informed of these issues are: the CA, Hall Director (if applicable), and your Learning Community Coordinator.

Challenges You May Encounter as a Mentor

There is no “standard” method to use to address the challenges you may encounter. Be sure to talk with your supervisor(s) about challenges that you’re facing in your peer mentor role. Other peer mentors may also be helpful to you as you address different issues. There are many resources available to assist you. Be sure to use them!

Motivating/encouraging

- Getting students excited about school/activities
- Students not wanting to participate in planned activities
- Trying to make everyone happy
- Dealing with apathy
- Students not meeting expectations

Role perceptions

- Being viewed as a teacher or parent
- Not being viewed as a peer
- Students wanting you to solve their problems
- Not being seen as an authority figure

Time issues

- Getting students to show up for meetings
- Working with multiple schedules when trying to plan events
- Finding time to build relationships
- Balancing activities with mentoring
- Having consistent contact with individuals

Personal issues

- Giving advice without personal morals/values getting in the way
- Dealing with roommate issues
- Confrontation issues
- Possible language barriers
- Programming/activities
- Program planning
- Breaking the ice
- Being inclusive
- Getting everyone involved

Addressing questions

- Helping others understand their major
- Not being able to answer certain questions
- Not giving too much advice but empowering the student
- Reaching out to those who need assistance but won’t ask for it

What to Expect from Supervisors

Working with your supervisor will be key to your success as a peer mentor. Your supervisor will provide you with information about the program as well as expectations for your role. Listed below are some topics to be sure to discuss with your supervisor at the beginning of the semester. Some topics will be revisited regularly during your time as a mentor.

Program Goals/Outcomes

- What does your supervisor want you to accomplish in your role? (Short Term, Semester, Year)
- What should students gain from their participation in the program?
- How will your mentor responsibilities help students accomplish the program goals?

Expectations

- Do you have a copy of the job description?
- What are your supervisor's expectations of you?
- What are your expectations of your supervisor? What do you need from your supervisor in order to be effective?
- How will you know that you're being successful in your role? How and when will your supervisor provide you with feedback?

Providing Information

- Does your supervisor want you to keep track of the interactions you have with students? If so, how?
- Is there a form your supervisor would like you to use to report information?

Meetings

- What is the intent of the meetings?
- What information should you be prepared to share at the meetings?
- When and where will you regularly meet?
- If there is more than one mentor for the program, should mentors plan to meet outside of regularly scheduled group meetings with the supervisor?

Resources

- What resources does your supervisor have that you may need access to (this may include a budget, professionals in the field/contacts, etc.)?

The most important thing to do is talk with your supervisor about what you need and what you should expect from him/her so that you can be most successful as a peer mentor.

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Tracking Student Information

There will be times when it will be helpful to have a record of the interactions you've had with your students. This helps you discuss how your job is going with your supervisor as well as assist residence hall staff or other campus resources if one of your students ever needed professional help for certain issues. An easy way of remembering your interactions with your students is by writing them down. You don't need to record every interaction, as some interactions will be social, but when a student comes to you to discuss a problem they're dealing with or something pertaining to your mentor role/relationship with them, it's a good idea to keep a record. There are many ways that this can be done; ask your supervisor about his/her expectations of tracking information or feel free to do whatever works best for you. A few examples of how to do this are:

- Keep a file box that holds index cards. Have an index card for every student and record interactions on that.
- Keep an excel file on your computer that records interactions with students.
- Keep a pad of paper that records interactions on a daily basis.

It is important to remember that, whichever way you choose to record interactions with your students, it must be kept confidential and put away so that only you have access to it. Check with your supervisor about what information he/she wants you to track.



Ice-breakers/Energizers, Teambuilders, and Conversation Starters

Ice-breakers/energizers and teambuilders are a great way to start off any meeting in order to set the tone for the duration of the gathering. They allow participants to feel integrated within a group, break up already formed groups/cliques, and unify all individuals by participating in an activity that has a shared goal for the entire group.

Useful websites for Ice-breakers/Energizers:

<http://www.lc.iastate.edu/PMhandbook.html>
<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/index.htm>

Conversation starter ideas

As a mentor, you should be in constant communication with the students with whom you are working. Many times you will have specific reasons to approach them in conversation. Other times, you may need a “starter”, especially if the student is shy and not likely to approach you. The following are some ideas to use to start up conversations with students in your community:

- The most basic...introduce yourself as the peer mentor and let the student know what your role is and how you'll be available to them throughout the year.
- Ask about the classes they are taking, how they're going, etc. If you have a similar major, ask about their instructors – maybe you've had some of the same ones.
- See if they've gotten involved in any groups on campus. Learn about their interests so you can continue to ask them questions or pass on information related to the subjects they like.
- Take information you've heard from others (maybe about where a person is from or activities they enjoy) and talk to them about it – “I heard that you played basketball in high school. Have you heard about ISU's intramural program?” or “Someone told me you were from Chicago. I am too – what area are you from?”

Visit <http://www.lc.iastate.edu/PMhandbook.html> for a list of icebreakers and teambuilders.

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Facilitation Strategies

Peer mentors are expected to facilitate a variety of interactions – from community building/ social events to study groups to classroom activities. Below are some strategies that you can use to facilitate different types of situations.

Go 'rounds – Ask the group a question or to share some specific information. Go around the room. If someone needs to pass, allow that but then come back to them. This is a great way to get folks talking and involved right away and allows them to know that their active participation is desired and expected.

Ideas Gallery – This is an alternate way of brainstorming. Put newsprint on the wall with categories of information you'd like the group to think about. Ask them to move from one paper to the next, read what's on the paper, and add their own thoughts. This activity gets them moving (a change of pace from typical brainstorming) and suggests an expectation that everyone contribute. This also allows those who are more introverted to have a comfortable way of contributing.

Sentence Stems – Create a list of open ended questions and number them. Cut the questions and place them in an envelope. Divide students into small groups of 3-5. One student should select a question from the envelope and respond. The goal is to promote dialogue so the group should be encouraged to ask questions or share additional insights where appropriate. Rotate the envelope until each student has had an opportunity to respond or until the questions have been exhausted.

Reflection/Sharing/TTYP – Asking people to do some personal reflection gives them a chance to think; again, this is especially helpful for those who process in writing better than out loud. "Turn To Your Partner" gives them a chance to share their thoughts and process a bit further whatever it is they've been asked to consider. This approach gives the introverts an opportunity to approach the topic in a way that might best suit them initially (through writing) and the extroverts a chance to approach it out loud, which might be their preference.

Case Study – Using a "story" that has no-to-low stakes for the students allows them to practice making decisions. This might be especially useful for mentors who teach or assist in teaching.

Force Field Analysis – This activity asks people to consider their "Ideal Situation," "Worst Possible Situation," and "Present Situation" so that they can identify inhibitors to their success and driving forces that will lead to success. A copy of the form is available for download on our website at <http://www.lc.iastate.edu/PMhandbook.html>. This might be a useful tool in program planning or determining how the group is functioning.

Mind Maps -- Mind mapping is a technique for noting information or explaining a process or concept. When using the mind mapping technique, you would display information graphically as opposed to the traditional method of sentences and words arranged on a page. To promote interaction and dialogue it is sometimes helpful to have students develop mind maps as a group and then explain to others in the class why they chose certain symbols and icons. Graphic representations of concepts can then be displayed around the room. Mind Map Resource: <http://www.peterussell.com/mindmaps/mindmap.html>

Continuum Activities—These activities ask students to take a stand and place themselves on a continuum between extremes on various issues. Continuums can be used for such topics as values clarification, working together, transition issues, ethical issues, group work, leadership, and getting acquainted. It's best to establish ground rules before starting and ensure that everyone doesn't have to explain/defend his/her position on the continuum, although those who wish to share why they've placed themselves in a certain spot on the continuum will be invited to do so.

Inside Outside Circles/ or Double Circle

1. Have a large group number off by two's (1,2,1,2 etc.)
2. Have 1's form a circle, surrounding the 2's. Have the 2's form a circle inside the 1's, facing the 1's.
3. As the facilitator, you will begin asking one question to the group, to be answered by each "pair." Give the pairs approximately 1 minute to share their answers to each question with each other.
4. Ask the inside circle to make a move, e.g. "all move 2 people to their left" or all move 1 person to their right." With the move completed, each person should be facing a new individual. Remember to introduce yourselves to the new person. Proceed to ask a new question and allow approximately 1 minute for sharing.

*You can use this activity as a get to know you icebreaker.

Sample Questions

- What is your favorite holiday and why?
- What is your favorite hobby and how often do you engage in enjoying it?
- If you could have a pet what would you choose?
- Who is a role model in your life right now?
- What is the greatest problem facing the world today and what steps should we take to address it?

*You can also link the activity to course content by generating a list of questions that draw upon the day's lecture or items for an upcoming test.



Establishing Effective Study Groups

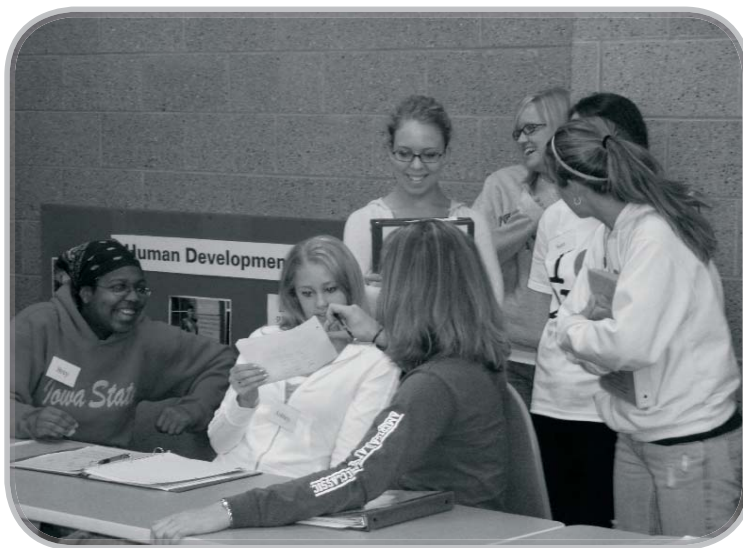
A large part of your job as a mentor is to maintain an environment that encourages academic success. The students involved in your learning community are in a wonderful situation where they can take advantage of the common academic goals of their peers. A great way to encourage the daily integration of academics into the lives of your students is by encouraging them to study together on a regular basis. The following is just a short list of the positive effects of study groups.

Study groups...

- Provide an opportunity where peers can teach each other by reinforcing and clarifying learning.
- Make learning more interesting and fun by providing a type of support group.
- Help students feel more comfortable with material so they can discuss it in the classroom environment.
- Motivate students to study because the success of the group depends on the participation of all members.

Things you can do as a mentor to help establish study groups:

- Create sign up sheets that go along with the classes you know your students are taking.
- Provide tips on how to study effectively – staying on subject, having an agenda, setting a start and stop time, etc. Check out the Academic Success Center for more ideas.
- Work with your resources to set study hours in a quiet location.



Programming/Activities

Identifying program activities/getting feedback

A good way to find out how things are going in your community is to ASK the people who are participating in it. This can be done a number of ways.

Brainstorming- ask students about their goals for the year and what kinds of activities they would like to see made available – both social and educational. Write down the ideas they give you! When you're looking for something to plan, go to that list. People like knowing that their comments matter.

Survey/Assess- after an event, hand out a short survey asking what the participants thought about it – if the content was good, what they learned, what could've been done better, what was done really well, etc. You can also ask for verbal responses. Be sure to take these comments into consideration for future planning. Again, don't forget to use your resources (like your Learning Community Coordinator) to help you assess and evaluate your new data.

Talk with other mentors: get together with other mentors and see what programs/activities they have tried, what has worked and what hasn't. Remember to take into consideration your learning community differences that might affect the outcome of a particular program.

Program planning checklist

As a mentor, there will be times when you will need to plan programs and activities for your learning community. These may be social or educational/academic in nature. Ideas include:

Educational/academic

- Bringing in speakers
- Organizing study groups
- Taking tours of companies related to the Learning Community major/theme
- Attending lectures on campus
- Portfolio and resume workshops
- Campus group presentations: Wellness Center, Financial Counseling Clinic, Academic Success Center, etc.
- Community service opportunities

Social

- Going out to dinner or for dessert
- Pizza parties
- BBQs and tailgates
- Bowling
- Watching movies
- Birthday parties
- Intramural teams
- Cyclone athletics
- ISU music events



Some things to take into consideration when planning include:

- What type of program/activity do I want to offer (social, educational, etc.)?
- Where will this program be/what facilities are available?
- What resources do I need to carry out this program? Do I need specific equipment and where can I obtain it if needed?
- What dates are possibilities for this program – how can I maximize attendance and avoid conflicts?
- Are there any costs involved in this program? Will I need monetary support?
- Do I need approval for this program?
- Does this program comply with university policies regulating activities?

(See Appendix B for a program planning worksheet.)

Reserving meeting space on campus

At different times during the year you might find it useful to reserve meeting or activity space on campus. The following is a list of available spaces and reservation contact information. Visit the Room Scheduling website at <http://www.fpm.iastate.edu/roomscheduling/> for additional information about space on campus.

Reserve a room by

Phone: Call 294-6428 or

Online: Fill out a reservation agreement (<http://www.housing.iastate.edu/places/furniture/meetings>) and emailing to sweigel@iastate.edu.

Taking a field trip

Some peer mentors have responsibility for organizing field trips. If your mentor role requires this of you, consider the following:

- Identify the site
- Contact the location and identify a contact person
- Identify any costs associated with the trip
- Have students provide emergency contact information before departure.
- Reserve university vehicles if needed. Go to <http://www.transportation.iastate.edu/policies.html> for information.

Note: All student drivers must complete a Driving Permission Request Form, located on the Transportation Services website.

Additional Activities

- Consider having students do a reflection of the experience – either written reflection or verbal reflection in the group
- Work with your Learning Community Coordinator in advance to determine any reimbursement processes – you will likely need to save all receipts!

Faculty-Student Interaction

Alexander Astin, a scholar of higher education, noted in his 1993 book “What Matters in College”, that faculty-student interaction was one of two factors that made the greatest difference in getting students involved in the undergraduate experience. As a peer mentor, you will be asked to consider ways that faculty and student interaction can be increased. Below are several ideas that have been tried by others.

Low Risk

- Host a Faculty-Student Coffee.
- Coordinate a series of faculty-student lunches. Groups of four or five students could be invited to attend during various points in the semester.
- Ask a faculty member who is familiar with Ames to conduct a tour of the town for new students.
- Ask faculty members to present a favorite lecture or a fireside chat with students.

Curricular

- Have a group of faculty members and students attend a movie or rent a DVD related to a course topic or area of study and have faculty and students discuss the implications.
- Design a service project that involves students and faculty members. Discuss what was learned following the service learning project.
- Invite faculty members into the orientation courses and have them discuss the field.
- Host a round table in which faculty discuss opportunities for student involvement in faculty research.
- Before a major exam, see if faculty members would be available to conduct a late night study session. Serve pizza and pop.

Active

- Have faculty and students engage in a low ropes event early in the semester as a teambuilding activity.
- Have faculty members visit learning community floors during move-in and meet students and parents as they check-in.
- Invite interested faculty to compete on an intramural team.
- Invite a group of faculty members to attend a basketball or football game or CY Stephens offering with students.
- Have groups of students interview key faculty members and provide a brief presentation about what they learned.

Miscellaneous

- Have mentors interview faculty members briefly and create a faculty directory that includes interesting facts about the faculty they are likely to encounter in their first or second year.
- Have guest faculty members judge a contest or assess a group of student presentations.

Faculty members lead very busy lives. When planning an activity, consider the demands that are placed on their time and consider their personalities. Contacting the faculty member(s) well in advance of the event is important (minimum of 1-2 weeks). Make sure your event is organized and make sure that you do what is necessary to promote a high student turnout to these events. At the end, be sure to send a thank you note to the faculty member for participating in the activity.



Resources

Dean of Students Office

The Dean of Students Office offers a number of departments and services that will certainly be useful to you as a mentor in referring a student to the proper place. Departments include:

- Academic Success Center
- Greek Affairs
- Judicial Affairs
- LGBTSS
- Margaret Sloss Women's Center
- Multicultural Student Services
- Parents Association
- Recreation Services
- Student Assistance
- Student Legal Services
- Student Support Services Program
- Vocational Rehabilitation

For more detailed information on the services that the Dean of Student's Office has to offer, visit their website at: www.dso.iastate.edu

Information Technology/Computer Labs

The Information Technology Center on campus offers electronic equipment rental free of charge to students. An example of equipment offered includes:

- Cameras
- Projectors
- Video Equipment
- PA Systems
- Audio Players
- Accessories

For more specific equipment information and guidelines for reservations, visit their website at <http://www.it.iastate.edu/>.

There are a number of public computer labs located on campus. The locations are listed on the website at: <http://www.it.iastate.edu/labsdb/>.

Highlights from the Residence Halls Policy Handbook

As an integral member of a learning community within the residence hall system, it is important that you are aware of and follow the hall policies that are outlined in the Policy Handbook. It is not your role to enforce these policies but to abide by them and encourage appropriate behavior among your students. If you are not part of a residential learning community, it is helpful to be aware of these policies if you work with those who are living in the halls. Policies that may affect first-year students include the following:

Quiet/Study/Courtesy Hours Policy

You are responsible for helping to enforce quiet/study hours. If noise is problematic for you, ask the individual involved to be quieter. If the problem persists, contact your CA or the CA on duty. Anyone may document policy violations. For information on the documentation process, talk to your CA or Hall Director.

Quiet/study hours are designated times for sleeping and studying when noise should be kept to a minimum. These hours are maintained to help provide an environment in which students can succeed personally and academically.

The minimum acceptable quiet/study hours are listed below:

Sunday–Thursday 11 p.m.–8 a.m.

Friday–Saturday 2 a.m.–9 a.m.

Houses may set additional quiet/study hours that are enforced by residents and staff. Extended quiet/study hours will be in effect during Dead and Finals Weeks. A study break, not to exceed one hour, may occur between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m. daily during those weeks, except for the Saturday right before finals week in which the house may allot a 4 hour block of time ending before 10 p.m. for a study break. Each hall will determine, within these limits, when its study break will be. During the study break, all policies will be enforced; noise should not exceed levels deemed acceptable during courtesy hours. Each house will post its approved quiet/study hours policy.

In addition, courtesy hours are in effect 24 hours a day to help create an environment in which students can successfully pursue their academic studies. During courtesy hours, students who are asked to make less noise are expected to do so. Noise from stereos, TVs, musical instruments, and conversations should be kept to levels that will not interfere with other residents. Check with your CA for availability of music practice rooms in your residence neighborhood.

You are responsible for helping to enforce quiet/study hours. If noise is problematic for you, ask the individual involved to be quieter. If the problem persists, contact your CA or the CA on duty. Anyone may document policy violations. For information on the documentation process, talk to your CA or hall director.

Alcoholic Beverages and Controlled Substances

All state, federal, and local laws and university policies pertaining to alcohol and other drugs, including controlled substances, apply to residents and guests within the residence halls.

Only residents and their guests who are 21 years of age or older may possess and consume alcoholic beverages in the privacy of their residence hall rooms. If you are under 21, you may not consume, transport, or possess alcoholic beverages anywhere in the residence halls, nor may you have a guest (regardless of his/her age) who consumes alcoholic beverages in your room. Residents and their guests are responsible for providing verification of age upon request by a staff member. Students and/or guests who refuse to provide age verification will be assumed to be under 21.

Maple and Eaton Halls, and Lincoln, Palmer, Pennell, Lowe, and Stange Houses in Friley Hall will be substance-free areas. Alcohol will be prohibited to all students in these areas, regardless of age. Any student found responsible of violating the alcohol policy will be removed from the substance-free living environment. If there is not place to relocate the student, the hall director shall have the discretion to determine an appropriate sanction.

Students who are not 21 or older and who are found responsible for possession and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages, including behavior that is a result of alcohol consumption, will receive sanctions through the judicial system and will be referred to the Student Counseling Center or Substance Abuse Violence Prevention Office for alcohol assessment and/or screening. The student will be charged a fee for the assessment and/or screening.

Students who are not 21 or older may not have alcoholic beverage containers in their rooms.

Alcoholic beverages must be in their original, unopened containers when transported within the residence halls.

Alcohol may be neither consumed nor possessed in opened containers anywhere outside a student room, including hallways, dens, commons areas, restrooms, elevators, and other university grounds.

Containers of alcohol larger than one gallon are not permitted in the residence halls.

In consultation with the representative student governments, the president of Iowa State University has the authority to adopt special rules regarding use, possession, and consumption of alcohol during the annual VEISHEA celebration. The rules will be published in the Iowa State Daily and by other means before the celebration. Students and student organizations violating these rules are subject to disciplinary action.

For additional information about living in the residence halls,
visit the website at:

<http://www.housing.iastate.edu/>

Visitation: Guests and Visitors

The guest/visitation policy is gender-neutral. No guests are allowed in student rooms past 1:00 am on weekdays (Sunday-Thursday). Guests are allowed in student rooms at any time on Friday and Saturday. Guests are welcome at any time in designated common spaces such as house dens, kitchenettes, computer labs and study areas.

Roommates can agree to change any aspect of the guest/visitation policy as stated above by completing a Roommate Contract. In all cases, overnight guests may stay with the approval of the roommate(s) for a maximum of three (3) consecutive nights, and overnight guests are not allowed during semester break.

The Roommate Contract must be completed, signed and filed with the CA before it goes into effect. The Roommate Contract can be re-negotiated as necessary. All guests must be respectful of roommate's rights. Violation of the Roommate Contract will be handled through the judicial system.

A guest must abide by all policies of the residence halls and houses. The guest and host are mutually responsible for the conduct of the guest.

Wrapping up the year

Some learning communities conclude at the end of Fall semester, while others continue through Spring. However, when programs come to an end, students may appreciate having some type of closure activity to conclude their learning community experience.

Ideas for wrapping up the year may include:

- Having a reception/tea/banquet for students at the end to celebrate the semester/year.
- Providing awards or certificates to honor achievements or to acknowledge their participation.
- Writing personal notes to each student to thank them for their participation.
- Having students create collages of what they learned in the learning community.
- Asking students to provide a personal reflection of their learning community experience and having a time set aside for them to share.
- Maintaining a scrapbook or Powerpoint and sharing it with the students at the end.
- Taking a group photo and giving everyone a copy. Ask participants to sign each other's pictures.
- Scheduling a re-connection meeting for the semester after their participation in the learning community has concluded.

