MENTOR MANUAL
First Generation College Student
Employment-Mentor Experience
PROGRAM GOALS

The goal of the First Generation College Student Employment-Mentor Experience is to positively impact the lives and empower the success of first-gen college students at OSU.

The OSU Library is one of the largest student employers on campus and offers unique employment opportunities for OSU students. Our student assistants are provided with the opportunity to learn critical new skills that help prepare them for today’s workforce. A Library job can teach time management skills, workplace professionalism, exceptional customer service, and organizational loyalty. Library student assistants also have first-hand access to all of the fantastic resources offered by the Library to enhance study skills, research and learning.
MENTOR ROLES & EXPECTATIONS

Our program mentors will serve as a resource for information about college and OSU in particular, as a guide on success in school and work, and as a source of positive encouragement for their protégés.

Mentor expectations:

• Be employed by the OSU Libraries.

• Agree to a one-year commitment to the program

• Commit to spending 2-4 hours per month one-on-one with the protégé

• Proactively communicate with the protégé weekly

• Attend program trainings as required

• Attend optional group programs and help ensure your protégé is aware of these events
MENTOR–MENTEE RELATIONSHIP CYCLE

Stage 1: Beginnings
Characterized by
• Getting to know each other
• First impressions
• Seeing the positive in the relationship
• Bonding

Effective communication for this stage:
• Ask open-ended questions
• Use body language that is open and not guarded
• Active listening
• Demonstrate empathy
• Avoid “prescriptive” communication
• Use prompts
• Speak with language that you feel comfortable with
• Don’t be afraid of silence

Stage 2: Challenges
Characterized by
• Mentee challenges
• Testing phase
• Rethinking first impressions
• Difficult feelings or emotions may surface
Effective communication for this stage:
• Be consistent in your communication, even if it is difficult
• Demonstrate respect
• Build problem-solving into your open-ended questions
• Raise sensitive issues at the beginning of your interactions
• Make sure to separate behaviors from who the mentee is
• Disclose personal feelings/experiences when appropriate

**Stage 3: “Real” Mentoring**
Characterized by
• The relationship begins feeling right again
• Trust is established
• Growth in the mentee can be observed
• A “deeper” bond and connection has been formed

Effective communication for this stage:
• Continue with disclosures when appropriate
• Avoid advising, and allow student to actively problem solve
• Build off your knowledge of your mentee’s strengths to foster deeper discussions
• Give positive feedback and don’t be afraid to let your mentee know when something has hurt you.

**Stage 4: Ending**
Characterized by
• Preparing for closure
• Relationship may become deeper or mentee may start pulling away
• Reflection

Effective communication for this stage:
• Find common language to sum up your feelings
• Provide feedback that describes growth that you observed
• Be prepared to listen and affirm fears your mentee may have

¹Training New Mentors
Boundaries & Sticky Situations

Boundaries are the limits or rules that we set for ourselves and others. Boundaries can be physical and tangible or emotional and intangible. They help to protect us, to clarify what is our responsibility and what is another’s, to preserve our physical and emotional energy, to stay focused on ourselves, to live our values and standards, and to identify our personal limits. Keep in mind this is a professional relationship and should be approached with the same manner as you approach your Library colleagues.

Steps for setting boundaries:

• Identify your limits-The first step in setting boundaries is getting clear about what your limits are. You do this by paying attention to yourself and noticing what you can comfortably tolerate and accept. Remember that your limits are personal.

• Pay attention to your feelings-If you are feeling extremely uncomfortable or resentful about a situation that can be a cue that you need to either set boundaries or that you are letting your boundaries slip.

• Give yourself permission to set boundaries-Sometimes setting boundaries can make us feel guilty. Remember, boundaries provide clarity and help preserve our energy. You are doing yourself and those around you a favor by having clear boundaries, even if it seems difficult at first.
• Consider your environment—This context can have a strong influence on your behaviors, attitudes and perceptions. Your environment can either support the setting boundaries or present obstacles.

**Steps for enforcing boundaries:**

• Communicate consistent—Being able to articulate boundaries to ourselves is the first step, but then we also need to communicate our boundaries to others. Remember, our actions communicate our boundaries as well, so be consistent in following through.

• Address violations immediately—When our boundaries are violated, it’s not uncommon for people to stew over the situation for days or weeks. A lot can happen in that time, and you can lose context if you wait too long to bring it up.

• Use concrete explanations—Instead of focusing on you and your feelings, emphasize the effect on the mentorship program goals.

• Prepare for violations—It’s helpful to visualize your boundaries getting crossed, and how you’re going to handle those situations. That way, when a moment comes up, you are less likely to be overcome by your emotions because you have mentally rehearsed already.
Anticipating sticky situations is a good way to thinking proactively about appropriate boundaries for you. Think about how you would respond in the following situations and how setting clear boundaries up front could help in these and similar situations.

**Protégé asks personal questions about information you aren’t comfortable disclosing.**
Keep in mind this is a professional relationship and should be approached in the same manner as you approach your Library colleagues. You will be spending a considerable amount of time with your student. Both of you will be trying to get to know the other better. You student may ask personal questions, simply to try to figure out where the boundary is. It’s fine to share some personal information with your protégé, but think about what topics you are willing to discuss and which you consider off the table.

**Protégé reveals they are struggling with an issue (mental health, sexual assault, drug dependency, legal trouble, etc.) that you are not qualified to deal with.**
We don’t expect (or want) our mentors to try to solve every problem. We do want you to have an ongoing communication with your student that will help you notice early signs that they are struggling and could use extra help. See the “Help for Students” section for possible solutions, and seek additional guidance from Library HR or Student Affairs if you need more information on support resources. All full-time employees should have completed Title IX training. Visit the OSU HR website if you need to complete or refresh your training.
Protégé asks for money.
If you invite your student for coffee, will you be buying? Decide for yourself what, if anything, you are willing to invest financially in the relationship. And, be up front with your protégé about who is paying for what when you make plans with costs associated. Be sensitive to the fact that students typically have very little discretionary income, but may be embarrassed to reveal that to you. If your student asks to borrow money, be advised that there are official avenues to provide temporary financial support. Direct them to the VP of Student Services.

Protégé asks you to talk to a professor or supervisor on their behalf.
You are here to help your student succeed academically and professionally, but interacting with faculty or employers on their behalf is not in the student’s best interest. An ethical instructor or supervisor is not going to discuss your protégé’s performance with you, and could resent both you and the student for putting them in an uncomfortable situation. Do help your student navigate these intimidating conversations by coaching them on when, where and how to address their concerns.

Protégé suggests an activity at their home or yours.
One-on-one activities should always take place in public locations, and activities in private settings like a dorm, apartment, home or even your car, should always include at least one additional person. It can be exciting and flattering when your student suggests activities, and it shows a lot of trust if they invite you into their home or ask to see yours. However, always be aware of how activities could appear to an outside observer.
HELP FOR STUDENTS

We don’t expect mentors to be an expert in everything. Directing your mentees to the right place to get expert assistance is still helping. Stay aware of situations that are beyond your scope and knowledge.

**Academic Support**

**LASSO:** [http://lasso.okstate.edu/](http://lasso.okstate.edu/) 405-744-3309

The LASSO Center is dedicated to helping all OSU students succeed as they transition into college and throughout their college experience. LASSO provides free supplemental instruction, academic success coaching, tutoring and student success workshops and presentations.

**Math Learning Success Center:** [http://math.okstate.edu/mlsc](http://math.okstate.edu/mlsc) 405-744-5818

This facility strives to meet all the extra-classroom needs of undergraduate mathematics students, and the MLSC is an essential part of our Success in Undergraduate Mathematics (SUMS) initiative.

**Presentation Coaching:** [http://info.library.okstate.edu/presentationcoaching](http://info.library.okstate.edu/presentationcoaching)

“Presentation Coaching” is a free resource to improve presentation and/or interview skills. Presentation Coaching can be tailored to students’ specific needs, with the goals of helping students become skilled and engaging speakers and ultimately leading to their academic success.
Writing Center: http://osuwritingcenter.okstate.edu/ 405-744-6671

At any of the six locations, including on the first floor of the Library, students can get help understanding and practicing many strategies effective writers use—from brainstorming to drafting to editing techniques.

Health and Wellness
Alcohol and Substance Abuse Center: http://ucs.okstate.edu/asac 405-744-2818

The Alcohol and Substance Abuse Center (ASAC) is committed to providing quality, confidential services for OSU students affected by problems related to substance abuse. They promote and provide innovative, campus-based services that improve the well-being and quality of life for students. The goal of ASAC is to help OSU students maximize their potential by supporting their intellectual, personal and social growth.

Health Services: http://uhs.okstate.edu/ 405-744-7665

Walk-in or appointments accepted. University Health Services offers a wide range of medical services including immunizations, women’s health, lab and x-ray services.

Psychological Services: http://psychology.okstate.edu/psychology-services 405-744-5975

The PSC provides services to children, adolescents and adults. Services are available to residents of Stillwater and the surrounding community, as well as to OSU students, faculty, and staff. The PSC offers a variety of psychological services, including but not limited to individual therapy for adjustment problems, depression, anxiety and PTSD, assessments for learning disabilities, ADHD, emotional/behavioral problems,
Autism, and other Developmental Disabilities. There is a charge for these services.

**Reboot Center:** [http://ucs.okstate.edu/reboot](http://ucs.okstate.edu/reboot) 405-744-6434

The Reboot Center offers a relaxing and supportive environment for learning skills to improve stress management, performance and well-being. Free services include quiet inviting space for developing skills to calm mind and body; video-game software responsive to stress physiology where images become more vivid, animations more dynamic and speed increases in response to relaxation; individual consultation; and presentations on stress-related topics

**Student Disability Services:** [http://sds.okstate.edu/](http://sds.okstate.edu/) 405-744-7116

Student Disability Services (SDS) is committed to providing a community that ensures full participation for students. SDS provides assistance to students that will facilitate their independence and academic progress. Academic support services includes specialized testing, classroom accommodations, accessible textbooks, and access to assistive technology (AT).

**University Counselling Services:** [http://ucs.okstate.edu/](http://ucs.okstate.edu/) 405-744-5472

University Counseling Services supports the OSU mission through efforts to assist students in improving the quality of life so that personal and intellectual growth can be fostered, values can be clarified and knowledge can be interrelated for use in improving the campus and larger environments for future generations.
Personal Safety
Orange Shield App

This free application can be downloaded from the Apple or Google Play stores.

OSU Police: https://police.okstate.edu/ 405-744-6523 911

The campus is protected by a fully accredited law enforcement agency that is operated and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Authority of the sworn officers is derived from state statutes, which allow for full police powers on OSU property. In addition, by agreement with the City of Stillwater, campus police and city police enjoy an excellent working relationship.

Safe Walk: 405-744-6523

Oklahoma State University has launched a Safe Walk program that will provide enhanced safety on its Stillwater campus. The program uses trained student Public Service Officers or PSOs to accompany anyone from one campus location to another between the hours of 9 p.m. and 2 a.m.
IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

Weekly emails, texts, or phone calls to touch base. Each time, try to share interesting and useful information like upcoming academic deadlines, employee news, or library/campus events. Sharing news from “In the Loop” is one way to find ideas.

Leave an encouraging note at their desk or time card.

Meet for coffee in Café Libro or at the Union. Depending on their work and class schedule, at the end of their shift might be ideal time.

Invite your protégé to join you at a Library event like Noon Concert, Science Café or Tech Tuesday. The shared experience can give you something new to talk about.

Attend your protégé’s intramural game, performance, or public presentation.

If your protégé has an all-sports pass attend a sporting event together.

Walk and talk. Taking a stroll across campus or around Theta pond promotes healthy habits and can encourage dialogue.

Share your resume with them and offer introductory advice on beginning their own resume.

Invite them to practice with you when they have an upcoming class presentation or speech to deliver.


STAY CONNECTED

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Topic > Library

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