

2
0
2
4

PEER MENTOR SURVEY REPORT



lc.iastate.edu
1084 Student Services Building
Iowa State University

PEER MENTORS at Iowa State University

Peer mentors are upper-division students from the major or program associated with their particular learning community. They serve as a vital resource to new students, providing transitional support and connecting them to campus and community resources. Peer mentors often organize study groups, social events, and out-of-class activities for learning community participants. Their experience, guidance, and leadership are invaluable to our students. Peer mentors are integral to the success of learning communities at Iowa State University.

79
LEARNING
COMMUNITIES

6,772

LEARNING
COMMUNITY
PARTICIPANTS

600 +

PEER
MENTORS

FALL 2024 LEARNING COMMUNITY STATS

REPORT SECTIONS

Care and Concern for Students - Page 03

Academic Support - Page 04

Social Connections - Page 05

Campus Resources - Page 06

General Guidance and Support - Page 07

About the Survey and References - Page 08



CARE AND CONCERN FOR STUDENTS

SURVEY Findings

Respondents to the Peer Mentor Survey either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

96% My peer mentor responds in a reasonable time when I express a concern

76% I have regular interactions with my peer mentor

87% My peer mentor has made an effort to get to know me



My peer mentor has been **extremely helpful**. She is always willing to help us with our classes or connect us with other resources if she cannot; she also **always checks how [classes] are going...** She also is really awesome to connect with one-on-one and I feel like she **truly cares about my success** and wants to help me find the right path for me within [my major].

My peer mentor has... truly **made an impact** on my success here at Iowa State. She has made my experience much less stressful as she works with my previous commitments. It is clear that she truly **cares about my success** both as a student, athlete, and individual.



A significant aspect of the peer mentor role is providing psychological and emotional support to mentees (Nora & Crisp, 2007). This involves listening, providing moral support, assisting in identifying problems, providing encouragement, and establishing a supportive relationship between student and mentor.

At Iowa State, learning community peer mentors provide care and concern for their mentees through individual and group meetings, making referrals to campus and community resources, facilitating academic and social events, and effective communication.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT



Peer mentors often play the role of learning coach, with a significant benefit to mentees of greater academic achievement (Colvin & Ashman, 2010), Mentored students can experience higher GPAs and retention rates compared to those without a mentor (e.g., Campbell & Campbell, 1997).

Learning community peer mentors at Iowa State provide academic support through organizing and encouraging study groups, sharing effective study strategies, reaching out to students who might be struggling, and connecting students with resources such as the [Academic Success Center](#).



She has made my college experience and **success here at Iowa State attainable**. She works well with me and my **commitments and goals**. As well as this, she truly wants to see my peers and I succeed.



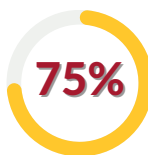
A peer mentor has been very beneficial to me so far this semester, but especially **when developing my four-year plan**. They gave me great advice on which classes to take and when, and **I feel much more confident** in my plan now.

[My peer mentor] gave me **individualized advice** that made difficulties easier to understand and **shared efficient study methods** that helped me absorb the information better... My mentor also **provided support** during difficult assignments, which increased my will to keep going. In addition, they gave me **constructive feedback** on my work.



SURVEY Findings

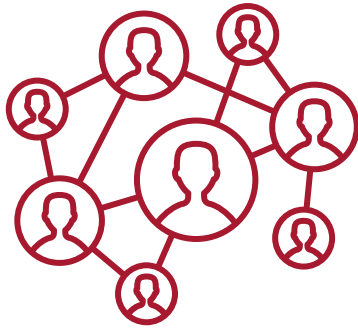
Respondents to the Peer Mentor Survey either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:



My peer mentor encourages learning community participants to study together



My peer mentor demonstrates concern about my academic success



SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

SURVEY Findings

Respondents to the Peer Mentor Survey either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

95%


My peer mentor facilitates interactions among learning community participants

66%

I have made an effort to get to know my peer mentor

93%

My peer mentor is skilled at facilitating discussions

 *She has helped a ton for all the students **getting to know each other**. I have **made some great friends** from my learning community and [my peer mentor] is a big reason for this.*

*[My peer mentor] has **become a friend to me**, and someone I look up to. As someone who is involved in lots of areas in the music department, she **always knows who can help me** with anything I need.*



*I have been able to **connect with students** and others who have been in my shoes or are currently going through what I am. It feels good to have that **supportive community**.*

Peer mentors are valuable contributors to students' social support (Rieske & Benjamin, 2015) and they support mentees' sense of belonging at the university (Jacobi, 1991; Hill & Reddy, 2007; Nora & Crisp, 2007). Students who do not connect to a peer group are more likely to leave the university (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Tinto, 1975).

Peer mentors working with Iowa State's learning community program help students connect with faculty, staff, and peers by sharing involvement opportunities on campus, planning activities and events, leading group discussions, and sharing their classroom and research experiences.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Peer mentors are a connecting link between students at the university and serve as a student advocate (Colvin & Ashman, 2010). They connect their mentees to key resources, help them navigate the university, and can act as liaisons to faculty and staff (Lundsford, Crisp, Dolan, & Wuetherick, 2017).

Learning community peer mentors at Iowa State receive training and information about campus and community resources, involvement opportunities, active and empathetic listening strategies, and how to make effective referrals.




SURVEY Findings


Respondents to the Peer Mentor Survey either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement:



 *My peer mentor was very beneficial to me as he informed my peers and I a lot **about Iowa State and what is has to offer**... He is **very knowledgeable** about the university and the [degree] offered here.*

*[My peer mentor] is a very intelligent, helpful, and friendly mentor who had helped me with a variety of **websites and outside resources**.* 

 *I gained more insight into specific **classes and opportunities** my peer mentor has taken that helped her succeed in a similar major as mine. She also heavily **encouraged ClubFest**.*

*I learned about degree requirements and how to make a plan and schedule for my classes, how to send an email professionally, about **resources within ISU** to help with **classes or personal issues**, and more!* 



GENERAL GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

SURVEY Findings

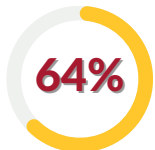
Respondents to the Peer Mentor Survey either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:



My peer mentor provides me with useful information



My peer mentor has kept me informed about upcoming learning community activities



I have sought out my peer mentor for assistance



Overall my peer mentor has been helpful



My peer mentor is knowledgeable about the issues discussed in my learning community



*[My peer mentor] was very helpful when trying to find ways to **become more involved** and **connected on the campus**.*

*It is nice to connect to someone who is a current student. It feels like they **understand my struggles** a little bit more and they feel **easier to talk to about issues** I am having since they may have gone through the same issues recently.*



*What sets [my peer mentor] apart is her genuine passion for **seeing others succeed**. She goes above and beyond to **share resources**, **offer feedback**, and **check in regularly**, creating a strong sense of community.*

The Peer Mentor Survey takes place during weeks six through eight of the fall semester. This survey is designed to gather feedback from learning community (LC) participants about their interactions with peer mentors during the first half of the semester. LC coordinators, the faculty and staff who coordinate the individual LCs, are provided with a unique report link to review responses for their LC(s). They are encouraged to share this feedback with their peer mentors individually in order to identify positive attributes and potential areas for improvement for the remainder of the semester.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

This report contains responses from the Peer Mentor Survey run during the fall 2024 semester. The survey is administered through the Qualtrics survey platform via anonymous response link. Item responses ranged from **2,895** to **2,898** (-220 from fall 2023). Respondents were encouraged to complete the survey as many times as necessary to provide feedback for each peer mentor with whom they interacted within the LC. Since responses were anonymous, no demographic data was captured.

A full version of the survey items can be found on the [Iowa State Learning Communities website](#).

References

- Bean, J.P., and Metzner, B.S. (1985). A conceptual model of nontraditional undergraduate student attrition. *Review of Educational Research*, 55, 485-540.
- Campbell, T. A., & Campbell, D. E. (1997). Faculty/student mentor program: Effects on academic performance and retention. *Research in Higher Education*, 38, 727-742.
- Colvin, J. W., & Ashman, M. (2010). Roles, risks, and benefits of peer mentoring relationships in higher education. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in learning*, 18(2), 121-134, doi:10.1080/13611261003678879
- Dziczkowski, J. (2013). Mentoring and leadership development. In *The Educational Forum* (Vol. 77, No. 3, pp. 351-360). Taylor & Francis Group. doi:10.1080/00131725.2013.792896
- Hill, R., and Reddy, P. (2007). Undergraduate peer mentoring: An investigation into processes, activities and outcomes. *Psychology Learning and Teaching*, 6, 98-103.
- Jacobi, M. (1991). Mentoring and undergraduate academic success: A literature review. *Review of Educational Research*, 61, 505-32.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2002). *The leadership challenge*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lunsford, L. G., Crisp, G., Dolan, E. L., & Wuetherick, B. (2017). Mentoring in higher education. *The SAGE Handbook of Mentoring*, 20, 316-334.
- Nora, A., & Crisp, G. (2007). Mentoring students: Conceptualizing and validating the multi-dimensions of a support system. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice*, 9(3), 337-356.
- Rieske, L. J. and Benjamin, M. (2015). Utilizing peer mentor roles in learning communities. In M. Benjamin (Ed.), *Learning communities from start to finish*. (New Directions for Student Services, no. 149, pp. 67-77). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. doi:10.1002/ss.20118
- Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Educational Research*, 45, 89-125.