

NC State Graduate English Peer Mentor Program – Mentor Overview

The mission of the NC State Graduate English Mentoring Program is twofold:

1. To develop mentoring skills and leadership capacity within graduate students [mentors] and
2. To facilitate the formation of a social-support system, trusting professional relationships, and a sense of inclusion and community for incoming 1st year graduate students [mentees].

The NC State Graduate English Mentor Program matches English graduate students with second-year graduate students who have established at least a year of graduate studies under the English department. The program is designed to give students access to an experienced individual to turn to for guidance, advice, direction, and to help students broaden their professional networks, enhance their graduate experience, and prepare for and acquire insights into the job search process. The official program will conclude at the end of the academic school year as each year will bring a new cohort of students and graduate exiting seniors.

IMPORTANT: *The NC State Graduate English Mentor Program is NOT a job placement program. Mentors will not be expected to open doors to specific jobs (or any job) for their Mentees.*

REQUIREMENTS FOR MENTORS:

- Must be an English graduate program student (MA, MFA, MSTC) with more than 18 credit hours towards their graduate degree. To be considered for the Mentor Program, she/he must be a student in good academic standing.
- Commit to the time and communication requirements as mutually agreed upon between mentor and mentee. At a minimum, there should be five face-to-face meetings per academic year.
- Attend the annual NC State Faculty-Student Social at Aloft on orientation day.
- Complete the program surveys at various intervals throughout the year.

MATCHING PROCESS:

The Director of Graduate Program and the Graduate Services Coordinator will randomly pair students together by concentration. Matches will be based on availability. It may happen that your valued experience and expertise is not the right match for a student in a given year.

THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP:

The Mentorship Program affords both the second-year and first-year graduate student the opportunity to develop a dynamic relationship from which both participants benefit. The ideal mentoring relationship is one that exceeds fact-finding and delves into personal knowledge and experience. Good mentoring relationships do not just “happen.” They take effort, patience, and planning, But the returns are great and will have a positive impact on you and your mentee for many years to come.

BENEFITS OF MENTORING:

While the advantages of a mentoring program for our first-year students are obvious, second-years also benefit from the program:

- Encourage your own personal and professional growth.
- Exposure to the emerging talent pool.
- Professional distinction as someone who can serve as an example and role model for others.
- Enhancement of coaching, leadership, and management skills.
- Develop a lasting career network.
- Provides intrinsic satisfaction by helping an emerging professional develop to his/her potential.

If at any point you have questions, concerns, or feel your mentee is not cooperating, please contact Graduate Services Coordinator Jenny Tiet (919.515.4106 or email graduate-english@ncsu.edu).

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TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MENTORING

DO:

- Make every effort to keep your appointments with your mentee.
- Actively listen to questions and concerns.
- Encourage discussion.
- Attempt to meet your mentee's needs.
- Assist your mentee in expanding her/his support network. Discuss the importance of maintaining positive relationships and help your mentee broaden her/his professional network and build a community of mentors.
- Look for opportunities that your mentee should explore and encourage her/him to explore them.
- Communicate your expectations of the mentee clearly at the beginning of the relationship.
- Create an environment of open communication and active listening.
- Invite the mentee to see what you do, both on and off the job. Share your own successes and failures. Let the mentee see your human side and encourage her/him to reciprocate.
- Share what you have learned about specific jobs, career paths, organizational cultures and industries.
- Use email when requesting, scheduling and verifying plans with your mentee. Pose questions that are not time-sensitive to your mentee, and try to maintain a sense of contact when one or both partners are finding it difficult to schedule a mutual time.

DON'T:

- Use email to give critical feedback, exchange impressions on sensitive issues or communicate an issue that can be "read" in more ways than one.
- Become overwhelmed with your mentee's problems. Remain calm and dispassionate.
- Give up if the relationship seems to stall.
- Hesitate to provide your mentee with constructive feedback about areas for personal and professional development.
- Hesitate to contact the Graduate Services Coordinator if you are having trouble connecting with your mentee or if work pressures prevent you from fulfilling your mentor commitment.
- Hesitate to provide candid feedback to the Graduate Services Coordinator regarding your satisfaction with the mentoring program and opportunities for improvement.
- Expect to have all the answers. In most cases, it helps your mentee just to know and feel as though he/she has been heard and supported.