

***Student Resource Booklet
For Interacting with Mentors***

The Power of Mentoring

For

**Students of
Resilient Scholars Program**

**CSUN Faculty Mentor Program
Professor Glenn Omatsu
c/o Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)
205 University Hall
(818) 677-4151**

glenn.omatsu@csun.edu

www.csun.edu/eop/fmp_index.html

The Power of Mentoring

According to CSUN EOP Director José Luis Vargas, **the single most important factor for students' success on this campus is their ability to find mentors.** He came to this conclusion based on his many years of experiences on this campus: first as an undergraduate, then as a graduate student, next as an advisor helping students, and finally as a top administrator. Finding mentors, he believes, helps students to succeed academically. In addition, finding mentors helps students with career planning. And perhaps most important of all, having mentors helps students develop life management skills, such as dealing with personal and family challenges that often affect academic work. José Luis Vargas believes that mentors are especially important for freshmen from low-income families who are the first in their families to go to college. Why are mentors so important for new students?

Consider this: For a new student, a university can be an exciting but also intimidating place. A university can also be a lonely place for a new student, especially if that student is the first in their family to go to college, the child of immigrant parents, or a member of a minority community. Even simple things that experienced students take for granted can be challenging for a new student, such as finding classrooms and offices on campus, understanding school policies for registration for classes, and learning the special language of the university such as “a hold,” “office hours,” “annotations,” and “prerequisites.” A small number of new students learn the answers by directly asking professors in their classes or comfortably talking to university staff. But many, many students hold back in asking questions. This is why finding mentors is so important for freshmen.

A mentor is defined as a knowledgeable and experienced guide, a trusted ally and advocate, and a caring role model. An effective mentor is respectful, reliable, patient, trustworthy, and a very good listener and communicator. A mentor helps students. Specifically, **a mentor helps students discover and develop the potential within themselves to succeed in the university and in life.** In a university, mentors can be found among faculty and professional staff. But mentors can also be found in the ranks of students themselves. Student mentors are known as Peer Mentors. Due to their close association with other students, Peer Mentors are very important. Often new students confronted with an academic or personal problem will seek out advice first from a Peer Mentor and only with encouragement will that student contact others in the university, such as counselors, faculty, or administrators.

But finding a mentor at a big university is not easy, especially for a student who is a first-generation college student. Thus, at universities that have made a commitment to help students, administrators have set up advising and tutoring services for freshmen. However, in these programs not all helpers are mentors. Some simply see their work as jobs and interact with students like bureaucrats. Mentors are those who understand their interactions with students as not simply jobs but as opportunities **to help others discover the potential within themselves to succeed in the university and in life**. Mentors help to nurture this potential in other students. In other words, what distinguishes Mentors from other people who do advising and tutoring is not the amount of work they do but *the quality and kind of work* they do. Mentors bring to their work as advisors and tutors the consciousness of the importance of mentoring.

Mentoring as the “Giving and Receiving of Wisdom”

- *Learning How to Be “Mentored on the Run” at CSUN*
- *Using the Help of a Community of Mentors at CSUN*
 - *Promoting a Culture of Mentoring at CSUN*

When we hear the word mentoring, most of us create the following image in our minds: that of an old sage (almost always male and white with long hair and often a flowing beard) sitting for hours in a secluded space and providing advice to a young person. Of course, in the real world, mentors come from all races of people, are both young and old, female as well as male, and have hair or no hair. However, the popular and dominant image of a mentor helps us to become more aware of an even deeper stereotype we have of mentoring. We tend to define mentoring around “big moments.” Specifically, we conceptualize mentoring as one-to-one, long-term relationships involving a wizened sage transferring wisdom to a single disciple in magical moments created over long periods of interaction. In reality, mentors in our lives can be sages, but they are more likely “ordinary” people all around us. In the real world, mentoring is reciprocal and not one-way — i.e., mentoring involves an interactive process in which both the mentor and mentee benefit. Also, in the real world, mentoring is more than an isolated relationship of two individuals; most mentoring occurs in a web of relationships with others (i.e., within a community). And, perhaps most important, mentoring in the real world occurs not only in “big moments” but mainly in “little moments” — i.e., as part of our daily interactions with others. Nevertheless, our understanding of mentoring is often limited by the stereotype of what we believe it to be.

In their small book, *Mentoring: The Tao of Giving and Receiving Wisdom*, Chungliang Al Huang and Jerry Lynch remind us about the mentoring opportunities that are always all around us. They define mentoring as “the giving and receiving of wisdom” within a web of relationships. Through the interactions that mentors have with others, they share the “gift of wisdom and [have] it graciously appreciated and received by others who then carry the gift to all those

within their sphere of influence.” Mentoring, Huang and Lynch further emphasize, occurs within a community, and mentoring activities help to promote a culture of wisdom throughout this community.

According to Huang and Lynch’s expanded understanding of mentoring, each of us daily has many opportunities to serve as both a mentor and mentee with those around us. Yes, mentoring does occur in special “big moments” — those built up through relationships with a few individuals that we have worked with intensely for years — but we need to more fully recognize that most of the most powerful acts of mentoring happen during “little moments.” The “little moments” occur in our day-to-day interactions with others all around us. But to capture the potential contained in these “little moments,” we need to expand our consciousness and overcome our stereotype that mentoring consists of “big moments.”

How can this new understanding of mentoring help us at this time at CSUN? Currently, most of us feel besieged by many impersonal forces: massive budget cutbacks, increasing student fees, and uncertainty about the future. Politicians and CSU officials want faculty and students to accomplish more with fewer resources. In the midst of this turbulence, we frequently hear students and faculty talk about the need for a greater sense of community on our campus, better communication, and more opportunities for interactions. Students want faculty and other campus mentors who not only can help them advance academically but who can understand them as people. This sentiment is keenly felt by students from immigrant backgrounds and by other students who are the first generation in their families attending college. Meanwhile, many potential mentors on our campus feel they have no time to do so.

If there were ever a time to emphasize mentoring at CSUN, now is the time. Of course, the concept of mentoring by itself cannot solve all the major challenges facing our campus, whether these be responding to budget shortfalls, accelerating student graduation rates, or promoting educational equity and diversity. However, an emphasis on mentoring — or more specifically, the creation of a “culture of mentoring” at CSUN — could help to create the conditions necessary to unleash the creativity and energy of students, staff, faculty, and administrators across our campus.

Still, the persistent stereotype that mentoring consists only of “big moments” holds us back from advancing and seeing all the potential “little moments” of mentoring surrounding us.

More than a decade ago, following a series of campus townhall meetings, Dr. Gordon Nakagawa coined the concept of “mentoring on the run” to capture the “little moments” of mentoring already happening on our campus. These “little moments” are embedded in the work of some faculty, staff, and student peer mentors who consciously use each interaction with others on our campus as a mentoring opportunity. Countering the widespread belief that mentoring at a large, commuter campus can only impact a handful of students, Dr. Nakagawa found faculty who had embedded “little moments” of mentoring in their classroom instruction and their informal interactions with students outside the classroom. He found professional staff who had infused mentoring into their work as helpers of students. He found student peer mentors who adeptly helped fellow students access campus resources and maneuver through the bureaucratic maze of the university. He found busy students who effectively used these “little moments” to gain help and support from those around them.

During the past decade, the Faculty Mentor Program has strategically focused on increasing awareness about the power of these “little moments” of mentoring and training faculty, staff, and student peer mentors in this approach. We believe that “mentoring on the run” — rather than representing a stunted or limited form of mentoring — is an advanced form of mentoring that is ideally suited to our large, commuter campus. Moreover, because so much of the existing research on the importance of mentoring focuses on the “big moments,” we at CSUN can greatly contribute to the mentoring literature by developing insight into the power of the “little moments.” Thus, our current efforts to advance understanding of “mentoring on the run” here at CSUN may have implications far beyond our campus.

As we develop our capacity to both “mentor on the run” and “be mentored on the run,” we will be able to change the deeply ingrained image of mentoring within our minds. Gradually, a new image will take shape — one that is rooted in the reality of the little mentoring moments and the “giving and receiving wisdom” in our daily interactions with others. This new image will not only center on the power of “little moments” of mentoring but the importance of building a “community of mentors” here at CSUN and promoting a “culture of mentoring” on our campus. We can all be part of this change.

You're Receiving the Gift of Mentoring When . . .

A mentor smiles at you and asks how you're doing.

A mentor smiles at you and asks how you're doing -- even when you don't respond.

A mentor sees the potential in you that is hidden to others -- and perhaps even to yourself.

A mentor shares stories about their educational career and the ways she or he succeeded.

A mentor really listens to you with your best interests in mind.

A faculty mentor remembers your name and uses it often in class.

A mentor answers your questions and not the questions you are supposed to ask.

A mentor knows more about you than only how you are doing academically.

A mentor reaches out to you when you may be in trouble.

A mentor hears about an opportunity and thinks about how it could benefit you.

A faculty mentor or peer mentor gets to class 10 minutes early to make themselves available to you and fellow students.

A mentor posts a note of encouragement on your Facebook Wall.

A mentor challenges you to do better in your classes because they know you can do better.

Please add your own insights:

Misconceptions about Mentoring

Misconception: In a university, mentors are older people with gray hair (or no hair).

Reality: In a university, mentors can be young or old. Some of the most outstanding mentors of students are fellow students, or Peer Mentors.

Misconception: Mentoring only happens one-to-one on a long-term basis.

Reality: At a big university, mentoring occurs in many different ways. Some mentoring relationships are traditional relationships involving a one-to-one setting over a long period of time. But effective mentoring can also occur in a group setting or even through a single encounter. In other words, for a student, each interaction with a faculty member, a staff member, or a peer mentor is an opportunity to be mentored.

Misconception: Mentoring programs at universities only are for high-achieving students, especially those who are on their way to grad school.

Reality: All college students need mentors, but according to research faculty in universities spend most of their time working with high-achieving students. In the late 1960s, students and community activists created programs like EOP to open opportunities in higher education for low-income, first-generation college students and to provide students with necessary support services such as mentoring to help them succeed academically and serve their communities. Thus, central to the mission of EOP is the practice of mentoring and to ensure that the university meets this responsibility for all of its students.

Misconception: Only the person being mentored benefits from mentoring.

Reality: By definition, mentoring is a reciprocal relationship where both the mentor and mentee learn from each other. True mentors are those who have developed the wisdom to learn from those they mentor.

Misconception: Faculty, staff, and peer mentors have a lot of responsibilities and do not have the time to take on extra responsibilities relating to mentoring.

Reality: Mentoring is not a separate set of activities that are different from advising, tutoring or working as a student assistant in an office. Mentoring relates to consciousness about a person's work as a faculty member, staff member, or peer mentor. Without this consciousness, faculty, staff, and peer mentors are perceived by fellow students as junior bureaucrats focusing on

rules, regulations, and procedures. Universities don't need more bureaucrats. Universities do need people who are student-centered and who can see and nurture the potential in others.

Misconception: By calling oneself a “Mentor,” a person becomes a mentor.

Reality: Not all faculty, staff, or peer mentors are mentors, even if they have that job title. Mentors are those who have developed consciousness about mentoring and in their interactions with students demonstrate respect, patience, trustworthiness, and strong communication skills, especially listening skills.

Misconception: Becoming a mentor requires a lot of time and a lot of work.

Reality: Becoming a mentor requires a change in consciousness — i.e., how people think about themselves and others. Workshops and training sessions can help people to develop this consciousness. Mentoring is not a matter of working harder or longer or adding to their job responsibilities but seeing their work differently.

Misconception: At a large university, one mentor can help only a limited number of students. Although a mentor may want to help large numbers of students, the cold reality is that she or he can only work with a select few.

Reality: Each interaction with a student is a mentoring opportunity, even a single encounter with a student. The key is to develop consciousness about the importance of mentoring in your interactions with fellow students and to infuse this consciousness in your daily work as a tutor or advisor. Also, it's important for mentors to see themselves as part of a network of other mentors — as part of a Community of Mentors. To effectively help a particular student or a group of students, mentors can draw upon this network or community. Mentoring occurs in a community, not in isolation.

Understanding Your Mentors

Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

What a Mentor Is . . .

By Dr. Gordon Nakagawa

Mentor roles and responsibilities are varied and complex. Serving as a guide, facilitator, role model, and/or ally to the mentee, a mentor must be prepared to take on a range of roles and responsibilities that may change as the mentor/mentee relationship develops over time, as the needs and goals of the mentee shift, and as specific contexts and situations require different strategies. Although it's not possible to pigeonhole any mentor, mentee, or mentoring relationship, a mentor will generally enact a number of common roles and responsibilities. It's worth emphasizing that whatever role the mentor may take, the mentor's principal goal, as Paulo Freire reminds us, is to invite and nurture the "total autonomy, freedom, and development of those he or she mentors."

A mentor is . . .

- **A knowledgeable and experienced guide** who teaches (and learns) through a commitment to the mutual growth of both mentee and mentor.
- **A caring, thoughtful, and humane facilitator** who provides access to people, places, experiences, and resources outside the mentee's routine environment.
- **A role model** who exemplifies in word and deed what it means to be an ethical, responsible, and compassionate human being.
- **A trusted ally, or advocate**, who works with (not for) the mentee and on behalf of the mentee's best interests and goals.

Understanding Your Mentors

What a Mentor Is Not

By Dr. Gordon Nakagawa

Mentors and mentees should understand that mentors cannot be all things to their mentees. A role model is not a flawless idol to be mindlessly emulated by the mentee; an experienced guide is not a surrogate parents who stands in as a mother or father figure; a caring facilitator is not a professional therapist who is capable of treating serious personal problems; a trusted ally or advocate is not a social worker or a financier. Often, mentors and mentees encounter problems in their relationships due to different ideas about the appropriate role(s) and responsibilities of the mentor, mentee, or both. There are boundaries in virtually all relationships, and the mentor/mentee relationship is no exception. While there are no hard and fast rules, and while there may be rare exceptions, there are guidelines for what a mentor is (or should be) and for what a mentor is not (or should not be).

A mentor is *not* . . .

- **A (surrogate) parent.**
- **A professional counselor or therapist.**
- **A flawless or infallible idol.**
- **A social worker.**
- **A lending institution.**
- **A playmate or romantic partner.**

Mentors' Main Objectives Should Be to:

1. Establish a positive, personal relationship with their mentee(s).

- Avoid acting as if they were nothing more than a professional service provider (“I’m here to do a job; I’m *not* here to be your friend!” Make a proactive effort to act as a guide, a “coach,” and an ally and advocate.
- Regular interaction and consistent support are important in many mentoring relationships.
- Trust and respect must be established. Once a positive relationship is developed, it is much easier to realize the remaining three goals.

2. Help their mentee(s) to develop academic and life skills.

- Work to accomplish specific goals (e.g., help on a homework assignment or peer advising about the best use of “free” time).
- When and where appropriate, emphasize life-management skills, such as decision-making, goal setting, time management, dealing with conflict, values clarification, and skills for coping with stress and fear.

3. Assist mentee(s) in accessing academic and university resources.

- Provide information — or better yet, help mentee(s) to find information — about resources (faculty, staff, academic support services, student organizations, etc.). Assist mentee(s) in learning how to use these resources.

4. Enhance their mentee’s ability to interact comfortably and productively with people/groups from diverse backgrounds.

- The mentors’ own willingness to interact with individuals and groups different from themselves will make a powerful statement about the value placed on diversity. Model the attitudes and behaviors that they emphasize.

- Contrary to popular belief, we are *not* “all the same.” It is important to acknowledge and understand, not ignore, our differences. We need to learn how to use our differences as resources for growth. Respecting differences is necessary but not sufficient; we need to know how to negotiate our differences in ways that produce new understandings and insights.
- Everyone holds particular preconceptions and stereotypes about one’s own group and other groups. Take special care to not (intentionally or unintentionally) promote their own views and values at the expense of their mentees’ viewpoints. Work at critically examining their own perspectives on race, ethnicity, culture, class, religion, sexual orientation, etc.

[Adapted from Mentor Training Curriculum, National Mentoring Working Group convened by United Way of America and One to One, 1991, in *One to One “Mentoring 101” Curriculum*, The California Mentoring Partnership.]

Understanding Your Mentors

A mentor should not . . . *

- Break promises.
- Condone disrespectful or destructive behavior.
- Talk down to a mentee.
- Coerce the mentee into taking any action.
- Exploit or take advantage of the mentee.
- Be inconsistent.
- Become a crutch.
- Break confidentiality (except in cases of potential harm to the mentee or to other people).

• Adapted by Dr. Gordon Nakagawa from a handout distributed by David F. James, Mentoring Institute, "Diversity in Mentoring Conference," International Mentoring Association, Temple, AZ, April 3, 1997.

Developing a Mentoring Perspective

Who Are Our Mentors?

Directions: [1] **Write the names** of any and all individuals who have served as mentors in your life; [2] **circle the name of *one* person** who has been especially important or influential in your academic and/or personal growth; [3] **identify one or two characteristics** that describe your mentor(s).

Who?

Characteristics?

Based on your description of mentors and their characteristics, think about the *process of mentoring*. What does it mean to say that we are engaged in a “mentoring” relationship? What do mentors do in practice?

What Is EOP, and Who Are EOP Students?

By Glenn Omatsu

At CSUN, EOP (Educational Opportunity Program) serves as the conscience of the university and the center for innovation and creativity. EOP has served these two important roles for four decades.

EOP serves as the conscience of CSUN by reminding administrators and faculty – sometimes gently and other times loudly – of their fundamental responsibilities to serve the needs of low-income students, to carry out the university’s mission of advancing diversity and educational equity, and to defend the right of all people in California to a college education.

EOP serves as the center for innovation at CSUN by pioneering initiatives relating to admissions, instruction and pedagogy, student services, community outreach, community service, and other aspects of university life. Today, many initiatives launched by EOP have become standard practices at CSUN. These include student advising, mentoring and tutorial projects, transitional programs to help freshmen succeed in college, pedagogical innovations to improve learning outcomes, and retention strategies to increase student persistence rates for graduation.

For the past decade, EOP is best known for its innovative approaches in working with “special-admit” freshmen through its Bridge Transitional Programs. “Special-admit” freshmen are a subset of EOP students who were admitted to CSUN by EOP based on their high motivation and capacity to deal with life obstacles despite having low grades and test scores in high school. To help these students succeed at CSUN, EOP during the past decade reorganized its Bridge Transitional Programs to emphasize long-term learning communities and linked and integrated curricula – all built on the foundation of mentoring.

Today, growing numbers of officials in the CSU system are recognizing CSUN EOP as one of the system’s foremost models of a “learning-centered” program. EOP has gained this recognition due to its innovative approach that integrally links

together its admission process, its student services, and its classroom academics to promote success for its students.

Officially, here is how EOP defines itself on its CSUN website: “EOP designs, administers, and supports programs that deliver access and retention services to CSUN students. Established in the Fall of 1968 by a legislative mandate, EOP focuses on highly motivated low-income, first-generation college students, a population that not only reflects the diversity of CSUN's feeder communities, but also the diversity of the university itself. Currently the total undergraduate enrollment of EOP students is approximately 2650 students (8% of university population).”

At CSUN in the late 1960s, student activists and community supporters embedded mentoring into the founding mission of EOP. Mentoring permeated all aspects of EOP’s work with students. For example, EOP founders connected the admission of low-income students from historically disadvantaged communities to retention services to enable them to succeed. Moreover, for EOP founders, mentoring did not refer to traditional one-to-one matching programs with designated “mentoring times.” Instead, mentoring was infused into all interactions of staff and peer mentors working with students. These EOP mentors worked together as a community and in the process created a distinct EOP culture of mentoring on this campus. Today, the core principles of the CSUN Faculty Mentor Program – “mentoring on the run,” building a “community of mentors,” and promoting a “culture of mentoring” on our campus – are drawn from the founding mission of EOP and its cornerstone of mentoring.

Who, then, are today’s EOP students? Officially, CSUN administrators define them as low-income students who are the first in their families to attend college. In contrast, EOP leaders define their students as much, much more. First, EOP students are high potential students. They are students who have been admitted into EOP through its holistic and deliberative admissions process involving several steps, including group and individual interviews. Second, EOP students who participate in the Bridge Transitional Programs for freshmen are students who embrace RRAM: the values of Respect, Responsibility, (positive) Attitude and Maturity. Third, EOP students, as a result of working with mentors, want to give back to EOP and the home communities that nurtured them.

Overall EOP is a vital part of our university. All students, all faculty, and all staff at CSUN benefit from the existence of EOP. And all people in California benefit from the accomplishments of EOP students.

Investigating a “Culture of Mentoring” on Campus

Visit and quickly observe about three to five offices on your campus to identify both positive and negative examples of a “culture of mentoring.” Find at least one example of an office with a positive “culture of mentoring” for students and only one example of a negative “culture of mentoring.” If you cannot find any positive examples, identify offices that have “mixed” cultures with both positive and negative elements.

Campus offices with a positive “culture of mentoring” have the following characteristics:

- Students hang out in these offices regularly and visit them frequently, even when they don’t need to go there for official business.
- Staff in the office don’t have the mainstream mentoring mindset that believes mentoring of students only occurs formally through one-on-one meetings and designated “mentoring times”; instead, staff have mastered the alternative mindset that mentoring occurs in every interaction with students, no matter how brief.
- Everyone in the offices emphasizes “human interactions” in their encounters with students.
- Staff — especially student assistants — answer the phone with a smile.
- If the office has a reception area for student visitors, the space doesn’t look like a dentist’s waiting room or the DMV waiting area.
- Even though everyone in the office is busy, all staff are still able to answer students’ questions — with a smile.
- There is remarkable consistency in behaviors and attitudes between the highest-ranking person in the office (boss, manager, director, etc.) and the lowest-ranking person (e.g., student assistant).
- Staff interact with each other as a “community of mentors” — they help each other, nurture each other, and provide support without having to be told to do so.
- Visitors often hear warm laughter in the office.
- Staff working in this office — especially student assistants — seem to like working there.
- Based on your brief observations, if you were to ask a student visitor to describe the “culture of mentoring” in this office with three adjectives, what three adjectives would they say?

Discussion: Are You Using All Your Strength as a Freshman?

Some freshmen are having problems in Fall Semester because they are not using all of their strength to do well in their first year of college. Students need to learn how to use both their “inner strength” and their “outer strength.”

Using All Your Strength

A young boy was walking with his father along a country road. When they came across a very large tree branch, the boy asked, "Do you think I could move that?"

His father answered, "If you use all your strength, I'm sure you can."

The boy tried mightily to lift, pull, and push the branch, but he couldn't budge it.

Discouraged, he said, "Dad, you were wrong. I can't do it." His dad said, "Try again."

This time, as the boy struggled with the task, his father joined him. Together they pushed the branch aside.

"Son," the father said, "the first time you didn't use all your strength. You didn't ask me to help."

This is an important lesson. There are many things we can't do alone, but that doesn't mean we can't get them done. We're all surrounded by resources that can be mobilized to help us achieve our goals including family, friends, and faith.

Sometimes we fail to ask for help because of pride or stubbornness. Sometimes we think it's a sign of weakness to admit we need a hand. And sometimes we don't even think about asking for help. Whatever the reason, it's a waste.

It's important that we learn to use all our strength. This includes inner resources such as discipline, courage, and even love. It also includes outer resources. Just as we should be willing to help others, we should be willing to ask the help of others. It's one of the great things about being human.

Michael Josephson from "Character Counts"

Learning How to Serve as Mentors for Each Other

Becoming a member of the Resilient Scholars community carries with it several responsibilities. One of the most important responsibilities is learning how to serve as a mentor for fellow community members. Learning how to become a mentor is a process, and the first step is learning how to be mentored by others. Think about how mentors have helped you recently, especially mentors here at CSUN. Then read the following scenario and answer the questions:

Scenario

In the Resilient Scholars community, one member is no longer attending meetings and events and not responding to leader Jina's requests to meet with her. Jina also learns that the student has poor attendance in all classes and has recently not been doing assignments. The student is now in danger of failing classes and getting kicked out of CSUN. One of the student's friends in Resilient Scholars remembers that the student at the beginning of the year mentioned that it was difficult to trust people and to talk about issues and challenges in life. In the past, the student tried to deal with these issues alone even though that often didn't work. At the same time, the friend remembers that the student really wants to be in college and do well as a freshman.

- Why do you think this student is not asking for help from mentors even though the issues bothering her or him are affecting grades and even the chance to stay in college?
- What would you do to help this fellow Resilient Scholar? How would you serve as a mentor for this member of your community?
- What advice would you give to leader Jina about what she should do to help this fellow member of your community? Specifically, what should Jina do? What should Jina not do? Why?
- Jina has many years of experience helping students, and she says that oftentimes students who need help wait too long and ask for help at the last minute. At that time, mentors can't do much to help students. Why do students wait too long to ask for help? How can mentors in Resilient Scholars – including yourself – help to make sure that this does not happen to fellow members?

Name _____

Mentoring Survey for College Students

According to one longtime CSUN administrator, the single most important factor for students' academic success on this campus is their capacity to find mentors.

- I agree with this statement.
- I don't agree with this statement.
- I don't know.
- I don't understand what this administrator means.

In your first year of college, do you want to find mentors on this campus?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Check the statement that best describes you at this time.

- As a relatively new college student, it's important for me to do everything by myself.
- As a relatively new college student, I want to learn how to use the help of others.
- As a relatively new college student, I want to learn how to do things by myself while also using the help of others.

How would you want mentors to help you in your first year of college (check all answers that apply)?

- Meet with me and both listen and talk to me.
- Meet with me and do all the talking.
- Give me suggestions about campus resources.
- Provide guidance to me about dealing with personal and family problems.
- Help me understand academic expectations in college.
- Give me advice about how to work with mentors on campus.
- Other: _____
- I am not interesting in having mentors help me.

What are the three most important qualities defining a good mentor for college students?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic expertise | <input type="checkbox"/> Good listener | <input type="checkbox"/> Resourceful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kind | <input type="checkbox"/> Approachable | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Experienced | <input type="checkbox"/> Strict | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic | <input type="checkbox"/> Patient | <input type="checkbox"/> Challenging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ | | |

For a college student, which of the following people make the best mentors?

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professors | <input type="checkbox"/> Advisors and other CSUN staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More experienced college students | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other family members | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends from high school |

The peer mentor and professor who gave you this survey also filled it out. Are you interested in how they answered each of these questions?

- Yes, I am interested
- No, I am not interested

Name _____

Mentoring Survey for Resilient Scholar Program Leaders

According to one long-time CSUN administrator, the single most important factor for students' academic success on this campus is their capacity to find mentors.

- I agree with this statement.
- I don't agree with this statement.
- I don't know.
- I don't understand what this administrator means.

In your undergraduate years, did you actively seek out mentors on campus?

- Yes
- No
- I don't remember

How did mentors help you during your undergraduate years? (check all answers that apply)

- Gave me advice about academic challenges facing me
- Gave me advice about career plans
- Gave me suggestions about using campus resources
- Provided guidance to me about dealing with personal and family problems.
- Helped me understand academic expectations in graduate school
- Gave me advice about how to work with mentors on campus
- Other: _____
- I was not interested in having mentors help me.

What are the three most important qualities defining a good mentor for Resilient Scholars?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic expertise | <input type="checkbox"/> Good listener | <input type="checkbox"/> Resourceful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kind | <input type="checkbox"/> Approachable | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Experienced | <input type="checkbox"/> Strict | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic | <input type="checkbox"/> Patient | <input type="checkbox"/> Challenging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ | | |

For a college student, which of the following people make the best mentors?

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professors | <input type="checkbox"/> Advisors and other CSUN staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More experienced college students | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other family members | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends from high school |

Are you interested in seeing the answers of each Resilient Scholar to this survey?

- Yes, because _____
- No, because _____

Talking with Professors:

Some Suggestions for EOP Freshmen

During this semester, how many times have you done the following things in your classes?

Asked questions to professors: ___ times

Participated in class discussions: ___ times

Talked to professors before or after class: ___ times

During this semester, how many times have you visited your professors during office hours?

___ Never

___ Once

___ Two or three times

___ More than four times

What are the main reasons that freshmen do not visit their professors during office hours?

___ They don't know what to say or do

___ They are afraid

___ They are too busy to go

___ They are doing well in class and don't need to talk to their professors

___ Other: _____

Why is it important for EOP freshmen to learn how to talk with their professors and visit them during office hours? Write down at least three important things.

From discussing this question with fellow EOP freshmen, write down three more important things that you heard.

Write down two examples of "lower-level questions" that you can ask in your classes. (See the next page for examples)

Write down two examples of "higher-level questions" that you can ask in your classes. (See the next page for examples)

A Guide to Asking Good Questions

Lower-level Questions

Knowledge – identification and recall of information

- Who, what, when, where how _____?
- Describe _____

Comprehension – organization and selection of facts and ideas

- Retell _____ in your own words.
- What is the main idea of _____.

Higher-level Questions

Application – use of facts, rules, principles

- How is _____ an example of _____?
- How is _____ related to _____?
- Why is _____ significant?

Analysis – separation of a whole into component parts

- What are the parts or features of _____?
- Classify _____ according to _____.
- Outline/diagram _____.
- How does _____ compare/contrast with _____?
- What evidence can you list for _____?

Synthesis – combination of ideas to form a new whole

- What would you predict/infer from _____?
- What ideas can you add to _____?
- How would you create/design a new _____?
- What might happen if you combined _____ with _____?
- What solutions would you suggest for _____?

Evaluation – development of opinions, judgments, or decisions

- Do you agree _____?
- What do you think about _____?
- What is the most important _____?
- Prioritize _____.
- How would you decide about _____?
- What criteria would you use to assess _____?

What Is the Difference Between a “C Student” and an “A Student”?

Most EOP freshmen associate getting A’s in classes with the following things:

- Reading all assigned materials
- Underlining and highlighting important materials in assigned readings and taking notes
- Starting on assignments early and not finishing them at the last minute
- Taking careful notes from professors’ lectures and reviewing the notes regularly
- Knowing how to study for tests
- For essays and research papers, starting early enough to write several drafts
- Studying at least three hours for each hour spent in a class
- Always being well-prepared in classes by having the required books and other materials
- Having some fun in college, but not to the neglect of studying

Most EOP freshmen associate getting C’s in classes with the following things:

- Doing just enough work to get by
- Doing some assigned readings but not all
- Starting on assignments late and sometimes not completely finishing them
- Not always paying attention in class
- Doing some studying for tests
- For essays and research papers, turning in first drafts as final papers
- Not always having all the required books and other materials for classes
- Doing some studying but making sure that studying doesn’t interfere with having fun

In reality, EOP freshmen who follow the above guidelines for getting C’s in their classes will end up failing most of their classes.

In reality, experienced EOP students know that the difference between getting A’s and getting C’s in classes also depends on learning how to “study smart.” To learn how to “study smart,” go to the next page.

Learn How to “Study Smart” to Get A’s Rather Than C’s

Here are some things that experienced EOP students suggest:

- **Set Goals:** Each semester before your classes begin, set goals. What grades do you want? What do you need to do to get that grade? Remember that no experienced EOP student sets a goal of getting a C. Those who have a goal to “just get by” are freshmen who are usually gone after their first semester of college.
- **Go to All Your Classes — Don’t Miss Classes:** One experienced EOP student said: “When I was a freshmen, I used to think I didn’t need to go to all of my classes all the time. I used to take days off like I did in high school. Now that I’m a junior, I don’t ever miss any classes. Why? When I miss a class, I have really missed more than one session, and I have a lot of work to do just to catch up with everything that I missed that day. I’ve found that it’s a lot easier to go to class all the time so that I don’t have extra work to do.”
- **Spend a Lot of Time on Campus and Use All Campus Resources:** Unlike freshmen who hurry to leave campus right after classes, experienced EOP students spend as much time on campus as possible. Experienced EOP students use all resources on campus, such as EOP advising, writing labs, the library, tutorial services, career counseling, and personal counseling.
- **Learn How to Form Study Groups:** For difficult classes, experienced EOP students participate in study group with fellow students rather than trying to master hard materials by themselves.
- **Find a Mentor on Campus:** EOP Director José Luis Vargas states that the single most important factor determining whether an EOP freshmen will graduate is their ability to find a mentor on campus. Mentors can be professors, but they can also be staff members and even experienced students. Mentors are especially valuable for first-generation college students.
- **Visit Professors and Staff in Their Offices:** Experienced EOP students get to know professors and staff and visit them in their offices. Professors and staff can provide information about job opportunities and can offer advice about career development and life enrichment.

Watch Out If You Hear Yourself Saying . . .

“My problems are my own business and not EOP’s business. Others don’t have to know about my business.”

“The reason I don’t talk to the EOP mentors any more (in Fall Semester) is because they have all changed from the way they were in the summer. Everyone is now different, except for me.”

“I told Jina in the summer: ‘Jina, you don’t have to worry about me in Fall Semester. I’ve really become a new person, and I won’t ever go back to the way I once was.’”

“I don’t need the EOP community. I have my own community with my friends from high school (my new friends in the dorm, etc.).”

“The reason I’m failing one class is because the teacher is bad.”

“I’ve already transitioned into a college student and practice RRAM really well. I don’t need to make any more changes.”

“While it’s good for other EOP students to learn from the past mistakes of experienced students such as mentors, I can’t learn that way. I learn best from my own mistakes, even if it means learning the hard way.”

“Shiva and EOP mentors have no right to tell me to break up my boyfriend (or girlfriend). Shiva has no right to tell me who I should hang around.”

“For college students, attendance is overrated. I have a friend who got an A in a class, even though he never went to class but did well on the final.”

Spoken during the fifth week of Fall Semester: “I can’t afford to buy the textbook for the class.”

“I don’t need to go to math tutoring because I get help from my girlfriend (sibling, roommate, etc.).”

“I’m a really good student, and I don’t need to be around the kids in this program. I can make it better through college by myself.”

“Why the shit did Sean call me in for a meeting? I don’t have a fuckin’ attitude!”

“People have always told me I’ve very mature for my age. I’ve never had a problem of being immature.”

“Lavelle can never understand my problems at home because unlike him I come from the hood.”

“I’ve always been a respectful person. As long as others respect me, I’ll respect them. But if you don’t respect me, then watch out! I’ll really fuck you up!”

“I don’t have time to go to EOP Central (math tutoring, writing labs, my classes, etc.).”

Learning How to Serve as Mentors for Each Other

Becoming a member of the Resilient Scholars community carries with it several responsibilities. One of the most important responsibilities is learning how to serve as a mentor for fellow community members. Learning how to become a mentor is a process, and the first step is learning how to be mentored by others. Think about how mentors have helped you recently, especially mentors here at CSUN. Then read the following scenario and answer the questions:

Scenario

In the Resilient Scholars community, one member is no longer attending meetings and events and not responding to leader Jina's requests to meet with her. Jina also learns that the student has poor attendance in all classes and has recently not been doing assignments. The student is now in danger of failing classes and getting kicked out of CSUN. One of the student's friends in Resilient Scholars remembers that the student at the beginning of the year mentioned that it was difficult to trust people and to talk about issues and challenges in life. In the past, the student tried to deal with these issues alone even though that often didn't work. At the same time, the friend remembers that the student really wants to be in college and do well as a freshman.

- Why do you think this student is not asking for help from mentors even though the issues bothering her or him are affecting grades and even the chance to stay in college?
- What would you do to help this fellow Resilient Scholar? How would you serve as a mentor for this member of your community?
- What advice would you give to leader Jina about what she should do to help this fellow member of your community? Specifically, what should Jina do? What should Jina not do? Why?
- Jina has many years of experience helping students, and she says that oftentimes students who need help wait too long and ask for help at the last minute. At that time, mentors can't do much to help students. Why do students wait too long to ask for help? How can mentors in Resilient Scholars – including yourself – help to make sure that this does not happen to fellow members?

Mentoring Resources for Students

CSUN Faculty Mentor Program website

Learn about “mentoring on the run,” promoting a “culture of mentoring,” and building a “community of mentors”

www.csun.edu/eop/fmp_index.html

Student leadership development booklet

www.csun.edu/eop/htdocs/leadership_booklet.pdf

Recommended Books

John Bransford, Ann Brown, and Rodney Cocking, eds., *How People Learn* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000). Comprehensive summary of latest research on teaching and learning; includes numerous practical examples of good teaching practices based on brain-compatible learning.

Chungliang Al Huang and Jerry Lynch, *Mentoring: The Tao of Giving and Receiving Wisdom* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1995). The authors define mentoring as “giving your gift of wisdom and having it graciously appreciated and received by others who then carry the gift to all those within their sphere of influence.” To carry out mentoring, the authors contend that we need to move beyond the prevailing Western view of knowledge as only “external” and take the approach that “what we have learned is used not to impress others but rather as wisdom to help others benefit from our knowledge.”

Laurie A. Schreiner, Patrice Noel, Edward “Chip” Anderson, and Linda Cantwell, “The Impact of Faculty and Staff on High-Risk College Student Persistence,” *Journal of College Student Development* 52:3 (May-June 2011): 321-338.

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_college_student_development/v052/52.3.schreiner.html

Based on interviews with successful “high-risk” students and faculty and staff, the authors identify key themes on how college personnel positively influence high rates of persistence for these students.

Margaret Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1999). Wheatley believes that our thinking about organizational structure and the process of change is mired in the “old science” of Newtonian physics — e.g., concepts of critical mass, entropy, equilibrium, incremental change, etc. She proposes a new paradigm for organizational thinking and change based on the “new science,” i.e., drawing from the insights of quantum physics and the study of complex systems, where “critical connections are more important than critical mass” and where dynamic disequilibrium, bifurcations in systems, and chaos are not only natural processes in organizations but opportunities for changes in human consciousness.

David Werner and Bill Bowers, *Helping Health Workers Learn: A Book of Methods, Aids and Ideas for Instructors at the Village Level* (Palo Alto: Hesperian Foundation, 2001). The authors use the framework of Paulo Freire and critical pedagogy as their approach to training health workers in the Third World, while cautioning people to adopt Freire’s approach but not his dense language in their work with others. This book is filled with practical advice, stories, and instructional aids such as drawings and puppet shows to help educators (and mentors) “start at the level where people are at,” to value existing knowledge in their students, and to help advance critical thinking skills.

“The fundamental task of the mentor is a liberatory task. It is not to encourage the mentor’s goals and aspirations and dreams to be reproduced in the mentees, the students, but to give rise to the possibility that the students become the owners of their own history. This is how I understand the need that teachers have to transcend their merely instructive task and to assume the ethical posture of a mentor who truly believes in the total autonomy, freedom, and development of those he or she mentors.”

Paulo Freire, Mentoring the Mentor