Guidelines for the Mentee

INSIDE

• What is mentoring?
• What is the role of my mentor?
• What is my role as the mentee?
• Suggested activities for mentor and mentee

OUR MISSION

The purpose of the Mentor Program is to help first-year students to make a smooth transition, to provide community among Rensselaer women students, and to engage students in developing lifelong learning skills and leadership for success in college and in the workplace. Pairing incoming women with upper class women students in a peer mentoring relationship provides community, support and networking opportunities across technical disciplines in which women are often an underrepresented minority.

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**Let’s Get Started!**

**Background**
The Mentor Program was initiated back in 1994 to match all first-year women engineers with a peer mentor in her intended major. Shortly after the program started, women students from other majors asked to be included in the program. Today, we have more than 400 Rensselaer women undergraduates participating as mentors and mentees!

**Program Purpose**
The intention of the program is to provide a social community and network among women students and to assist first-year students in successfully reaching their first-year goals, such as performing well academically or making friends.

**Building a Sustainable Partnership**
To build a solid mentoring partnership, it will be helpful to understand the role of your peer mentor and your role as the mentee. To sustain your mentoring relationship, you will need to decide whether you will regularly attend scheduled Mentor Program activities, whether you’re interested in the same clubs or organizations and would like to attend meetings/activities together, whether you want to study together, how you will communicate on a weekly basis for the first six weeks of the fall semester, and after that, how often you want to stay in touch with each other and how you will stay in touch with each other.

Please read through these materials carefully and if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the program director, Barbara Ruel, by telephone at 518-276-6203 or by email at ruelb@rpi.edu or Barbara’s student assistant, Elizabeth Kautz at kautze@rpi.edu.
**What Is Mentoring?**

Mentoring is a power-free, two-way mutually beneficial learning situation in which the mentor provides advice, shares knowledge and experiences, and teaches using a low pressure, self-discovery approach (Starcevich, Matt, 1999, “Coach, Mentor: Is There a Difference?” [www.coachingandmentoring.com](http://www.coachingandmentoring.com)).

**What Is the Role of a Mentor?**

**What do mentors do?**

- Coach... by showing how to do a task or activity
- Facilitate... by creating opportunities for learners to use new skills
- Counsel... by helping the learner to explore the consequences of potential decisions
- Network... by referring the learner to others when the mentor’s experience is insufficient

**What a mentor is...**

- Coach
- Facilitator
- Listener
- Friend
- Guide

**What a mentor isn’t...**

- Savior
- Therapist
- Servant
- Omniscient being

**What’s the Mentee’s Responsibility in the Mentoring Partnership?**

We’ve prepared a list of Questions and Answers and Suggested Activities that will help you to explore possible scenarios for interacting with your mentor during your first year. Your mentor has volunteered her time to be there for you and she’s hoping to learn and grow from the partnership that the two of you will develop together.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What can I expect from my mentor? Your mentor is someone....

- who is respectful, resourceful, supportive and patient
- who will be a good listener
- who’s agreed to make the initial contact with you (although you can contact her first, if you wish!)
- who will stay in touch with you throughout your first year
- who shares her knowledge and experience about student life, Rensselaer resources, and the Troy community
- who acts as guide and coach to help you reach your academic and personal goals
- who will provide friendship
- who can suggest avenues for meeting people and making new friends
- who can help you to quickly acclimate to your new environment
- who can offer advice when requested

What is expected of me as the mentee?

- Discuss your expectations of your mentoring relationship with your mentor.
- Share your first-year goals and interests. What do you want to accomplish?
- Interact with your mentor on a regular basis. If your schedules don’t mesh, tell us and we can look for a different mentor!
- Schedule mutually agreeable times and modes of communication with your mentor and respond promptly to each other.
- Ask questions, so your mentor understands how she can best support you.
- If you would like to change your mentor or discontinue your participation in the program at any time, please telephone Barbara Ruel at (518) 276-6203 or send her email at ruelb@rpi.edu.

What can I expect from the Mentor Program Office?

- Assist you and your mentor in getting “connected”.
- Answer any questions or concerns you may have regarding the Mentor Program and its activities or about Rensselaer’s resources and offices.
- Quick responses to your questions. Please send email to Elizabeth Kautz, student assistant, at kautze@rpi.edu or Barbara Ruel, program director, at ruelb@rpi.edu.
What kinds of things should I discuss with my mentor?

- How is college different from high school?
- What adjustments will I need to make?
- Why you and she decided to enroll at Rensselaer
- Academic major; career goals (yours and hers)
- Classes, teaching assistants, and professors
- Social life: What can you do in Troy?
- Where can you shop close to campus?
- Balancing classes and extracurricular activities
- Clubs/activities
- Fraternities/sororities
- Athletics
- Home life
- Vacations
- Undergraduate research opportunities

What kinds of things can I expect to do with my mentor?

- Walk the campus grounds & find out where your classes will be
- Go to the UPAC movies
- Go to a club or organizational meeting together
- Attend monthly Mentor Program activities
- Go to an RPI athletic event or join an intramural team
- Go the Mueller Center, walk, play tennis, or some other mode of exercise
- Go shopping via the CDTA bus (which is free to students)
- Participate in activities in which you have common interests
- Have conversation over lunch/dinner/snack
- Tell her how you did on your first test
- Ask for her opinion on how to address any concerns about a roommate, how to stay on top of class work, or how to deal with a classroom situation

How do I communicate with my mentor?

- IM
- Email
- Phone
- In person
- Letters (over the summer)
What can I do to ensure a good relationship with my mentor?

- Be yourself.
- Acknowledge that your mentor’s personal experiences, perspectives, and opinion’s may not match yours 100% of the time.
- Be open to hearing what your mentor has to offer and listen for any pearls of wisdom that may be useful.
- Find out more about your mentor’s interests, career goals, etc.
- Let your mentor know the best times to reach you and find out the best time to reach her.
- Stay in regular contact with your mentor. Take the initiative to connect with her!
- Ask questions! There are no stupid questions!
- Be a good listener.
- Follow through on scheduled commitments you’ve made with your mentor.
- If you miss a scheduled appointment with your mentor, apologize, explain what happened and schedule a new day/time to get together.
- If your mentor misses an appointment with you, don’t rush to judge her. Find out if she’s “ok,” and if you can reschedule with her.
- Be honest.
- Be realistic about your expectations for your mentoring relationship.
- Most importantly, HAVE FUN!
**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduce yourself – telephone or correspond with your mentor</td>
<td>Early July 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go to Navigating Rensselaer &amp; Beyond Reception</td>
<td>August 24 or 25</td>
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<td>Go to the Bookstore with your mentor</td>
<td>August 27-August 31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Get familiar with the campus computing system</td>
<td>August 27-August 31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go to the Activities Fair at the Field House</td>
<td>August 30, 6 to 9PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invite her to the Mentor Program Ice Cream Social</td>
<td>September 5, 8 to 9:30PM</td>
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<td>Discuss adding or dropping courses</td>
<td>Month of September</td>
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<td>Call your mentor after your first test</td>
<td>Evening of first test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invite her to the Pumpkin Design Party</td>
<td>October 25, 8 to 9:30PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invite her to the Mentor Program Thanksgiving Dinner and Panel of Professionals, RSDH, 2nd floor</td>
<td>November 16, 5 to 8PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invite her to the Holiday Party, RSDH, 2nd floor</td>
<td>December 2, 1 to 2:30PM</td>
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<td>Schedule Finals Week study breaks together</td>
<td>December 12-14; 17-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invite her to Big Red Freakout! (Buy tix early)</td>
<td>February 2, 7PM</td>
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<td>Invite her to February Mentor Event, RSDH, 2nd floor</td>
<td>Date and Time to be Decided</td>
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<td>Ask about being a mentor to a first-year student</td>
<td>April 9, 10: mentor training</td>
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<td>Invite her to participate in Design Your Future Day</td>
<td>April 19, 9AM to 3PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schedule Finals Week study breaks</td>
<td>May 5-9</td>
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<td>Invite her to join you for a meal in the dining hall</td>
<td>Anytime</td>
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<td>Ask her if she’d like to go to a club meeting or go work out at the Mueller Center with you</td>
<td>Anytime</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have a women's movie night (can do with other mentor/mentee pairs)</td>
<td>Anytime</td>
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