

Mentoring to Support First Generation Students

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We acknowledge and respect the ləkʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.



Welcome and
thank you for
your interest

- Quick intro
- Background
- Goals
- Expectations
- Timeline
- Any questions?



Quick Intro's

- Who we are and how we got started
 - Evolved from grassroots efforts (*Shoestring Initiative*, which is now student-led and focused on anti-poverty advocacy)
 - Now we want to focus on faculty-student mentorship between people with lived experience as first generation students
 - We are now calling ourselves *First-in-Class*
- Will create a MS Teams group for everyone to share info
- Will put resources for mentors in the Teams group
 - Excel spreadsheet of resources that everyone can edit

Background

\$50K from President Hall – who is First Gen himself – for a 2-year pilot mentorship program (July 2022-June 2024)

First in Class

Support from Student Affairs
- Advice based on previous peer-to-peer mentoring program and program to connect first year students

Hire RA's to:

1. Develop resource list (website as a hub)
2. Organize get-togethers with refreshments
3. Organize a conference

Already secured a Lansdowne scholar from Humanities for spring 2024

Goals

- Have faculty mentors support self-identified first generation students
- Website as a hub of information for students
 - Include information about mentors: faculty/subject and also relevant identity characteristics, why want to be a mentor
 - <https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/>
 - **Sept 16 deadline** to get **100 word mentors' bio** on the website in advance of speed-friending event
 - Email bio to: firstgen@uvic.ca



Goals



- 'Speed friending' event – linking up mentors and mentees
 - Give students option to **match** based on **academic field** or **identity**
 - **Aim to match** interests with faculty, but **balancing an even distribution** among mentors, so people do not feel overburdened
 - **Primary and secondary mentors**
 - Secondary mentors would give students freedom to connect if not official mentor

Goals

- We (the **founders**) will **provide the framework** for this pilot program but want people to have **freedom to mentor** in a way that is meaningful to them
 - Sharing what we learn from Student Affairs on various UVic mentoring programs
 - Providing structural support in terms of resources
 - Managing and planning events for the entire mentorship program
 - Creating a community of support for mentors and for each other as first gen faculty members



Goals

- Provide the opportunity for first gen students to socialize to academic setting and understand the “hidden” curriculum
- Academic life can be a scary and overwhelming experience
 - Can be an opportunity to decode norms of university and professional life; demystifying university systems and structures
- Create a community of support across campus

Expectations

- Meet two or three times a term with the mentees, or as needed
 - One of these meetings will be a meet-and-greet for all mentors and mentees
- Each mentor will work with students to co-create expectations
 - One element of this is how to communicate
 - Could be students' first experience with meeting faculty
 - Mindful not to "ghost" them [this advice came from Student Affairs]
 - Conversation about what each hopes to get from program
 - Potentially create an agreement or document that outlines expectations
 - E.g., how to respond to email, attend meetings; minimal guidelines, pieces of structures, reflection around timelines: managing expectations

Timeline

- Year 1:
 - Soft launch – this meeting!
 - Bios to firstgen@uvic.ca for website: Sept 16, 2022
 - Speed “friending” – October 4, 2022
 - One get-together per term over the academic year
- Year 2:
 - Repeat and revise based on qualitative feedback from Y1
 - People won’t need to commit to this for the full two years (unless you want to)
 - Either way, we hope you will stay in touch about what worked and what didn’t
- Academic Conference in 2024:
 - We are interested in learning from everyone in the first year of the pilot program about how to focus the conference

Any
questions?

