

What does it mean to be a MASAI Mentor?

As a MASAI Mentor you are a *Retention Specialist*. You are expected to be a caring, sensitive, mature, responsible individual who exhibits good character traits and a positive attitude. You are the person who is looked upon as being informed, concerned, and involved. You are a working demonstration that it takes motivation and effort to accomplish goals. Selection as a MASAI Mentor implies that you will be a role model for your mentees. Through your commitment to the program and its rules, you are creating a positive or negative image for your students. When you talk to them, they will learn from your successes, failures, dependability, warmth, caring support and encouragement. Keeping their secrets, maintaining confidentiality, will frequently determine your success or failure with them.

As a MASAI Mentor you will not be perfect; you will make mistakes. There will be expectations and demands placed upon you that you may not be able to meet. Help is always close by, either from the other MASAI Mentors or the Diversity Advocacy staff. Deal with your mistakes the best way you can and keep moving. Recognize your limitations and develop a pro-active strategy to deal with them.

You have an exciting challenge before you – helping a new student adjust to life at ISU's campus. For most of them, this will be a totally alien environment. They will feel lost, excited, adventuresome, and lonely. As a Retention Specialist, it is your job to help them get started off on the right path.

The students with whom you work can come here to live, learn, prosper and succeed, or they can live, learn, stumble and fail. **YOU** are the one who might make the difference.

MASAI MENTOR SELECTION CRITERIA

MASAI Mentors will:

- Have a 2.5 GPA or higher
- Be a upper class student in good standing
- Submit application and complete an interview with a member the Diversity Advocacy Staff

REQUIRED SKILLS

As a MASAI Mentor you are responsible for introducing new students to the university environment and for clarifying fundamental differences between their high school and their college environments. However, your most important task will be working with first-year students concerning potential adjustment problems. In the case that the MASAI Program cannot provide for serious academic, social, or personal problems, you are to direct the student to the appropriate university office. In order to fulfill these responsibilities, it is assumed that you will complete a training program developed to help you acquire the needed knowledge to make correct referrals and some counseling skills.

In order to execute the above responsibilities with the greatest degree of effectiveness, you:

1. Should be self-motivated, responsible, dependable and committed to the program.
2. Should possess a positive appreciation of the uniqueness of individuals and a willingness to learn from them.
3. Should be aware of personal biases that may contribute to rigidity and ineffectiveness in relating towards others.
4. Should possess strong interpersonal skills and a warm and genuine concern for human beings.
5. Should be understanding, giving and sensitive, and be able to listen and understand while possessing a sense of humor.
6. Should be capable of working independently, one-to-one and in groups – with or without supervision.
7. Should be able to empathize yet remain objective.
8. Should be resourceful, contributing – critical and questioning, but approachable – and should be able to perform in both a rigid and loosely structured working environment.
9. Should feel at ease with peers, supervisors, faculty members and administrators of all levels.
10. Should be able to admit limitations in personal knowledge. Should be able to ask questions when necessary.
11. Should be able to cope with rejection and constructive criticism.
12. Should be familiar with all university services available to students and be able to refer students with special problems to the appropriate office.
13. Should be able to give enough time to make a positive contribution to the program.
14. Should be understanding of the need to protect the students' confidence.
15. Should make yourself readily available for your mentees.

MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

Educational Programming

The aim of Educational Programming (EP) is to provide mentees and the mentors with the proper information and training that will help develop and improve skills necessary to being a successful student. Mentors and mentees are required to attend **4 educational programs per semester**, or one per month as described below:

- At least one program sponsored by The Julia N. Visor Academic Center;
- 1 Career Center program
- 2 from a list of recommended programs provided throughout the fall semester.

Mentor and mentee attendance at EP's is mandatory unless excused by the program coordinator one week prior to the event. A one-on-one, phone or email conversation, no later than a week prior unless confronted with an urgent matter, is the only acceptable way of being excused from a development. This means that mentors should not leave messages at the office, but actually communicate with the coordinator.

Study Time

In keeping with the goals expressed in Educating Illinois, the purpose of the study time is to increase the retention and academic progress of our students. Mentors will be responsible for scheduling a minimum of **2 hours** of study time per week, with each mentee at the ***Julia Visor Academic Success Center***. These hours must be completed at the ***Visor Center*** unless needed accommodations have been discussed and approved by the program coordinator.

Community Group Meetings

Community group meetings will serve as an opportunity for mentors and staff to discuss concerns, ideas, or suggestions about the program. One community group social will be held in the fall semester.

Cultural Programs

Before the beginning of each month, mentors will be provided with a copy of our cultural programming calendar. This calendar highlights and promotes diversity events and activities around the campus. Mentors are **strongly encouraged** to attend these events in order to expose your mentees to the numerous events offered on campus. Programs that are related to education and diversity but are not listed on the calendar may fulfill this requirement, but this requires the approval of the program coordinator.

One on One

The purpose of *One on Ones* is to give mentors individualized attention to their needs and concerns, and to resolve issues as they arise. It is the mentor's responsibility to schedule a *One on One* with the assigned graduate assistant in their community group whenever they deem it necessary; the graduate assistants will comply with the same policy. Mentors should have **at least 2 One on One** meetings..

Bi-weekly Reports (MASAI interaction logs)

Electronic bi-weekly reports/logs will serve as a means for the office staff to assess the academic, social, and personal development of the mentors and mentees, as well as their growing relationship together. These reports are another way of promptly informing the staff of issues as they arise so they can be attended to before they become problems.

Electronic bi-weekly reports/logs are due the second and fourth Fridays of each month by noon. Early reports are accepted. If planning to leave town for the weekend, it is the mentor’s responsibility to ensure that his/ her bi-weekly reports are sent in prior to the above stated deadline.

Semester Grade Reviews

Mentors’ and mentees’ academic progress will be reviewed at the **mid-semester** point and at the **end of the semester** grading periods. The intention of this review is to track students’ academic progress and intervene when necessary. Mentors who are unable to maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPA will risk having their employment terminated.

3 Strikes Discipline

Throughout the semester, mentors will also be subject to a review of their completion of *Mentor Expectations*. If a mentor fails to fulfill an expectation as outlined above, they will be served with a written warning. If this occurs for the second time, the mentor will need to hold a one-on-one with the program coordinator and be issued with a final written warning. If this happens a third time, **the mentor may be released from their contract.**

It is important for mentors and mentees to note that whenever a mentor is released from their contract, **the other mentors and mentees of their community group will bare the responsibility of the remaining mentees until a replacement mentor is hired.** For example, the other mentors of the community group will be responsible for at least one of the mentees who were being supervised by the mentor who was dismissed.
