Overview of the Revised Application Form by Andreas Quainoo, TAC Co-Chair

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This is document lays out the minimum expectations of every peer mentor when it comes to reviewing participants’ application forms. It is not a hard-set procedure that you must follow but it is expected that you carry out everything outlined here in order to make mentoring as effective as possible.

The application form is a needs assessment form and it minimizes the time required to fill the Individualized Success Plan (ISP) during the initial meeting. It also gives participants the opportunity to think about the “whys” and the “whats” of peer mentoring with the open-ended questions. This eliminates the need to select reasons for academic difficulty with which they may not entirely agree. It also makes goal-setting easier and the goals more achievable since the goals will be set by the participants.

I have outlined the review stages into distinct steps that are easily recognizable.

Before Contacting Your Student

After receiving the automated email from the Mentoring for Success Program database informing you of your newly assigned student, check your shared folder in the Mentoring for Success Program Office’s Webmail Plus cabinet for the student’s completed application form. (The program director will send you an invite to the shared folder at the beginning of the semester and you must accept it in order to access your folder.)

“Print” it in PDF format and save it to your computer or flash drive first for easy reference. (Refer to the “How to Print to or Save as PDF” topic in the Mentoring for Success Program Forum if you do not know how to do this.) Glance through it and take note of the class(es) for which the student is requesting a mentor and whether you will require the writing section on page 8 (typically for foreign language and writing intensive classes) to be filled out. Make a note of whether the student has filled it out.

Contacting Your Student

In your initial email to the participant, follow the email format in the Quick Start Guide document.

Before Your First Meeting

Print a copy of the PDF documents you saved previously if having a hard copy of the forms makes the review process easier for you. (If you would like a program assistant to print out a copy of the application forms for you, please contact a program assistant to set this up.) Read through the application form carefully as this will be your first “encounter” with the student.
While reading, note down any questions or further clarifications you may need if anything is unclear next to the areas they occur. Check for a pattern in the answers the participant has given. It is possible that “No” or “N/A” might be carelessly selected to speed up the process of filling out the form. For example, in the “Reasons for Academic Difficulty” section, if the participant’s answers suggest he/she does not need help, note that area down and ask the participant during your first meeting.

Take careful note of the following areas:

(N.B.: The “page numbers” mentioned below will not correlate to the page numbers in the forms you print out from your email. In the online application form, the “page numbers” refer to the different sections in the form and the section headings do not appear in the emails. Furthermore, when printing from web pages (and your email), pagination will depend on various factors such as your default text size and margins, scaling, browser, etc. and is, therefore, inconsistent.)

**Page 2: Introductory Questions**

This section contains the student’s contact information. The information is also available in the student database. Always use the information provided in the database as the student may have changed his or her information after submitting the application form. You may also want to know whether the student is a new or returning participant as having a returning participant may quicken the process because of his or her familiarity with the program. These questions should lay the ground for the approach the peer mentor needs to take with the student.

**Page 3: Demographic Questions and Page 4: Tutoring/Course Information (General Academic Information)**

These sections will contain information regarding the participant’s major and minor, year in school, and affiliations with various programs on campus. Be careful to note students that are either Seita Scholars or have been registered with Disability Services for Students as you may need a different approach when working with them.

**Page 5: Information for Your Peer Mentor and Page 6: Possible Reasons for Academic Difficulty**

Just like the sections indicate, this is a section created with you in mind. Pay careful attention to it. Note the student’s strengths and areas for improvement, and begin looking for ways that will help the student based on the listed difficulties or challenges. These sections could reveal lack of motivation, poor time management skills, deeper personal issues, or other reasons not listed, which would help peer mentor develop the appropriate strategies needed to remedy these situations. Note down any resources that could help.

Whenever possible, attempt to correlate strengths into areas that need improvement. This should be easier for the student to develop new strategies for improvement. As a peer mentor, since you may have taken this class, note down strategies that may help the student overcome the difficulties he or she may be having with the class. Be careful not force those on the student because the strategy may have worked for you but it may not work for someone else.
Page 7 - Time Management Assessment
The time management assessment section is vital as it could be the root cause of academic difficulty. Ensure you go through each of the participant’s answers carefully and look at the areas that need improvement. Discuss this with the student during your first meeting.

It is vital to ask questions during your first meeting. Do not take everything at face value. It may send the signal that you may not really care about what you are doing. Asking questions about the student’s responses in the application form will indicate that you are willing to help.

Page 8: Writing Section
If the writing section was filled out, use the Writing Assessment Guide for Peer Mentor on the following page as a guide and go through it with the participant during your first meeting. Recommend any resources on the second page of the ISP (such as the Writing Center) that may improve the participant’s writing where necessary.

Page 10: Mentoring for Success Program Student Agreement
This is more of a general reminder for peer mentors with regards to what they should expect of their students (i.e., meeting on a regular basis, being on time, keeping appointments, losing tutoring privileges after 3 consecutive no-show/no-calls or last-minute cancellations, etc.) and what participants can also expect from their peer mentors. It is a good point to address in the first meeting regardless of the participant’s familiarity with the Mentoring for Success Program so that perhaps they may take the meetings more seriously.

During Your First Meeting
Check to see whether the student has made any additions/changes to his or her information since signing up. Their contact information may have changed since signing up. Inform the program assistants immediately if that is the case and provide them with the updated contact information. These changes may also be an answer to some of the questions that you may have had while going through the form initially. Also, ask for the writing sample if one was requested.

Repeat some of the questions on the application form where there is a pattern or some inconsistencies to ensure the participant was not randomly answering the questions to get through it quickly. During this meeting discuss the suggestions you have come up with that may help the student. It is important not to impose these on the student. Develop small steps (goals) that will enable you to check constantly to determine whether the goals set up are being reached.

After Your First Meeting
Constantly refer to the goals set up during your first meeting. Ideally these should be short and easily achievable goals that will be checked off at each meeting. This will boost the student’s morale to attain the more difficult ones.
Writing Assessment Guide for Peer Mentor

1) While our program provides tutoring in foreign language courses, we do not have expertise in writing consultation and do not provide help with general college writing. We recognize that writing is one of the fundamental skills essential to being a successful college student; therefore, if a student is seeking assistance with writing (in English) in general, you should refer to student to the Writing Center. If you are tutoring a student in a foreign language course, you may use this rubric as a guide to determine if the student shows evidence of these qualities in their writing. Based on the following areas, circle the description that best describes the student’s sample.

(Credit goes to Andrea Kryger, TAC Co-Chair; adapted for program use by Johnisha Taylor, TAC Member)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content/Development</td>
<td>There is a clear theme in the paper. Purposeful writing is evident and all presented facts relate to the theme.</td>
<td>There is a clear theme; however, there are presented facts that do not relate to the theme.</td>
<td>Unrelated facts distract from comprehension of the narrative. The theme is vague.</td>
<td>The theme is unclear. Many facts provided do not support the intended theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Writing shows a clear, concise direction in narration with varied transition word use to achieve sequential fact progress in the narrative (e.g., then, after, meanwhile, before, etc).</td>
<td>There is evident fact sequential progression in the narrative. Transition word use is evident, though not varied.</td>
<td>There is little sequential progression and facts are somewhat scattered throughout the sample. Simple transition word usage is evident (e.g., then, and then).</td>
<td>There is no sequential progression of the narrative with scattered facts throughout sample. There is poor transition word usage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readability/Style</td>
<td>Writing is cohesive, easily understood, and maintains a good flow of ideas.</td>
<td>Writing shows some cohesion. While wording may be somewhat awkward, a clear idea can be understood.</td>
<td>Writing shows little cohesion. Wording takes away from the reader’s comprehension of the sample.</td>
<td>The sample lacks cohesion. Wording is awkward and is distracting to the reader. It is difficult to understand the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar/Spelling</td>
<td>There is a variety of sentence structure. There is fewer than 2 spelling/punctuation or grammatical errors.</td>
<td>There are minimal (fewer than 3) spelling/punctuation or grammatical errors. There is evidence of varied sentence structure.</td>
<td>There are several (approximately 5) spelling/punctuation or grammatical errors. There is little sentence variation or complexity.</td>
<td>There are many (more than 8) spelling/punctuation or grammatical errors. There is little sentence variation or complexity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Notes regarding the above writing sample:
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

3) If necessary, which of the following resources do your students plan on utilizing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Resource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer Mentor</td>
<td>Mentoring for Success Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Writing Assistance</td>
<td>The Writing Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Exploration</td>
<td>University Curriculum (Exploratory Advising)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
<td>Disability Services for Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other: _______________________________________________________

Other: _______________________________________________________