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INTRODUCTION

The LGBTQ+ Mentorship Program is a function of the Gender + Equality Center (GEC) at the University of Oklahoma. The program seeks to provide support and guidance to students who are looking for a mentor in the LGBTQ+ community.

MISSION

The mission of the LGBTQ+ Mentorship Program is to connect LGBTQ+ students with their peers and the OU alumni with shared interests and/or career paths. We provide educational and social opportunities for participants to establish and build mentoring relationship and a support network centering their LGBTQ+ identity. The program fosters an environment that encourage self-discovery and community advocacy for our participants.

Mentees are encouraged to utilize the LGBTQ+ Mentorship Program, peer mentors, and alumni mentors to build an affirming community, ask questions that helps them navigate the institution, career fields, as well as the society at large.

PURPOSE

The program aims to support LGBTQ+ students at the University of Oklahoma by:

- Fostering a sense of community among LGBTQ+ students at the University of Oklahoma
- Connecting LGBTQ+ students with resources on campus and around Norman
- Providing guidance and mentorship to LGBTQ+ first-year and transfer students

EDUCATIONAL STATEMENT

The Gender + Equality Center will empower OU community members to create affirming, violence-free communities and actively work toward a just and equitable society.

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS

LGBTQ+ Programs: helping LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff navigate the university, and connecting OU community members and partners to resources and education.

Gender-based Violence Prevention: our efforts to end gender-based violence on our campus through various awareness & prevention programs and events all year long.

Advocates: a 24/7 crisis line and in-person support service for anyone in the OU Community experiencing sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, or sexual harassment.
MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

To build a strong community and support network for our students, the LGBTQ+ Mentorship Program strives to connect LGBTQ+ students with their peers and the OU alumni with shared interests and/or career paths.

**Mentee:**
Available for all students, targeting specifically at new students to the institution (first-year or transfer student).

Mentees are expected to attend programs hosted by mentorship program, take full advantage of opportunities and keep the mentor(s) informed of personal and academic progress and challenges.

**Peer Mentor:**
Available for non-first-year.

Peer mentors are expected to attend programs hosted by mentorship program, help the mentees with their transition to college by connecting them to resources and providing tips to enhance their college experience.

**Faculty, Staff, & Alumni Mentor:**
Available for graduate students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

FAS mentors are encouraged to attend programs hosted by mentorship program, and are expected to serve as resource for their mentee(s) by providing insights to successfully enter and navigate their professional field.

SELECTION & PAIRING PROCESS

Once the application is received, the committee will review the applications and try our best to match the mentors and mentees based on the criteria (including but not limited to):

- Identity
- Interests
- Professional goals

Based on availability of participants, the program will try our best to assign mentor/mentee relationship/pod. Interviews may happen to learn more about the needs of participants. If we cannot find a match, we will notify our applicants.
THE POD MODEL

The LGBTQ+ Mentorship program is implementing a “pod model,” which involves the formation of small groups consisting of FAS mentors, peer mentors, and mentees. The implementation of the pod model aims to provide students with numerous opportunities for interaction and support from various mentors within a single group, in addition to their designated mentorship pair.

By establishing pods, the program ensures that students have multiple points of contact and connection, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of the mentorship experience. Throughout the duration of the program, these pods will serve as a system that the program periodically assesses to evaluate its efficacy. Nonetheless, participants are strongly encouraged to actively engage with individuals outside their assigned pairing or pod, fostering broader connections and relationships throughout the program.

Responsibilities of Peer Mentor:

- Bi-weekly check in with mentees (with meeting in person at least once a month)
- Check in with the program about mentee’s interaction at least once a month
- Attend 2 LGBTQ+ Program’s events per semester
- Attend 2 Mentorship Lunch & Learn or Pages of Pride reading group
- Assist their mentees in answering questions or providing them resources

Peer Mentor will receive $50/semester in scholarship. Failure to complete the responsibilities of the Peer Mentor may result in revocation of the membership of the program and the scholarship.

Responsibilities of FAS Mentor:

- Monthly check in with mentees
- Check in with the program about mentee’s interaction
- Attend LGBTQ+ Program’s events or Mentorship’s events as you can
- Assist their mentees in answering questions or providing them resources

While FAS Mentor are not compensated, they can take their mentees to lunch/dinner or coffee on campus on the GEC. FAS may email the program coordinator and the GEC to reserve the meal card to be used on campus. The amount may be exceed $145.00 over the course of a year.
The Gender + Equality Center is committed to educate, advocate, and empower our OU community members through our trainings, programs, and services. The Mentorship program is advancing these commitments to better serve our mentees, mentors, and alumni.

EDUCATE

The Gender + Equality Center believes in our responsibilities as educator - to share knowledge, experience, and expertise with our students and community members at large. We work diligently to equip ourselves with information about LGBTQ+ student leadership and identity development, trauma-informed practices, and gender-based violence prevention through continuous research, assessment, and professional development. The LGBTQ+ Mentorship Program strives to be a learning organization by fostering an educational and reflective environment as well as providing various engagement opportunities for our members to have a better self-awareness, able to advocate for themselves and others, and be socially just leaders within their community.

ADVOCATE

The Gender + Equality Center believes in the power of advocacy in our community care. Advocacy can take many forms, from personal advocacy to support services and institutional advocacy. We advocate for victims/survivors of gender-based violence or those who experience homo- and trans- negativity. The LGBTQ+ Mentorship Program strives to connect our members to resources on and off campus; provide tools and education for our members to practice self-advocacy and to be active bystanders in the face of violence and oppression. The goal of the program is also to assist students in building a strong support network that can help students navigating the institution and the larger profession field.

EMPOWER

The Gender + Equality Center believes in empowering our community members to enact social change. We empower our members through our educational efforts: by sharing information, providing appropriate resources, giving opportunities, and motivating and developing the skills that our members need in order to be more socially just in their leadership and advocacy. Our empowerment also includes accountability and restorative justice, and creating an affirming environment for our members to practice self-improvement and create life-long-learning. The LGBTQ+ Mentorship Program strives to provide more leadership and self-directed learning opportunities for our members and support them in their effort of making a more socially just society.
LEARNING GOALS & OUTCOMES

The LGBTQ+ Mentorship Program is committed to advancing the educational goals and learning outcomes of the Gender + Equality Center and the Division of Student Affairs.

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT** is a student’s process of gaining awareness and understanding of who they are as individuals. Personal Development includes understanding who they are in terms of values, beliefs, and purpose as well as their social group identities. Demonstrating empathy and compassion, especially for those with very different backgrounds and experiences, is critical in all relationships. By exploring their sense of purpose, abilities, privileges, and intersecting identities, students can learn to develop self-efficacy and agency to positively change their own lives and impact their communities.

Students will be able to:
1. Articulate their identities.
2. Demonstrate empathy and compassion in relationships.
3. Describe how they can contribute to making positive change.
4. Demonstrate the competencies needed for their professional development.

**WELL-BEING** is a student’s holistic understanding of wellness; including the emotional, mental, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual dimensions of wellness. Well-Being is conscious, self-directed and evolving, positive, affirming, and inclusive. Students will be able to foster their own well-being as well as communities of well-being.

Students will be able to:
1. Define personal well-being.
2. Identify resources to support their well-being.
3. Integrate wellness strategies into daily life.
4. Foster communities of well-being.

**COMMUNITY IMPACT** includes a student’s awareness of issues impacting communities and the world as well as their capacity and desire to take action to make positive, sustainable change. Both components are critical to collaboratively solving our world’s most pressing problems.

Students will be able to:
1. Describe the impact of their actions on others.
2. Identify issues facing communities.
3. Collaborate effectively with others.
4. Advocate for positive change in their communities.
MENTORSHIP

WHAT IS MENTORSHIP?

Mentorship is defined as:

“A process whereby an experienced, highly regarded, empathetic person (the mentor) guides another individual (the mentee) in the development and re-examination of their own ideas, learning, and personal & professional development.”

It is worth noting that mentorship is not a one-way street where the mentor “pouring” knowledge into the empty vessels that are the mentees. In fact, mentorship is mutually beneficial for both parties. In other words, mentorship describes the relationship of mutual understanding, support, and learning between mentors and mentees. Although mentorship can be interpreted in a number of ways, through the LGBTQ+ Mentorship Program, we are hoping to providing our participants opportunity to engage with formal voluntary mentorship with peer mentors and alumni mentors.

WHY DO WE NEED MENTORSHIP?

There are a multitude of ways that LGBTQ+ students can experience homo- and trans-negativity within the higher education institution’s walls, from negative campus climate, commonplace incidents of harassment and discrimination, to inadequate support & resources from the institution. Despite the hostile environment that LGBTQ+ students face, they persist. There is little empirical evidence of why and how, but LGBTQ+ supportive programs - such as identity-based mentorship program - was shown linked to student success. Mentorship for LGBTQ+ students has proven to be a catalyst for leadership outcomes and efficacy. Not only does mentorship helps students to cultivate a sense of efficacy and motivation to achieve their personal and professional goals, but also to cope with and endure often-hostile campus climates. The research available has cited the potential significance of mentors - ranging from faculty and staff to even peer mentors, have in getting students in engaging with institutional programs, specifically queer-specific activities and encouraging them to take on positional leadership. By connecting students to mentors with shared identities and/or interests, we hope to inform students’ leadership involvement and development process, as well as have a positive influence on their academic lives and career goals.

ROLES OF A MENTOR

Mentors can take various roles during the mentoring relationship depending on the nature of the mentees needs and experiences. However, there should be a clear distinction between different roles that a mentor might be asked to do by their mentee:

- **Coach** - A coach has objective viewpoints, creates and defines goals, and develops new skills. A coach can help mentees reflect internally, craft their own goals, set out strategies, and be an accountability partner to the mentees.

- **Advisor** - An advisor will look at a mentee’s needs, and help them identify what it is they need, what they need to do to get there, and how to overcome issues as they come up.

- **Counselor** - A counselor is not there to push a mentee, instead they are there to listen and support a mentee as they work on personal growth. A counselor is there to serve as an emotional supporter and a reflection for mentees.
Some specific responsibilities of the mentor for the LGBTQ+ Mentorship program are including but not limited to:

- take the initiative for contacting their mentees and staying in touch with them
- devote time to the relationship and be available for students if possible
- assist mentees with their various questions, needs, or concerns
- share their institutional knowledge and personal/preprofessional experience with their mentees
- follow up on their mentees progress
- maintain confidentiality of the information shared by their mentees
- attending trainings and social events with mentees

What mentors are NOT to the mentees

- **Academic Advisor** - A mentee can share their knowledge about the study programs, provide helpful information and study tips, as well as guide their academic expectations. However, mentors are not equipped to be an academic advisor for the mentees. Please direct the mentees to their college for their degree questions, as they might impact the mentee’s degree planning process or scholarship, etc.

- **Therapist** - A mentor can share their personal experience, affirming thoughts, etc., however; mentors are not equipped to be a therapist for their mentee. Please refer to the resources section to better direct students to appropriate resources.
MENTORSHIP TIPS

Step One: Building the Relationship
- We encourage open dialogue about expectations.
- Communicate your goals for the relationship.
- Arrange to meet in a comfortable setting free from distractions and interruptions.

Step Two: Assessing Needs
- We encourage mentees to state interest and perceived needs.
- Form a written list.
- What motivates the mentee? What deters performance?

Step Three: Goal Setting
- Using the list form Step Two together develop a list of goals.
- Challenge the mentee to make the goals specific and measurable.
- Suggest resources.
- Share similar experiences in a supportive manner.

Step Four: Follow Up
- We encourage reflection on progress during each meeting.
- Highlight and restate positives and negatives.
- Suggest revision of goals if necessary.

Step Five: Termination
- Begin discussing termination/summer continuation a few weeks prior to your last meeting.
- Discuss with mentee what kinds of closure needs each of you have for the relationship.
- Process how the goals are not limited to the life of the program and how to apply skills learned to future issues and situations.
- Solicit feedback about the relationship and your performance as a mentor. Further, suggest the mentee provide suggestions for change.
There are many ways that you can engage with your mentees. Here are some required as well as some recommended strategies for you.

**OPENING EXPERIENCE  Sep 16  |  10 AM**
Welcome participants to the mentorship program and set expectations for the program

**MONTHLY LUNCH & LEARN  12 PM**
Enjoy a complimentary lunch while engaging in a guided discussion on various developmental topics.

Dates: October 11, November 9, February 1, April 9

**PAGES OF PRIDE  Mar 6  |  12 PM**
Attendees will be gifted a complimentary copy of a book selected by the collective. Additionally, a complimentary lunch will be provided to foster deeper conversations surrounding the book.

**BI-WEEKLY CHECK INS**
Mentors are asked to reach out and check in on their mentee(s) at least twice a month. Mentors and mentees might use prompts provided through the program’s newsletter to facilitate the conversation and check-ins, but the mentors and mentees may talk about and discuss whatever subjects that might be helpful for the development of the mentoring relationship.

**SOCIAL EVENTS**

The Gender + Equality Center and LGBTQ+ Programs continuously put on large-scale social and educational events for the campus at large. Some more exclusive events will be available for members of the LGBTQ+ Mentorship Program before being opened to the public. Mentors and mentees are required to attend at least 2 events per semester as check points during the year to develop deeper mentoring relationship.

**CLOSING BANQUET  Apr 21  |  6 PM**
Celebratory banquet as a conclusion of the year for members of the program.
MENTORSHIP FAQs

How often should we plan on meeting?

We highly recommend meeting at least once a month and checking in with each other at least twice a month, if not more. Regardless of the frequency of meetings, we also recommend establishing your preferred means of communication between meetings (e.g. email, text, call, etc.) and responding to each other within a reasonable amount of time.

Are there guidelines in place for mentors and mentees connecting with each other through social media?

Connecting through any social media platform should be mutually agreed upon by all parties.

I am unable to meet with my mentors/mentees because of personal health reasons, being out of state, etc. What should I do?

Although we recommend participants to meet in person as a means to strengthen their relationship, we recognize that this may not be possible for everyone for various reasons. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to connect with each other virtually by using Zoom, Google Hangouts, FaceTime, or Skype if available, as they provide both audio and visual connection. If none of these options are available, then the fallback is certainly by phone. It is important to lay the groundwork in real time. Text, email, etc., are encouraged as occasional supplemental check-in methods.

What if I cannot attend all of the required events?

We highly encourage you to consider your time commitment to participate in the Mentorship Program. We also want to make sure that our participants get as much benefit from the program as they can, and they can be a reliable support for other participants. However, accommodations will certainly be provided if you are still committed to the program. Please email the program coordinator (contact listed on the Mentorship Resource page) if you have further questions and/or accommodation requests. Your membership with the program may be terminated if you remain inactive for your involvement.

How much should a mentor or mentee open up about themselves?

While there are no clear-cut rules in this regard, there are some guidelines. First and foremost, is to apply good judgment. There are certainly parts of each of our lives that do not belong in the mentoring partnership. Let mentees be the guide; they may be very open and willing to share their story. Trust is critical to every successful partnership. By opening up, you are laying the foundation by saying you trust the other party, thereby fostering trust in you as well.

Is it acceptable to conduct our meetings/check-ins in the mentor’s home?

The objective of meeting in a relaxed and comfortable environment is great. However, we recommend that you find a more neutral place if possible; the location can be a coffee shop, restaurant, public park, campus, or even the LGBTQ+ Lounge at the Gender + Equality Center.
The mentoring program offers support and guidance to students who are looking for a mentor in the community. Every effort is made to respect the privacy of each participant, but there are three circumstances in which confidentiality must be broken:

- Mentee is threatening to hurt themselves
- Mentee is threatening to hurt someone else
- Mentee informs mentor that a child or elderly individual in the household is being abused

In these three circumstances, mentors are required to break confidentiality and report the circumstances to the LGBTQ+ Program Coordinator who will then contact the proper authorities.

Due to the casual match relationship, it is possible that someone might overhear personal conversations between mentors and mentees. It is important to be candid with your mentee about how confidentiality will be handled from the very beginning of your relationship. (For example, your mentee is not out to any of their friends. You are out in public and a group of your mentee’s friends walks up to say hello. One of the friends makes a comment that they have never met you (the mentor) before. How do you introduce yourself? Discuss this situation with your mentee before entering the relationship).

The LGBTQ+ Program Coordinator and the Mentorship Student Chair, and the mentors will communicate monthly (either via telephone, email, or in person) to discuss the current status of the mentoring relationship. This may include discussions that transpire between the mentor and the mentee.
MENTORSHIP FAQs

What if my peer mentor/mentee graduates?

When a member of the program graduates from the institution, the formal mentoring relationship will conclude. The graduates may continue to stay connected as friends and/or colleagues with their current mentors and/or mentees outside the program. They may also choose to participate in the program as an alumni of the institution. It is up to each person to decide the extent of their involvement with their mentor/mentee after graduation.

What if the mentorship is not working out?

Sometimes, despite everyone’s best efforts, a mentoring relationship comes to an early conclusion. Common reasons may include major life changes (health concerns, major school or career shifts) that make continuing impossible or unreasonable. If either of you truly feel it would be best to end the relationship, please contact the program (please visit the Mentorship Resource page) so we can ensure the partnership ends on a positive note for everyone.

What you should NOT do is ghost and become unresponsive to the assigned mentors/mentees or the program. This is not only unhelpful, it is also disrespectful to the members of the program.

I have concerns about my mentors/mentees. What should I do?

We take the concerns of our participants in the program very seriously. Please contact the program (please visit the Mentorship Resource page) for further assistance.

What if I no longer get what I need from the mentoring relationship?

Just like any relationship evolves over time, so does the mentoring relationship. And just like any other relationship, it takes work to maintain a successful mentorship.

First, it is important to communicate your personal boundaries (what you are comfortable doing) and goals (what your are looking for) in the mentoring relationship. This serves as the foundation of your relationship.

Neither of you know how the mentoring relationship will evolve over time, how expectations may shift over time, or how the mentee’s needs may change. For this reason, it is important for all parties to do a periodic check-in on the status of the mentoring partnership.

Here are three questions that might help you to guide that conversation. Note that the questions are listed in this order for a reason; asking them in this sequence will help both the mentor and the mentee maintain a balanced perspective on strengthening the relationship.

1. What do you most like about the mentoring relationship as it is now? What is working for you?
2. What would you like to change?
3. What are your suggestions about making the mentoring relationship more meaningful as we move forward?

If this does not resolve your issues, please contact the program (please visit the Mentorship Resource page) for further assistance.
Any mentorship pair can be discontinued at any time at the request of either the mentor or the mentee, in order to preserve the voluntary nature of the relationship. The Mentorship Program will conduct periodic separate check-ins with each party on the development of the pairing as well as to gauge any issues between mentor(s) and/or mentee(s).

MENTORING RELATIONSHIP GRIEVANCES

The participants may give updates on and report any issues with their mentoring relationships through this form: https://bit.ly/GECmentorUpd8

Participants may use this form for the following:
- Updates on the mentoring relationship
- Conflict and relational issues with the mentor relationship
- Any other updates on the mentoring relationship

PROGRAM GRIEVANCES

The participants may email the LGBTQ+ Program Coordinator or contact the Gender + Equality Center if they have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the program.

INCIDENTS REPORT

If there are any incidents that need immediate attention from the program, participants may report through this form: https://bit.ly/GECmentorReport

Participants will be asked to elaborate on the incident(s). Keep in mind that the Mentorship Program staff are mandatory reporters for sexual misconduct. Participants can contact OU Advocates as a confidential resource (contact listed as a campus resource).

MEMBERSHIP REVOCATION

Membership of the program may be revoked if any member of the program violates:
- Program Guidelines
- Student Code of Conduct

The Director of the Gender + Equality Center reserves the right to remove any member of the program.
There are many special interest LGBTQ+ groups (depending on the colleges) on campus for student to get involved, even after they graduate.

Please visit the website:
ou.edu/gec/lgbtq/get-involved
STUDENT SERVICES

Housing & Food Services
- Walker Center, Rm. 126
  405-325-2511
  housinginfo@ou.edu
  ou.edu/housingandfood

Information Technology
- Various locations
  405-325-HELP (4357)
  ou.edu/ouit

Student Legal Services
- OMU, St. 428
  (405) 325-6875
  sls@ou.edu
  ou.edu/studentlegalservices

Career Center
- OMU, St. 323
  405-325-1974
  careercenter@ou.edu
  ou.edu/career

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Health Services
- Goddard Health Center
  405-325-4611
  healthservices@ou.edu
  ou.edu/healthservices

Fitness & Recreation
- Sarkeys Fitness Center
  405-325-3053
  fitrec@ou.edu
  ou.edu/far

Gender + Equality Center
- OMU, St. 370
  405-325-4929
  gec@ou.edu
  ou.edu/gec

Counseling Center
- Goddard, Rm. 201
  405-325-2911
  ou.edu/ucc

SafeWALK
- 405-325-WALK (9255)
  ou.edu/police/crime/ou-safewalk

SafeRIDE
- OU SafeRide App
  405-325-4929
  saferide@ou.edu
  ou.edu/police/crime/ou-saferide

Food Pantry
- 333 Cate Center Dr.
  405-325-2044
  oupantry@ou.edu
  ou.edu/foodpantry

INTERVENTION RESOURCES

Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)
- 405-325-7700
  normanbit@ou.edu
  ou.edu/normanbit

OU Advocates
- OMU, St. 370
  405-615-0013
  ou.edu/gec

OU Reporting Hotline
- 844-428-6531
  ou.ethicspoint.com

Compass Network
- Cate Quad 4, Floor 3
  405-325-8103
  gps@ou.edu
  ou.edu/gps

Please call 911 if there is an emergency situation.
MENTORSHIP RESOURCES

GENDER + EQUALITY CENTER

| OMU, St. 370 | 405-325-4929 |
| gec@ou.edu | ou.edu/gec |

CONTACT

QUAN PHAN | LGBTQ+ Programs Coordinator
quanphan94@ou.edu | (405)-325-4929

FORMS


Purpose: Any incident that needs immediate attention from the program.

Mentorship Update Form [bit.ly/GECmentorUpd8]

Purpose: Participants may use this form for the following:

- Updates on mentoring relationship
- Conflict and relational issues with the mentoring relationship
- Any other updates on the mentoring relationship
The LGBTQ+ Mentorship Guidebook is last updated in 2023.
Designed by Quan Phan