

National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)

RETENTION PROGRAM - ACADEMIC MENTORING

VERSION 3.0

July 2016



Purpose

The academic mentoring component of the NSBE Retention Program exists to establish a system of peer accountability and trust. Also, to help retain minority students within the STEM fields in college. Upperclassmen and Alumni are asked to serve as role models, advisors, and motivators to those that come after them. Chapter officers are encouraged to pair students, and find the best way to facilitate these relationships. If a similar mentoring program already exists in an engineering school (e.g. hosted by a minority engineering program), chapter officers are encouraged to establish a relationship with the organizer, and populate this program with mentors and mentees.

How it works

Roles & frequency of events

1. Mentee - Mentee should keep in constant contact with their relationship partner, be proactive in establishing the connections, and always be open-minded.
2. Mentor - Mentors should serve as an advisor both academically and socially, and be able to give the mentee insight into the Institution and its surrounding environment.
3. Frequency of Events - The mentor and mentee should meet based on their individual schedules and keep record of meetings.

In addition to individual meetings, large scale events should occur at least twice per semester.

Categories of Relationships

There are four categories of mentorship which are essential to the success of the retention program:

Mentor

The mentor would serve as a trusted counselor or guide. A mentor is an individual, usually older, always more experienced, who helps and guides another individual's development. This guidance is not done for personal gain.



Expectations

The mentor will be expected to do the following:

- Providing information and advice based on experience and ideas
- Encouraging mentee to take a healthy, positive, and constructive risk
- 'Being there' just to listen and understand
- Offering honest and positive feedback
- Planning and thinking with mentee about how to work through a challenge or confusing situation
- Sharing different points of view to understand an issue or problem from as many different ideas and ways of thinking as possible
- Making use of multiple perspectives to base decisions in choosing from the best of all the options, creating an action plan, and following through with that plan

Sources

Sources of mentors for your members may be as follows:

- College Alumni
- Senior members
- Minority Engineering Program Director
- Other trusted staff/faculty of the college

Starting

How to get the mentor-mentee relationship start and going can be done in the following ways:

- Reach out to the various mentor sources informing them of the initiative
- Create an avenue for mentors and mentees to meet. This can be done by having a social activity (e.g. games night, dinner, out on the town). Encourage members to network with the prospective members whoever they form seem to gravitate to, hopefully they will develop and maintain a mentoring relationship.
- Be sure to continue the social activities on a regular basis to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to meet.

Mentorship Initiatives

The following are initiatives that should be considered:



The Buddy Mentoring System (Collegiate member/Collegiate member): An approach to mentoring where an upper classman; Buddy 1 (junior or senior) is paired with a lower classman (freshman or sophomore); Buddy 2, to serve as an informal advisor on their academic progress. Buddy 1 will act as big brother/sister to Buddy 2, small brother/sister. Buddy 2 will motivate and check on Buddy 1 at least once a week and give them advice on how to do better in their classes and also provide them with information on on-campus tutoring and other resources. This is a more social approach to formal mentoring.

The Family Mentoring System (Alumni member/Collegiate chapter): Set up an Alumni volunteering list to be chapter mentors and informal advisors at the regional and national level. This alumni does not have to be from that school. They will keep in touch with their respective chapter at least once a month to see how things are going and if any member needed specific help or advice or chapter concerns in general. They can also advise on one on one basis depending on specific needs. This person serves as a guardian of the whole chapter. Every chapter should have at least one alumni mentor designated to them for a year (more if possible). The alumni have to volunteer or submit an intention form to the regional or national level to do this. We do not just want to assign alumni to chapters who may never be active with their role as mentor since they were just assigned and were not willing to do it voluntarily.

This way we have a big NSBE family who are mentoring and helping each other succeed by positive encouragement and examples. This is a social approach to mentoring. This approach is more friendly and has both academic and social support system components.

Advisor

Advisors are first and foremost educators. In this role they provide information, present alternatives, encourage responsibility, support creativity, and challenge members to develop as leaders. In this role an advisor walks a fine line between leading and giving the individual the strength to lead themselves. The advisor should help the mentee develop personal goals, identify their personal interests, and assist in defining their future aspirations.



Expectations

The advisor will be expected to do the following:

- Create opportunities for the educational and personal development of members
- Have knowledge of all plans and activities of the group/individual
- Discourage domination of the individual/group by any other individual or groups
- Assist in the orientation of freshmen
- Provide guidance in the planning and evaluation of goals
- Assist in setting realistic goals and objectives for the academic year
- Promote closer involvement between students, faculty and staff; suggest the group apply for faculty student interaction

Sources

Sources of advisors for your members may be as follows:

- College Alumni
- Senior members
- Minority Engineering Program Director
- Other trusted staff/faculty of the college

Chapters should consider advising in groups to provide for cases of limited numbers of advisors. Groups may be categorized by:

- Major
- Level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate)
- Needs (internship, research, networking, funding)
- Plans (career, graduate school)

Starting

How to get the advisor-advisee relationship start and going can be done in the following ways:

- Reach out to the various advisor sources informing them of the initiative
- Academic/major/minor advisors should be considered
- Professors who perform interesting research should also be considered

Advising can be done on a one-on-one basis (by appointment) or can be done in a workshop format, or by meeting regularly.



Counselor

A counsellor is a person who is involved in counselling. It refers to a person who is concerned with the profession of giving advice on various things such as academic matters, vocational issues and personal relationships. Counselling is working out your personal problems with the help of a trained professional.

Expectations

The counselor will be expected to do the following:

- Helps resolve your problems in a positive way by helping you to clarify the issues, explore options, develop strategies and increase self-awareness
- Encouraging mentee to take a healthy, positive, and constructive risk
- 'Being there' just to listen and understand
- Planning and thinking with mentee about how to work through a challenge or confusing situation
- Help the mentee develop the confidence necessary to be a successful student

Everything you discuss with the counsellor is confidential, except in a small number of specific cases, such as where the counsellor is required by law to report a crime.

Sources

Sources of counselor for your members may be as follows:

- College Counseling and Psychological Services Centers
- Other trusted staff/faculty of the college

Starting

How to get the Counselor-counselee relationship start and going can be done in the following ways:

- Reach out to the various counselor sources informing them of the initiative
- Make it well known to the membership that seeing a counselor is perfectly acceptable
 - Focus the conversation around how mental health relates to academic empowerment



All campuses are equipped with counselling offices to chapters should consider making use of the staff there. Members may feel uncomfortable going for “counselling” as it this usually has a negative connotation to it. The chapter should consult with the counseling offices on ways they can collaborate to hold meetings and workshops which can effectively fulfil the needs of the members involved. Activities on a group level should be first considered then branch out into individual sessions, with the expectation that hopefully members will voluntarily make use of the counselling offices on their own when needed.

- Be sure to continue the social activities on a regular basis to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to meet.

Motivator

Motivation is the psychological feature that arouses an organism to action toward a desired goal and elicits, controls, and sustains certain goal directed behaviors.

It is of the utmost importance that the moti generates motivation within the mentee. To best way to generate motivation is to consistently provide the mentee with positive feedback as they work towards their goals. The motivator motivates us by using many techniques. The first and most important technique is by illustrating the advantages (and disadvantages of not doing) of doing something. The motivator may use examples, give testimonials, in his support and thereby motivate us to do the thing.

Expectations

The motivator will be expected to do the following:

- Make the mentee feel good about themselves and encourage them
- Follow up
- Ask about how they can help
- Do not use bribery for motivation
- Emphasize progress
- Encouraging mentee to take a healthy, positive, and constructive risk
- 'Being there' just to listen and understand
- Planning and thinking with mentee about how to work through a challenge or confusing situation
- Generate motivation within the mentee
- Help the mentee develop the confidence necessary to be a successful student



Source

Who can better take up the role of being a motivator than your fellow chapter members!

Starting

How to get the motivator-mentee relationship start and going can be done in the following ways:

- Create an initiative within your chapter! Talk about how encouragement and praise of progress can really get someone fired up
- Create a “motivating your buddy” system
- Encourage friends on a day to day

Initiatives

Developing close ties is essential as persons are more receptive to than strangers. To develop this bond, chapters should consider holding team building workshops and social activities where members will be forced to work together to achieve some goal. An example would be dividing members into groups, assigning each group a color, and have each group compete against each other in a series of fun sports like sack race, lime and spoon race, egg catching, obstacle race, cards games, dominoes, checkers, chess, etc.

Another initiative that can be considered is a reward system for members. For example anytime members have achieved above 90% in a quiz or exam, their names could be entered into a grand raffle to win a prize. Also certificates of participation, appreciation could be distributed to members.

Measurables

Firstly, the number of members participating in these initiatives would be the first gauge of how successful the initiative are in terms of reception by your membership. If they are eager to participate then that would suggest that you are meeting their needs.

Having participants submit a monthly (or after session) report/testimonial of their mentoring relationships, advising and counselling sessions would provide insight on how these relationships and sessions operate and how the individuals involved feel about them. They will also provide tips that could be used to develop a better program.

Finally a qualitative survey should be developed to find out from members they liked about these initiatives, what they did not like, how it should have been improved, how



they think it could be done more effectively?

Utilizing all three methods would provide feedback essential to the effective development of the program.

Chapter Best Practices

- Academic Mentoring Relationships that lead to:
 - Better course planning
 - Increased knowledge of academic career building opportunities
 - Better knowledge of academic resources
 - Increased academic empowerment and confidence

Implementation Suggestions

- MENTORING IS NOT TUTORING
- Some Chapters may find it useful to create mentor-mentee groups where each mentor exhibits a different role in the mentor-mentee relationship.
- Chapter representative for NSBE Retention Program should schedule meeting with local NSBE Alumni Collegiate Initiative or Programs Chairperson to obtain mentors
 - If utilized, NSBE Alumni members should facilitate mentoring conversations with each collegiate student that they are assigned to.
 - Discussions about careers, grades, GPA's, interests, hobbies, etc.
 - Maintain frequent communication with "paired" counterpart
 - Email, phone, Facebook, Twitter, text message, BBM, etc.
- It is good to have 3 mentors. An alumni or faculty member is in the position the mentee aspires to be in:
 - The 1st who is on your level currently
 - The 2nd who is where you want to be in 3 - 5 years
 - The 3rd who is where you would like to be in 10 years
- Meet up once a month with your mentee or mentor to talk about something other than school - for example, a lunch meeting
- Weekly check-ins about school or career, motivate each other
- Make goals in the beginning of the semester, check up on those goals periodically (weekly, biweekly, monthly)
- Match people by majors and class year by using surveys
- Match people by general interests or goals in life
- Speed-mentorship session where people pick their own mentors based on a 5 minute conversation



Endnote

At the end of the day the members are the ones who you are planning for. This is only one source of information which you can use to develop the mentorship component of your retention program. Another source may be your members themselves. They would know who and what would serve their interest the best. Having them own their program activities by assisting in the planning would increase the likelihood of them being more receptive and increase their participation.

Checklist

FOR CHAPTER LEADERS:

- Identify upperclassmen that can serve as the program's mentors and freshman that can serve as the program's mentees
- Determine the selection process for the seminar groups
- Schedule mentor-mentee large-scale events
- Reserve a classroom/space to provide for the large-scale events
- Identify activities that all mentors and mentee would enjoy/benefit from.
- Determine a timeline for anticipated mentor involvement
- Create mentor-mentee pairs
- Utilize the applications to determine the appropriate mentor-mentee pairs

FOR MENTORS:

- Schedule meetings with the mentee
- Meet with mentee to establish a consistent meeting schedule for the term
- Identify the mentee's interests and schedule specialized meetings accordingly
- Determine the appropriate length and frequency of pair meetings
- Maintain communication with the mentee
- Develop mentee confidence, assist with skill development, and provide insight into available college resources and opportunities
- Review student performance via open discussions that connect with the mentees beyond casual conversation



Important Contacts

For general inquiries please contact the National Academic Excellence Chair. For region-specific inquiries, please contact your respective Regional Academic Excellence Chair.

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