



..... **2012 GUIDE MANUAL**

A great college experience starts with a great first year

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..... CHAPTER 1: An Introduction to the Guide to Personal Success (GPS) Program

Welcome!

Thank you for participating in the GPS program as a guide and mentor for first-year students at K-State. We hope that you find the mentor relationship to be both fulfilling and enlightening. Guides play an important role in helping first-year students achieve at K-State by providing a personalized connection to the University. The purpose of this manual is to provide you with an introduction to mentoring and guidelines for success within the GPS program. Enjoy and thank you again!

Program Description and History

GPS is K-State First’s freshman mentoring program. This program matches K-State faculty, staff and graduate students with first-year K-State students for a one-on-one mentoring relationship. These campus professionals are referred to as guides in the GPS program, as they provide guidance and support to their first-year mentees. The GPS program is open to all first-year students, and mentees are carefully matched with a guide. Guides are encouraged to connect with mentees both on their own with fun on- or off-campus events, or through monthly “connect” events sponsored by the GPS program.

Adapted from a similar program at George Washington University in 2009, the GPS program was originally housed in the Office of Student Activities at Kansas State University. This is the third year of the program, and over the years GPS has grown and changed. In 2011 the GPS program became part of K-State First. The program began as a one-semester program; however, in 2011 the program was expanded to carry through both the fall and spring.

Program Goals

The GPS program is part of K-State First, a program that works to create an engaging, welcoming and challenging environment for K-State first-year students. As a result, the GPS program shares many of the same program goals as K-State First.

The K-State First program aims to:

- Foster campus community and feelings of belonging.
- Offer opportunities for diverse activities and interactions.
- Raise academic expectations with engagement and compassion.
- Empower students with a strong sense of personal responsibility and social agency.

Within K-State First, the GPS program has one major goal: to enrich the college experiences of first-year students by connecting them with outstanding K-State mentors.

In addition, the GPS program strives to:

- Connect first-year students with experienced faculty, staff, and graduate students.
- Create a strong K-State community by encouraging interaction between students and staff.
- Foster high levels of engagement between first-year students and others on campus.
- Increase retention rates for first-year students.

Mentoring Snapshot

Generally, the role of a GPS guide is to provide guidance and support to one or more first-year K-State students. A GPS guide is different from an academic advisor; mentors are encouraged to connect with mentees beyond just academics. Mentors have access to and knowledge of campus resources and can connect students in a timely and targeted manner. For example, a guide who knows his or her mentee is looking for a job could more readily direct the student to Career and Employment Services.

In the past, mentees have found jobs, secured internships and joined different student organizations thanks to their guide's connections and references. This professional development piece of the program is something that your mentee is likely to be very excited about. Due in part to the demanding job climate in the U.S., many of these first-year students are coming to college with the idea of networking and building professional connections already on their radar, and the GPS program gives them a great place to start.

"My GPS mentor has helped me get a job as a tour guide for K-State. Also I used her as a reference for a job this summer as a Wildcat Warm-Up counselor. It's really nice for on-campus jobs because if they see that the person is K-State faculty or staff they know they are a reliable source."

— Kimberly Gerstner, 2011-2012 GPS Mentee

CHAPTER 2: Introduction to Mentoring

The Role of a Mentor

Serving as everything from an educator to a coach, mentors have the opportunity to enrich the life of a young person by cultivating an individual, personal connection. Similarly, GPS guides act as mentors for their mentees, shaping interests, helping to find career or life paths, using wisdom to give sound advice and sometimes just being a good listener.

Mentors look to connect and grow alongside their mentees. Mentors seek out their mentees and actively discover new ways to engage and connect. This means seeing the relationship as more than just helping the mentee, but as a relationship where both people grow over time. Within the GPS program, this growth is concentrated in the first year of the student's college journey.

Although mentoring is often a personal choice that grows out of a connection with an individual, the GPS program hopes to cultivate an environment where mentor-type connections with students can develop. Though a structured program cannot always reproduce the personal connections that grow between individuals, it can help to jump start positive relationships by introducing students to guides.

Guides within the GPS program should not worry if their relationship with a mentee is not the same as a traditional mentor/mentee relationship. There are many different kinds of mentoring, and each mentor provides unique benefits to their mentee. Although every mentor/mentee relationship is different, turn to the next page for some common roles that may relate to your upcoming experience as a guide within the GPS program. For many, these "mentor hats" are worn interchangeably throughout the year.



"Mentoring is neither passive nor academic—you want to engage and involve your mentees, learn with them and be transformed by the experience as well." – Life Giving Mentors

Lifelong friend This is often the role that one might envision for a mentor/mentee relationship. The mentor as a lifelong friend grows with the mentee, and the relationship develops as the mentee ages. The mentor might invite her mentee to her home, keep in touch through letters after her mentee leaves college, or collaborate on scholarship.

Coach Coaches push their mentees to succeed by offering constructive feedback, meaningful praise, and personal observations or insights. A coach helps mentees recognize and hone strengths while guiding mentees to programs or interests that will allow these strengths to flourish. A coach pushes mentees to succeed and provides the support and encouragement a mentee might need to feel motivated or empowered. Much like athletic coaches, mentoring coaches have a close relationship with their mentee(s) that is formed around a shared interest or goal. GPS guides who act like coaches might encourage mentees to apply for a job or join a new club. Coaching is all about providing the support mentees need to feel encouraged to try new opportunities.

Mentor when needed In the GPS program, there will be some mentees who rely on their mentors only when they need something. Typically, guides respond by giving advice, directing mentees to useful services, or by sharing their own similar experiences. Although it is best to stay connected through all seasons of a student's first year, some students do not fully understand the value of this type of mentor relationship. In this situation, we recommend that mentors remain patient and ready to reopen the lines of communication when their mentee approaches with a need or question.

MENTOR
AS A...

Advisor The GPS program envisions staff, faculty and graduate student mentors as experienced professionals who can provide advice and guidance to first-year students. As advisors, guides help new students navigate complex or unfamiliar situations. An advisor might give guidance based on his or her own experience, offer suggestions, or connect mentees with relevant programs or services. As an on-campus professional, many GPS guides will have the knowledge and experience to direct new students to programs on campus or use their own experience to give direction to mentees.

Professional connection Some mentors interact with their mentees primarily as professional connections, keeping all interactions fairly formal. This is often very useful for first-year students new to the campus community and eager to make professional connections that will help them find opportunities and organizations matching their interests. As professionals well-connected to the university, GPS guides are positioned to connect students with programs and organizations that they might be unfamiliar with. In addition, some mentees find that their mentors can direct them to open job positions, connect them with another professional that shares their interests, or act as a reference.

The Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring benefits the mentee, the mentor and the university by fostering high levels of engagement. As each mentee-mentor relationship is different, each individual in the program will experience unique benefits.

Although many people believe that mentees gain the most from a mentoring relationship, mentors have a lot to gain as well. Here are some of the benefits you might experience:

- Exposure to the emerging talent pool
- Ongoing attention to your own career development
- Satisfaction from imparting wisdom and experience to others in the profession without a huge time commitment
- Enhancement of coaching, mentoring, leadership and management skills
- The chance to be exposed to diversity of thought, style, personality and culture
- A way to recruit employees for the mentor's department or area of interest
- Feedback loop to students and program regarding curriculum needs
- Greater knowledge of recruiting success factors
- A way to "give back" to K-State
- A lasting career network
- Connections with new colleagues on campus

Moreover, mentoring gives guides access to a fulfilling interpersonal connection with new K-State students. Some mentors have even said that the GPS connect events have led them to discover new places and activities on campus.

Mentoring benefits mentees, too. Mentees often remark on how much they learn from their mentor, or how their connection with GPS has introduced them to new people and locations. Some benefits for mentees include:

- University success. In 2011 93 percent of GPS participants who joined GPS in the fall re-enrolled in the spring semester.
- Access to a professional network.
- An opportunity to make a connection that can open doors to future opportunities.
- Support navigating a new university.
- Individual interaction with a university professional.
- Exposure to new experiences and points of view.

These benefits are just the beginning. Some mentor/mentee relationships extend past the first year and become long-term friendships. Others offer meaningful guidance for a student's first year at a new university. No matter the level of connection, each mentor-mentee connection is different and has its own unique benefits.

"The GPS program organizes fun events that offer me a chance to catch up with my mentees at locations on campus that I might not otherwise carve out time to visit. Getting to know the students and getting to know K-State's amenities makes being a GPS mentor doubly rewarding."
-Sarah Hoyt, GPS Guide

Guidelines for Mentoring Success

Although there is no rulebook for mentoring, there are certain guidelines that will enable guides to be successful. The guidelines printed below are great general reminders for GPS participants and are useful tips for mentoring success.

- Be sure you are clear about how often you will communicate; whether it will be by phone, email, Facebook, text messaging, or more; how quickly you will respond; and confidentiality.
- Make contact frequently, especially during the first few weeks to build a trusting relationship.
- Respect your mentee's experience and views even if you don't agree.
- Follow up when you make a commitment to get information, take action, etc.
- Be appreciative of your mentee; learn his or her strengths and seek or offer advice in areas of strength.
- Work hard to make the relationship a two-way street. This means you should always be on the lookout for information/resources that might be of interest to your mentee (e.g., articles you read or information you come across).
- Be flexible and enjoy the experience.

General Rules to Remember

The GPS program recognizes that every mentor-mentee connection will have different goals and boundaries, but we hope that these guidelines will help start to develop your relationship.

Communication Communication is an essential part of any relationship, and it is very important to keep the lines of communication open with your mentee(s). This means contacting your mentee early and often to make sure you are on the same page. Regular contact will ensure that you are both comfortable with how often you are meeting, the events you attend, and your communications through technology.

Guides communicate with mentees primarily through email. However, some guides connect with mentees through social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn. Some guides give out numbers to their home phones or cell phones, and others feel comfortable texting. These are all great things to discuss in person the first time you meet.

Moreover, we encourage guides to communicate with the GPS program as well. If you would like to contact the program share information about your mentee/mentor relationship, there are several resources available to you. First, you can contact the Assistant Program Coordinator.

The Assistant Program Coordinator can offer new perspectives or advice. Second, GPS guides are welcome to connect with other program participants. Guides can use the Listserv to share concerns, suggestions or successes. In addition, guides are encouraged to connect with other guides within their own networks. Sharing stories and communication is one way to gain new ideas about connecting with your mentee.

Blame-free relationship

It is possible, for whatever reason, a mentor and a mentee will not connect. This is acceptable and understandable, and guides should refrain from feeling guilty. One failed connection does not mean that you are not a good mentor. Some guides worry that they are failing if they are not close friends with their mentee(s). This is not the case; many mentees are looking for guidance and support, not just friendship. You can still be a great guide without being a close friend of your mentee. If you would like to talk about any struggles you are experiencing, please contact the GPS Program Director. In the blame-free relationship, you can feel comfortable talking about your experiences.

Professionalism

Remember that the mentor/mentee relationship is a professional one. Although the GPS program is flexible, we recommend that mentors use their judgment in responding to and connecting with mentees. When responding to a mentee, remember to keep a professional tone and demeanor. Also, please choose appropriate locations to connect with your mentee. Favorite places for guides and mentees to connect include: Caribou Coffee, Sunset Zoo, Chipotle, Seth Child Cinemas and Konza Prairie, just to name a few!

Setting boundaries

Every guide will feel comfortable with different guidelines and boundaries. Guides are encouraged to remember that they are entitled to feel comfortable in this relationship and should not feel pressured into anything they do not want to do.

Our recommendation is to set up boundaries early with your mentee(s). One important boundary to set is that of communication. Although this year students will provide the program with their preferred method of contact (through their registration survey), this is still a good conversation to have. It's important for you to determine how you are comfortable communicating with your mentee(s) and set up communication guidelines so that your mentee(s) will know what to expect. For example, if your mentee's preferred form of communication is Facebook and you're not an avid Facebook user, talk with them directly about what an alternative might be. It's useful to start these communication guidelines by asking questions. If you would prefer to email, ask your mentees if they could check their email every couple of days to keep an eye out for your communications. This will ensure that you and your mentee(s) are on the same page.

When mentees and guides are setting up meetings or RSVPing to GPS-sponsored "connect" events, they are encouraged to remember that it is always important to ask first. In other words, make sure to ask your mentee if they are available and willing to attend an event before you schedule a meeting. In many instances, these events can also be attended independently by guides and mentees, relieving any pressure of all parties being in attendance. This is one way to keep the lines of communication open and ensure a successful, productive mentee-mentor relationship.

Confidentiality

Unless your mentee specifically says otherwise, you should always treat conversations as confidential. Please refrain from speaking about your mentee(s) with their instructors, roommates, friends or family members. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule. If you believe that your mentee could benefit from talking to one of the resource offices on campus, referrals are highly recommended. In addition, guides are welcome to share information directly with the program. The GPS Coordinator can help you navigate difficult situations and will keep student and guide information confidential.

..... **CHAPTER 3:**
Program Expectations and Communication Guidelines

Guide Expectations

The GPS program is structured yet flexible. However, we ask that our mentors meet three program expectations:

3

Connect with your mentee(s) a minimum of three times per semester



If possible, attend one GPS sponsored "connect" event over the course of the year



Fill out a brief program survey each semester

For some, these expectations are easily met and sometimes even exceeded. Last fall, 75% of the GPS guide survey respondents reported they had already met their student(s) three or more times—exceeding the semester program requirements only two months into the school year!

Pre-Arrival Contact

One of the unique ways that GPS guides connect with their mentee(s) is by contacting mentees before they arrive on the K-State campus. We encourage our guides to write a handwritten note welcoming their mentee(s) and introducing themselves. You will receive your mentee(s) home address when their profile information is sent to you and can even request a K-State postcard from the program coordinator!

This initial contact helps to keep the program personal and invites students into a comfortable environment right off the bat. Your mentee(s) will be excited to hear from you and your note will surely calm the anxiety that many experience prior to their arrival on campus.

All personal notes should be sent by Aug. 7, 2012, to ensure that students receive them prior to their move to Manhattan.

Here is an example of text you might consider including in your mentee personal note(s):

Hello!

My name is Derek and I am your GPS guide! I am looking forward to getting to know you this year and am especially excited to meet you when you arrive on campus later this month. I hope your final preparations go smoothly. I'm sure you have a lot to do!

Please look for an email from me in your K-State account within the next couple of weeks. I'd like to set-up a time to grab ice cream or coffee during your first week of classes!

Sincerely,
Derek

First Person-to-Person Meeting

The first in-person meeting is very exciting! If you are available to attend the GPS kickoff event that takes place during the first week of classes, we welcome you to meet your mentee there for the first time. If not, try setting up an informal meeting on campus during the first week of school. It is very important that guides and students meet within the first week of classes.

A good tip for navigating the first meeting is to ask questions. At this point you’ve ideally sent a handwritten note and maybe an email or two, but this is the time to really start getting to know each other! Ask about family, friends, classes, living situations — things that will really help you get to know them and keep the conversation going.

Also, remember that the first meeting is a great time to set up boundaries and establish a communication plan for the semester. Here are some ideas for points to cover in the first conversation:

Get-to-know-you questions:	Logistical concerns:
Tell me about your move to campus! Have you met anyone/done anything fun?	How would you like to schedule meetings in the future?
What kinds of things do you like to do for fun?	Do you want to meet here again or would you like to try somewhere new?
What kinds of activities did you participate in during high school?	How often would you like to meet?

Even when you discuss a set of working rules or boundaries, you’ll probably forget to cover something...or your mentees will misinterpret (or even ignore) what you agreed upon. When this happens, take it in stride. Patiently and yet firmly reiterate your agreement to your mentees, and try again!

Setting Boundaries that Work

Boundaries are important for any relationship; they keep both parties feeling respected, valued and comfortable. As guides, the creation of boundaries is a task that might fall to you. In setting boundaries, there are several important guidelines and forms of boundaries to keep in mind.

Although the GPS program does not have a firm list of rules, we do suggest that you and your mentees come to agreements about the following and more:

- Time and length of meetings
- Communication in between your meetings
- Areas to talk about and work on
- What’s off limits
- When you might refer your mentee(s) to someone else for additional assistance
- Style preferences (e.g., how each of you would like to give and receive feedback, how you prefer to communicate, punctuality habits)
- Physical/touch boundaries (What’s comfortable? Are each of you huggers...or not?)
- Confidentiality (what is strictly between you, what you as the mentor must report, if anything)
- Gifts
- Event payment

Here are some examples of boundary–related dilemmas you might face and how our program recommends you handle them (depending on the boundaries you’ve already set, of course.) Your mentee(s)...

Missed your schedule time to connect twice in a row and didn’t notify you that he/she wouldn’t make it.
Via your mentee’s preferred form of communication say:
“ Hi there. Just checking in to see how things are going for you. I went to _____ yesterday at ____ a.m./ p.m. to meet you like we’d planned but I didn’t see you there. It seems like you’re having a pretty busy month seeing as that last time to connect didn’t work out either. I understand how tricky scheduling can be come when you have so much on your plate. Do you think next time, if you have another conflict, you could send me a text/e-mail to let me know you can’t make it?

For now, what do you think about touching base again in a couple of weeks once things calm down and then we can try again?”

Asked if they could come over to your house.
If you prefer to keep the relationship strictly professional at this point you might say something like: “We might consider doing that later, thanks for suggesting it! For now, I’d like to continue meeting on campus if that’s OK?”

Asks you a very personal question.
“I’d prefer to keep that topic off limits between us.”

Tells you about personal struggles he/she has been facing.
“ I’m glad you trusted me enough to share that with me, thank you. You know I care about you, and I want you to find someone who can help you make the next improvement steps related to this concern. Who have you talked to already? Would you be comfortable visiting with _____?”

Called or texted you at 2 a.m. to talk.
“Is this an emergency? (If not) I prefer we do our talking during the day” or “Please, no more calls before 9 a.m. and after 9 p.m.” Decide what you want your role to be in the case of an emergency, which would be extremely rare if it occurs at all.

Asks you to take care of setting up his/her spring class schedule.
“ I’m glad you’re excited for your second semester at K-State and I know enrolling for the first time on your own can be a bit tricky. Have you met with your academic advisor? I am happy to provide some assistance but they are the best person to make sure you are enrolling in the best classes for your major. Also, they can provide you with helpful instructions about the online enrollment process.”

Gave you a hug.
If you’re comfortable, hug back. If not, you can thank them for the hug and let them know you’re not comfortable with hugging for the future.

Creating a Regular Contact Schedule

Although the program expects that you meet with your mentee(s) only three times a semester, it is good practice to email mentees monthly to keep in touch and see how their semester is progressing. A great way to keep the lines of communication open is by setting up a regular contact schedule. Mentors are busy professionals and can sometimes forget to contact mentees regularly. One way to make sure to remember is to create a calendar event. Remind yourself on first of every month that it’s time to send out an email to connect with your mentee(s).

Conversation Points throughout the Year

Great guides are enthusiastic and willing to talk with mentees about their experiences, goals and projects. Although there are many things going on in the lives of first-year students, some experiences will be more common at different points in the semester. We’ve included a list of talking points that are relevant to specific times throughout a student’s first year at K-State.

August

- First-year students might be experiencing several transition points that can drive conversation. Below are a list of important events and example questions.
- Getting settled on campus: How was move-in for you? Are you settled into your new home? How are your roommates (if you have any)? Are you living on or off campus?
 - Week of Welcome: Have you gone to any events during Week of Welcome? Do you know of all the things taking place during the first two weeks? (Week of Welcome events can be found online at <http://wow.k-state.edu>)
 - Getting involved: What were you involved in when you were in high school? Would you like to continue any of those activities here at K-State? (At this point, you can share information that you know about programs and events on campus.)
 - Classes: What do you think about your classes so far? Which classes are you most excited about? Nervous about? Do you know about the tutoring resources on campus? (For more ideas, take a look at our list of K-State resources at the end of this document.)

As a mentor, you can use this information by asking specific questions about experiences common to many mentees. Mentees might want to talk about the experience of having a room-mate, leaving their homes, or having college level classes. You can tailor your questions to these points, which will help your mentee share their experiences and keep the conversation flowing.

October

- First-year students are finally settling into their academic routine. Some transition points and follow up questions might include:
- Mid-term exams: How has your studying been going? Do you feel confident about your classes so far? Are your study habits working for you?
 - Examining a chosen major: Do you feel a draw toward any of your classes? What subject do you find most interesting? What are you excited to learn more about?
 - Time management: How have you been balancing school and friends? What about keeping in touch with family members?

Knowing that many first-year students are experiencing these transition points in October, guides can focus conversations on study habits, making new friends and academic goals. Although some mentees will be struggling through some of these transitions, others will be experiencing success. Gauge the reactions of your mentee(s) and if you feel that a mentee might need some extra help, you can refer him or her to some of the resources in the Resource Guide.

December

- As the fall semester comes to an end, many first-year students will be experiencing these important transition points in their academic careers:
- Final exams: How are you feeling about your exams? Which classes are you most worried/ excited about? How has studying been going? What’s your favorite study spot? Are any of your classmates forming study groups?
 - Winter break: Do you have any plans for winter break? Will you be working over break? What are some of the things you are excited to do? What will you miss over break?
 - Spring course selection: Do you know what classes you’ll be taking in the spring? What classes are you most excited to take? Are you trying to decide between several classes? Do you know any of the professors in your spring classes?

Mentors might use these transition events as talking points, focusing conversations on break activities, family, exams or time management. However, note that if your mentee responds slowly to your emails around this time, it’s helpful to remember that they are experiencing the stress of studying for final exams. Mentors should be sensitive to this by asking mentees about their time constraints.

January

- After a month away from campus, many students experience a fairly significant transition when they return for the spring semester. Talking points for your re-connecting in mid-late January might include:
- Winter break reflections: Follow-up to their answers from your December connect. How was your break? Were you able to re-connect with family and friends from high school?
 - Fall academic reflections: Last time we saw each other was before finals week — how did things turn out? Were you pleased with your final grades?
 - Re-adjusting to campus: Have you settled back into the residence halls/fraternity/ scholarship house/apartment? How are things with your roommate so far this semester? Did you make any changes to your class schedule over break? How are you feeling, overall, about your spring semester?

March

- Similar to October, March marks the halfway point of the semester and things tend to be very busy for students and staff alike. In addition to the October check-in conversation points, questions to ask might include:
- Spring break: What are your plans for spring break?
 - Summer plans: Are you starting to think about summer? Do you plan to go home? What about a job or internship?
 - Keeping in touch with family: Have you been able to go home lately or has your family made a trip here to see you?

May

- Students are gearing up for the second finals week of college. Many will be feeling more prepared than they were when you talked to them in December. Some questions will remain pertinent. Additional discussions might include questions like:
- Summer plans: Are you looking forward to your summer plans?
 - Fall course schedule: Have you finalized your class schedule for the fall? Will you be taking any summer classes?
 - Campus involvement: Have you thought about new and different ways you might be interested in getting involved on campus in the fall?

This is also a good time to talk about what your relationship might look like for the next year. For some, keeping in touch via email works best. Others have continued meeting in person throughout their student’s sophomore and even junior years of college. Talking about these boundaries and expectations will help leave things on a comfortable note for everyone!

What If...?
In addition to the examples of boundaries included in an earlier section, there are several common questions and experiences that guides have encountered in the past. Examples of these situations and how you might go about handling them are as follows:

My mentee isn’t responding to my communications.
Some mentees sign up for the GPS program in the summer when they are nervous about school. After getting to campus and settling in, they no longer feel the need for a mentor. Although this is unfortunate because mentoring is useful for both students in need of assistance and those who are not, there are several ways you can respond. First, use concerted effort within the first couple months of the school year to reach your student. Second, inform the GPS program directly. The coordinator is also able and willing to reach out to the student to gauge his/her interest in staying involved with the program. If your mentee responds and lets you or the program know that he/she no longer would like to be involved, the GPS program will mark the student’s records accordingly and you will not be asked to continue trying to correspond.

My mentee doesn’t need/want to meet up because everything is going well for him/her.
Some mentees feel as though mentoring is necessary only when they are struggling. Mentoring can be extremely useful for students who are not struggling, simply having the chance to connect and talk with a professional on campus helps students to expand their networks. You might mention these benefits in your correspondence. If your student continues to not want to meet, however, you might contact the Program Coordinator.

I haven’t contacted my mentee in a while and I don’t know how to re-open the lines of communication.
It happens. Everyone gets busy and suddenly looks at their calendar and realizes that half a semester has disappeared. Although it is useful to set up a reminder system (see the section of the manual titled “Setting a Regular Contact Schedule”), it is of course possible forget. If this does happen, send your mentee(s) an email or give him/her a call as soon as you remember. Start off by apologizing for your absence and explaining your reasons for forgetting. Then try to repair the relationship by making plans for a meeting. Your correspondence may look similar to this:

Hello Leah,

How have you been? I have been out of touch for the last several weeks. I had a large project coming up and I lost track of time.

I really enjoyed our coffee meeting in September, and I was hoping we could set up another time to connect. Do you have any time this Wednesday?

Again, I’m sorry for not emailing you sooner. I look forward to hearing from you!

Best,
Caitlin

I don’t get along with my mentee.
In this situation, guides will need to examine their feelings about their mentee. In addition, guides can speak with the Assistant Program Coordinator. Talking through your feelings with someone in the program and listening for possible solutions will benefit your mentee/mentor relationship. If there is a strong reason for the lack of connection, you may be matched with a different mentee.

I think my mentee doesn’t like me.
In any relationship people may feel insecure or unsure about their standing. Because guides may feel responsible for their mentee(s) experience in the program, it is easy to feel as though mentees are not having a positive connection. If you feel this way, try and step back and examine the relationship. Is your mentee naturally shy or quiet? If so, their quiet demeanor may have nothing to do with you. In addition, mentees might feel uncomfortable talking openly to a seasoned professional. By listening attentively, you might help them overcome this fear. If, after further consideration, your fears are not allayed, try speaking with the Assistant Program Coordinator. This will help you work through your concerns with someone experienced in the program.

My co-worker seems to be having a great GPS experience and has a strong bond with her mentees, and I feel like I’m not as good a mentor.
Although it is natural to compare your experience with your peers, remember that every mentor-mentee relationship is different. Perhaps your mentees need a different kind of support than the mentees of your peer. Try reading the section of this guide titled “Five Approaches to Mentoring.” There are different kinds of guides, and you might be a different kind of mentor than your peer. All of the different mentoring approaches contribute to the experience of mentees, albeit in different ways. All mentees don’t need to have the same experience to have a positive experience.

I am unable to remain committed to the program due to unforeseen circumstances.
Some guides sign up for the program and find that an unforeseen obligation results in their inability to continue in the program. Although this is disappointing, it is understandable. If this occurs, contact the Assistant Program Coordinator right away. She will ensure that your mentee(s) gain a new mentor and therefore still have a positive experience.

What happens if my mentee and I don’t make connections three times per semester?
The program recognizes that quantifying connections between guides and mentees is not always an accurate way to look at the relationship. Guides and mentees are not labeled as “inactive” in

the program if they do not meet three times. They are asked to respond to two check-in surveys throughout the course of the year. Of course, e-mail updates are welcome anytime.

Does email count as connecting, or do we have to meet in person?
The GPS Program encourages guides to remain regular contact with students through written or verbal correspondence; however, the overall goal is that guides will meet with their mentee(s) at least three times in person. These in person meetings give guides and mentees an opportunity to get to know each other through conversation, something that email and other forms of communication lack.

My student needs to talk to someone with experience in a specific area that I am not qualified to assist in.
Many guides support their mentees by directing them to relevant services on campus. Although there are many situations where you might need to direct your mentee to services on campus, here are three commonly used services:

1. K-State’s One Stop Shop website, k-state.edu/onestop/, has a full list of resources that your mentee might find useful.
2. The Office of Student Life, k-state.edu/osas/, has many resources to help students with non-academic issues.
3. K-State’s GPS program administrators are available to help you answer questions and to direct you towards useful services. We can be reached by phone at (785) 532-5167 and by email at gps@k-state.edu.

CHAPTER 4: Connecting with GPS

GPS Connect Events
The GPS program offers exciting monthly “connect” events. These events are typically free or very low cost, accessible/schedule-friendly and specialized to offer both you and our students a VIP connect experience. In the past, some connect events have included:

- Reserved seats at a women’s basketball game with a pre-game discussion hosted by K-State’s athletics director.
- An evening of donuts, board games and ping-pong at Varsity Donuts in Aggieville.
- A holiday reception and concert at McCain Auditorium with a tour of the orchestra pit and meeting with the conductor afterwards.
- An outdoor lunch event with improv entertainment.

Attendance at connect events is not required but encouraged as events work with your schedule. Additionally, guides and mentees can attend these events independent of their GPS counterpart if schedules do not align for both individuals to attend. Connect events are great opportunities to meet with mentees in a fun, interactive environment. These events also allow mentees to mingle and get to know new people to add to their professional network. These events will be advertised through email, so be sure to check your inbox regularly for upcoming connect events. Information is also posted to the GPS Facebook page: facebook.com/ksugps

Connecting On and Off Campus
There are many different ways to connect with mentees both on and off campus. The GPS program leaves plenty of room for your interests and ingenuity. In the past, guides have met with mentees on campus by:

- Having coffee together at a coffee shop on campus.
- Meeting up for a brown bag lunch in between classes.
- Going bowling in the K-State Student Union.
- Getting ice cream on campus.
- Attending together one of the many on-campus events posted on the University calendar.

In addition to connecting on campus, GPS guides and their mentees sometimes meet off campus in Aggieville or elsewhere. We ask that guides use good judgment in planning events,

remembering that the relationship between guides and mentees is a professional one. In the past, guides have set up times to:

- See a movie.
- Go ice skating at the rink in City Park.
- Meet for lunch at one of the many restaurants in town.
- Go for a walk at the Konza Prairie.
- Test the ice cream shops around town.
- Enjoy dinner at the mentor's home.

These are just a few examples of the many ways that guides and mentees can connect on and off campus. Mentors can choose meeting locations and events that fit their comfort level, remembering to always ask mentees what their preferences are. Also, the GPS program does not want guides to spend an excessive amount of money on these connect sessions. The program is consistently posting deals around town and on campus on the GPS Facebook page for those individuals looking for a low-cost/free event. For more information about checking comfort levels, see the "Setting Boundaries" section of this manual.

CHAPTER 5:

Impact of GPS

Professional interaction and personalized support helps first-year students in all aspects of their lives. Mentoring in the GPS program contributes to higher levels of engagement in other areas of the university. Mentors provide intellectual challenges, which engages students in critical thinking outside of the classroom, as well as personalized support. This support helps students find the help they need to be successful in college, as well as new opportunities and information. Some mentees have even found campus jobs based on recommendations and advice from guides.

There are different levels of success due to the individual nature of every mentor-mentee relationship. Some mentees find big successes and others experience many small successes over the course of a semester. Mentors will realize that the recommendation to the Academic Resource Center helped their mentee pull through in a tough class, while others will find that simply listening to their mentee gives them a time to work through tough problems. Each of these moments count as successes, even though they are unable to be formally quantified.

Thank you, again, for your willingness to serve as a guide for the GPS first-year mentoring program. Your participation will have an impact on the lives of the first-year students you encounter through this program!

CHAPTER 6:

Works Consulted

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