

# Peer Mentor Recruitment, Training, and Retention

*A Multidimensional Perspective*

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**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

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# What is Mentoring?

- At the most basic level, mentoring assumes some form of collaborative relationship between two people.
  - Formal arrangements vs. Informal partnerships
  - Short-term vs. Long-term
  - Qualifications may include professional standing, personal knowledge, life experience, etc.
- Mentoring relationships generally focus on “the growth and accomplishment of an individual, assisting in professional and career development, role modeling, psychological support, and the development of personal and reciprocal relationships.”

# Why Peer Mentoring?

- Mutually beneficial relationship between students with IDD and their peer mentors
- Mentors help facilitate classroom interactions between students with IDD and other peers/course instructor
- Mentors are expected to maintain a focus on person-centered planning and self-determination for their matched students
- Benefits of peer mentoring:
  - Increased student retention and success
  - Positive influence on career development and transition to employment
  - Positive influence on psychosocial development, friendship development, and social skills

# Peer Mentor Expectations

- Be committed to schedule/position assigned
- Be punctual & set a good example in regards to classroom etiquette
- Keep an accurate log of student interactions, comments, and concerns
- Maintain a professional, but friendly, relationship with students
- “Even the playing field,” for the students – Do NOT do the work for them
- Treat the students as you would any other “typical” student
- Fade supports as appropriate
- Assist in goal setting and attainment

Both the mentor and mentee need to understand their own role as well as the other person’s role, and everyone must be clear on the program’s policies, boundaries, and expectations

# What is TOPS?

- Comprehensive Transition Program housed at The Ohio State University Nisonger Center
- Caters to students with IDD in ages 18 to 26 that want to have college experiences
- Students graduate with a two- or four-year Workforce Development Certificate



# Background & Student Demographics

- Established in 2010 after the reauthorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act
- Student Demographics
  - 25 students expected for the 2018-2019 school year
    - 20 males and 5 females
    - 23 in-state students and 2 out-of-state students



# Four Pillars of Transition

Academics	Employment	Independent Living & Campus Membership	Self-Determination
Students audit one OSU class per semester in their area of interest.	Students participate in jobs, unpaid internships, and career experiences on campus and in the community.	Students have the same social opportunities as a typically enrolled OSU student; they also are enrolled in specialized life and job skills courses.	Students choose their path in the TOPS program – from their courses to their internships; self-determination skills are also emphasized.

⇒ **TOPS offers a two-year program or a four-year program for its participants.** ⇐

# The TOPS Peer Mentoring Model

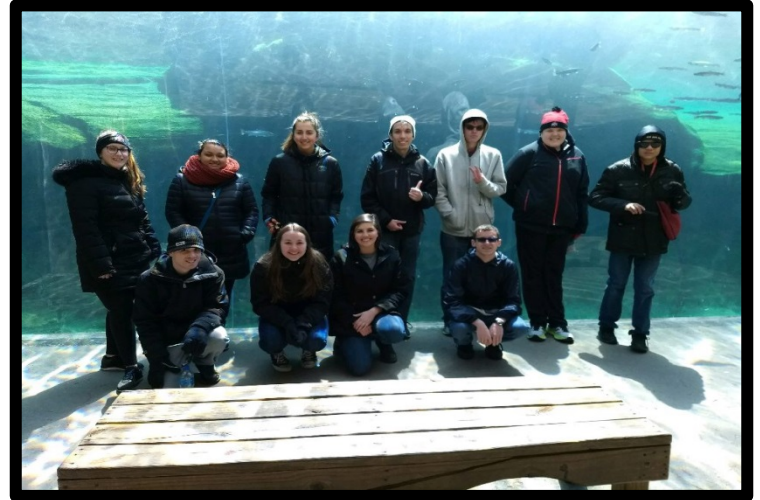
- Students enroll in one or two credit hours of a Disability Studies 5191 Internship during their first semester
  - Translates to three or six hours of support per week
    - *“Offers undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to work with disability-related organizations on or off campus. Repeatable to a maximum of 9 cr hrs or 3 completions. This course is graded S/U.”*
- Peer mentors support TOPS students in three of the four transition areas
  - Independent Living & Campus Membership
  - Academics
  - Self-Determination





# Peer Mentor Recruitment

- Advertisement
  - Word of mouth
  - Pay It Forward
  - Honors & Scholars
  - Various clubs & organizations
- Application process
- Group interview process



# Peer Mentor Training

- In-person training for new mentors and returning mentors that are changing roles
- Online mentor modules
  - Required of all new mentors
- Ongoing communications/webinars
  - Two to three online webinars per semester



# Initial In-Person Mentor Training

- Introduction to Think College and transition programs
- Introduction to the TOPS Program
- Introduction to IDD
- Roles and responsibilities of peer mentors
- Panel of returning peer mentors
- Scenario and situational-based discussions
- Q & A



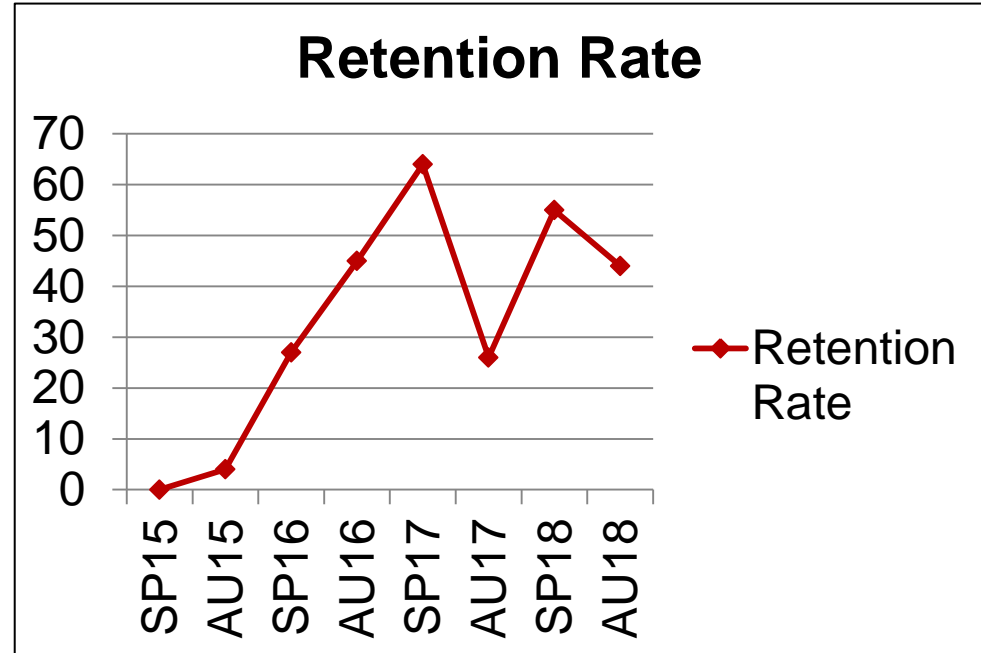
# Training Modules & Curriculum

- Module #1: Who Are Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities?
- Module #2: College and the TOPS Program
- Module #3: Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities of TOPS Students
- Module #4: Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities of TOPS Peer Mentors
- Module #5: Technology to Support TOPS Students
- Module #6: Understanding HIPAA and FERPA
- Module #7: Goal Setting with TOPS Students



# Peer Mentor Demographics & Retention

- Mentors from all years in school
- Majority female
- Common academic majors include:
  - *Health Sciences*
  - *Psychology*
  - *Education*
  - *Speech and Hearing Sciences*
  - *Biological Sciences*
  - *Neuroscience*
  - *Pre-OT*
  - *Pre-PT*



# Let's hear from some of our peer mentors!

**Ashlee Chadwick**

*Peer Mentor*  
TOPS Program

**Baylee Neate**

*Peer Mentor*  
TOPS Program



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# Who Are We?

- Ohio State Students
- Friends
- Peer Mentors
- Role Models



# What purpose do we serve?

Educational Coach	In-Class Mentor	Tutor	Social Coach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attends audited OSU course with TOPS student</li><li>• Events the playing field for the student</li><li>• Provides in-class supports, such as note sharing, classroom behavior modeling, and facilitation of social interactions</li><li>• One-to-one mentoring</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides in-class supports during specialized Student Learning Communities (SLCs)</li><li>• Technology-based and behavioral supports</li><li>• Small group mentoring</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides assistance and support with any outside of class work</li><li>• One-on-one tutoring and group tutoring models</li><li>• Also can assist students with organizational and time management skills</li><li>• Complete assignments with (not for) students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitates social activities on campus and in the community</li><li>• Models appropriate behaviors and etiquette in social settings</li><li>• Most common supports include tipping, healthy choices when out to eat, money management, situation-specific etiquette</li></ul>





# 7 Tips for Success as Peer Mentors



## Tip #1

Our goal is to help them ***succeed as college students*** & assist them in ***forming relationships*** inside and out of the classroom





## Tip #2

It's important to teach them to ***advocate for themselves!***



## Tip #3

***Challenge them.*** Our job is to allow them to realize and utilize their full potential.





## Tip #4

***See their capabilities*** NOT their disabilities.  
These students are far more capable than  
may lead you to believe.



## Tip #5

***Be their friend first and mentor second.***  
*They value our friendship, and they look up to each of our volunteers.*





## Tip #6

*Help them to **create a schedule** that they can follow when mentors aren't present. This will reinforce positive behaviors and a healthy lifestyle.*





## Tip #7

***Utilize your*** professional staff and all campus ***resources***. When things get off track they are here to redirect you and see the program succeed.





# Let's hear from our students

- <https://youtu.be/UQ07O-3WPK8>

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