Southern Nevada Northern Arizona
Louis Stokes Alliance
for Minority Participation

Near-Peer Mentoring Program

MENTOR HANDBOOK
What is SNNA-LSAMP?

Founded in 2017, Southern Nevada Northern Arizona (SNNA) LSAMP is funded through an NSF LSAMP grant (HRD 1712523) and led by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). In addition to UNLV, SNNA-LSAMP includes three partner institutions: Northern Arizona University (NAU), the College of Southern Nevada (CSN), and Coconino Community College (CCC). SNNA-LSAMP’s goal is to increase substantially the number of STEM baccalaureate degrees earned at colleges and universities in the region by students from historically underrepresented minority (URM) groups (specifically, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Native Pacific Islanders).
Who are the SNNA-LSAMP program contacts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAU</th>
<th>UNLV</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Johnson</td>
<td>Terri Bernstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>928-523-5528</td>
<td>702-895-4776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology building, room 165</td>
<td><a href="mailto:terri.bernstein@unlv.edu">terri.bernstein@unlv.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Jennifer.Johnson@nau.edu">Jennifer.Johnson@nau.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Stanley</td>
<td>Michele Flores-Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Kate.Stanley@nau.edu">Kate.Stanley@nau.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Michele.Flores-Johnson@unlv.edu">Michele.Flores-Johnson@unlv.edu</a></td>
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What are the goals of SNNA-LSAMP near-peer mentoring?

SNNA-LSAMP near-peer mentors will help their mentees make connections, build community, be academically successful and prepare for their STEM careers by helping them:

1. Develop a sense of belonging at the university and within their major
2. Identify and use campus resources
3. Understand university policies and procedures
4. Set and achieve short and long-term goals
5. Engage in purposeful academic and extra-curricular activities

At the same time, mentors develop and refine interpersonal communication and leadership skills that will serve them well in all future educational and workplace endeavors. Near-peer refers to a student who has a year or more of experience compared to someone they mentor.

Who are SNNA-LSAMP near-peer mentors?

There are two types of SNNA-LSAMP near-peer mentors: graduate student mentors (GSMs) and undergraduate student mentors (USMs).
GSMs are university students enrolled in a STEM graduate-degree program at NAU or UNLV. GSMs at NAU and UNLV mentor students who are upper-level undergraduates (i.e., juniors and seniors) who are enrolled in the SNNA-LSAMP program at NAU or UNLV.

USMs are upper-level university undergraduates who are:

- STEM majors at NAU or UNLV;
- Have a GPA of 2.75 or above; and
- Are enrolled in the SNNA-LSAMP program.

USMs at NAU mentor freshmen and sophomores enrolled in the SNNA-LSAMP program at NAU or CCC. USMs at UNLV mentor freshmen and sophomores enrolled in the SNNA-LSAMP program at UNLV or CSN.

What are the responsibilities of an SNNA-LSAMP near-peer mentor?

All SNNA-LSAMP near-peer mentors are required to:

1. Complete mentor training. See Attachment A for more information.
2. Meet with each of their assigned mentees at least twice per month during the fall and spring semesters. These meetings can be conducted face-to-face, over the phone, via text message
or exchange of e-mail messages, or through videoconferencing.
a. For face-to-face and videoconference meetings, GSMs and USMs are expected to dress appropriately and sensibly.
b. Telephone mentoring sessions must not be conducted through a speakerphone when anyone other than the mentor and his/her mentee are present.
c. E-mail correspondence must be conducted through the institutional email accounts of the mentor and the mentee.
3. Ensure each meeting lasts at least 15 minutes and no more than 120 minutes.
4. Document each meeting in accordance with instructions in Attachment B.
5. Maintain confidentiality with mentees. Mentors must protect the privacy of their mentees and keep their mentees’ information confidential. Thus, GSMs and USMs must not share information about their mentees with anyone except approved SNNA-LSAMP personnel (i.e., NAU program contacts for NAU and CCC mentees; UNLV program contacts for UNLV and CSN mentees).
   If a GSM or USM receives an official request for information regarding a mentee, this request should be forwarded to the SNNA-LSAMP program contacts at his or her institution.
6. Immediately report any safety issues to SNNA-LSAMP program contacts at his or her
institution. Additionally, GSMs and USMs should not assume a counseling or tutoring role with students; instead, USMs should refer mentees to campus or community resources as appropriate. *Attachment C* includes a list of such resources.

7. Refer all mentees with questions regarding resources for students with disabilities to the disability resources office on the mentee’s campus. *Attachment C* include contact information for this office on each SNNA-LSAMP campus.

8. Comply with all codes of conduct established by the university in which they are enrolled. See *Attachment D*.

9. Show up on time for meetings and communicate in a timely manner with mentee.

10. Be present, resourceful and take action to support mentee.

What can I expect and not expect as an SNAA-LSAMP near-peer mentor?

As a near-peer mentor:

**Expect...**
- To be a positive role model to your mentee
- The relationship to be one directional in the beginning
- That some change will happen
- To support your mentee in reaching their goals
• To experience some frustration as a mentor
• That you will be busy
• To make some impact in your mentee’s life

Do not expect…
• To “reform” or “save” your mentee
• Your mentee to confide in you or trust you in the beginning
• Your mentee to change quickly
• Your goals to mirror your mentee’s goals for themselves
• Your mentee to schedule meetings or to develop plans without your help
• To see or understand the impact you have made

How do I set up meetings with my mentees?

To set up meetings with mentee:
• Email (see possible template below) to introduce yourself
• Follow up call (if haven’t heard from mentee) two days later. Leave a message with preferred contact method
• If no contact, email again (see template).
• If no contact on third attempt, inform the SNNA-LSAMP program contact at your institution
Hello [mentee name],

My name is xx. I am excited to be your SNNA-LSAMP Peer Mentor! I’m glad that you signed up for the program. I think you will find it hugely beneficial as you work toward your degree.

You might be unsure about how helpful working with a mentor can be, so I’ll just share a few things that my past mentors helped me with. [Insert own experiences here]. Basically, I am here to listen, help and be your partner while you are at [name of mentee’s institution]. I’d like to set up a day and time to meet. Here are my available times:

- List days/times

Will any of those work for you? If so, let me know which one. If not, let me know when you are available, and I’ll see what I can do. I’m eager to meet you.

You can reach me here or call me at [insert phone #] *(Only add this if you are okay with them texting/calling you)*

I’m excited to meet you! Talk to you soon.

Sincerely,
Follow-up Email Template

Hello [mentee name],

It’s [mentor name] and I’m reaching out one more time to set up a day and time to meet with you. I realize that you are busy and maybe unsure of how this will work and I understand that.

Our first meeting can take place at [local coffee shop or library or other public place] of your choice. Or we can talk over the phone or through videoconferencing, if that works better for you. I know this is all new but I want to make sure you know that I’m here to help and would like to get to know you. Please reach out and let me know what days and times will work for you.

I won’t reach out again as I don’t want to bother you. If you aren’t interested in receiving mentoring, please let [institution’s SNNA-LSAMP program contact] know ([program contact e-mail address]).

I hope I hear from you soon! Please reach out to me at [preferred contact] to set up a day and time to meet!

Good luck,
[mentor name]
What are some tools I can use to help my mentees?

Goal Setting & Action Plans

- Set goals that are easy to achieve in the beginning. Small wins help when setting bigger goals.
- Follow the SMART goal setting framework.
  - Specific: Goal should be detailed and specify who, what, when, where and how.
  - Measurable: How will you measure and track your goal?
  - Attainable: Be realistic about achieving your goal. Consider time, resources and other people or things you will need.
o Relevant: Make sure you know why this is important to you.

o Time bound: Establish a deadline and set some benchmarks/milestones.

• Utilize the action plan (template provided on LSAMP website) to sketch out a goal with your mentee.

• Make copies for both you and your mentee and follow up with them each mentoring appointment.

Motivating Students

• Focus on what a student is/has done well (Competency)
• Help students by providing choices (Autonomy)
• Develop a growth mindset (Competency)
• Establish high expectations and clear goals (Competency/Autonomy)
• Share of yourself and your passions! (Relatedness)

“Get to Know You” Questions

• What’s your favorite class so far and why?
• What did you like most/least about high school? Last semester?
• What do you like to do in your spare time?
• What are your family and friends like?
• What do you wish you knew how to do?
• If you could go anywhere for a week, where would you go?
• If you could spend the day with anyone, who would it be?

Clarifying Questions/Statements

• Give me some examples.
• Tell me more about that.
• Why do you think that happened?
• What could/should you have done differently?
• What’s next?
• What is exciting or worrying you about this?
• What are some of the possibilities?
• What would you like the outcome to be?
• What’s your biggest challenge now?
• If things worked out the way you wanted, what would it look like?

Mentoring Meeting Topics

• Talk about their classes. Which ones are they excited about? Which ones make them concerned?
• Discuss strengths and weaknesses, in general. How can you support them with each?
• What are their values? Why are those important to them?
• Reality check: are things going the way they hoped? How far off are they? What are some ways in which they might change direction?
• Discuss sense of belonging. Are they feeling good on campus? Are they making friends? Explore clubs and activities that might help.
• Discuss where they have been on campus. Where do they like to hang out and/or study on campus? Where haven’t they been that they want to go? Plan to go with them.
• What’s their living situation like? If they live on-campus, how are they liking it? What do they plan to do for next year?
• Mid-term/Finals prep: How can they best prepare to be more confident? What strategies can you share?
• Discuss undergraduate research opportunities on your campus. What do they think they might be interested in trying? What makes them the most nervous and/or excited?
• What are the mentee’s goals outside of getting their degree? How can you help them reach their goals?

Structure of First Session

1. Introductions/Pleasantries
2. Overview of what mentoring is:
   a. Provide encouragement
   b. Working towards goals together
c. Solve problems together/provide resources
d. Academic support & development

3. Ground rules of mentoring
   a. Discuss boundaries & confidentiality
   b. Meeting frequency-set up days/times, if possible
   c. Acceptable methods of contact

4. How are things going? Share of yourself and your experiences

5. Ask about mentee goals, aspirations, concerns
   a. Talk about working together

Confidentiality Limitations

As a mentor you are required to inform a professional staff (1) with the program, a counselor or law enforcement if:

- If a student is in immediate danger to themself or others
- If the student is endangering a population that cannot protect itself, such as in the case of child or elder abuse.

The first step is to contact your LSAMP program contact for guidance on how to proceed. If you are unable to contact that person, call or take your mentee to the on-campus counseling center and if none of those are options, call law enforcement.
10 Tips for Online Mentoring Success

1. Sign up for a free virtual conferencing account.
2. Research functions on the software you are using to explain to the mentee during sessions.
3. Be specific about your expectations for where your video session should take place.
4. Ensure your background is appropriate and won’t be the cause of distraction for your or your mentee (use video settings where available to blur or provide a picture if you feel its distracting).
5. Emotional and facial cues are a little more difficult online so attempt to communicate what you might say with your face or hands normally.
6. Check out your lighting to ensure you can be seen. Backlighting will make it hard to see you.
7. Determine how you plan to take notes since you will likely be on your computer.
8. Use the chat function or screen share (when available) to share resources in the moment.
9. Maintain eye contact as if you were in person.
10. Outline the meeting topics at the beginning of the meeting, if you have them.

Best Practices for Online Mentoring

- Make sure to update your application. Bug fixes, security patches, new features, etc.
• Always put a password on your session to protect your meeting from uninvited guests and eavesdroppers.

• Do not share sensitive information (files, pictures, documents, etc.), be mindful of what you are sending.

• Maintain awareness of your surroundings when you are sharing your screen.

• Make sure to lock your meeting to ensure no one else can join.

• Always check your settings to make sure they are what you think they are.

• Depending on the platform, the defaults may be less than optimal or even undesirable. For example, even if the platform advertises that it encrypts transmission data, that does not mean that its encryption feature is turned on as a default.

• Mute your microphone when not speaking to reduce noise and interference.

How are near-peer mentors compensated?

The workload and compensation structure for SNNA-LSAMP near-peer mentors varies by institution and by mentor level (i.e., GSM or USM. For more information, see Attachment E.