



Peer Connections Program

Peer Guide

Toolkit

Welcome

Thank you for volunteering to participate in the Peer Connections Program. As a Peer Guide to a new hire at UNLV, you will be a key player in welcoming the person and helping to ensure a successful transition to our university.

Background

The Peer Connections Program is an important component of UNLV's onboarding of new hires. Onboarding refers to the various activities organizations undertake to bring people into the workplace. These activities range from the processing of employment paperwork to the critical task of transforming the new hire into a valued member of our community.

Effective onboarding can improve an employee's performance, engagement, and retention. Pairing a Peer Guide with a new hire improves onboarding by facilitating the new hire's transition and connection to the university. A Peer Guide plays an early and important role in welcoming the new hire, establishing rapport, and providing the guidance and assistance needed for successful transition to a career at UNLV.

Who is a Peer Guide?

A Peer Guide is a UNLV administrative faculty member who is:

- An enthusiastic and knowledgeable member of the campus community
- An employee with at least 1 year of full-time service at UNLV
- Someone who wants to support their colleagues

Your role is not to be a trainer or manager

You may be a manager or trainer in your job, but as a Peer Guide you are a peer wherein questions and concerns may be explored comfortably as the new hire deals with the confusion and uncertainty often faced in acclimating to a new job.

Poaching is unacceptable

Please do not suggest to your new employee buddy that they consider an alternative position at the university, whether it be in your department, unit, or someplace else. Poaching undermines the integrity of the Peer Connections Program.

Creating a Successful Experience

- Contact and introduce yourself to the new hire as soon as you are alerted to having been matched to a new employee (an email template is provided below)
- Establish a relationship and build a rapport sufficient to invite and support regular interaction
- Establish/clarify contact expectations between you and the new hire in terms of when, how, and frequency
- Assist the new hire in discovering the basics of the university by:
 - Introducing the new hire to co-workers and other key people
 - Sharing information or answering questions about the university environment (e.g., its culture, how things get done, organizational acronyms, as well as the campus)
 - Providing advice about the resources available for information and assistance, and how/where to access them

Developing an Effective Relationship

- Take your time in establishing a relationship
- Be patient and positive
- Listening is very important – try to learn the new hire’s preferred communication style and use it
- Maintain any confidences established between you and the new hire to foster a relationship of trust – use your judgment, if something expressed gives you reason to be concerned, please get in touch with Peer Connections Program coordinator
- Follow up with subsequent emails to check in with the new hire about any questions or need for assistance

Drafting a Welcome Message

- Introduce yourself; include where you work within UNLV and your position/role
- Explain that you are available to help them through their next several months at UNLV
- Give them your name and phone number; let them know you are their informal “go-to” person and that they may contact you with any questions or concerns they prefer not to address with their supervisor or immediate colleagues

Email template to greet your new hire

TO:

SUBJECT: Your Peer Guide

Hi [new hire's name]!

How are you doing?

I am your Peer Guide from the Peer Connections Program. I have worked at UNLV for [x years] and I am [job title]. I would like to help you get more familiar with the university and grow your network.

Let's plan to meet for coffee or lunch. When is it good for you? I am available [enter days and times – it may be a good idea to send the person a calendar invite once you establish a date and time].

There are many great places on campus to eat or have coffee/tea. Do you have a preference yet? How about [enter establishment name]?

I am looking forward to getting to know you! In meantime, please reach out to me anytime if you have questions or need another perspective. I will be glad to help.

Best,

[your name]