UNLV Peer Connections Program Pilot

Participant Toolkit
UNLV Peer Connections Program Pilot

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

Background

The Peer Connections Program is a key component of UNLV On-Boarding of new hires. On-Boarding 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 On-Boarding can improve an employee’s performance, engagement, and retention. Pairing a Peer Guide with a new hire improves On-Boarding 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 faculty or staff member who is:

- A peer, ideally in a similar role and
- A volunteer

Your Role as a Peer Guide

As a Peer Guide, your role is to partner with a new hire by providing the information, support, and guidance needed to help make the transition to UNLV successful.

Specifically, you will be asked to:

- Contact the new hire prior to their start date to extend a welcome;
- Provide information about UNLV, locations, committees, governance, and other general information that may help folks feel comfortable; and
- Periodically check in with the new hire, especially during the first several months on the job so that you may answer questions or refer the new hire to sources of information and assistance.

Your role is not to be mistaken as that of a mentor, coach, trainer, or manager. Your role is 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.
Peer Guidelines

The following provides guidance for your use to create a successful on-boarding experience for the new employee. As a Peer Guide, you will:

- Contact and introduce yourself to the new hire as soon as directed to by the Peer Connections Program Coordinator using the communication tools and methods provided on pages 4-5 of this Toolkit and explain your role as a Peer Guide.
- Establish a relationship and build a rapport sufficient to invite and support regular interaction (with mutually agreed upon regular check-ins taking place during the first several months after the new hire starts.)
- 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); and,
  - Providing advice about the resources available for information and assistance, and how to access.

Guidance

- Refer to pages 4-5 of this Toolkit for the sample communication templates you may use.
- Take your time in establishing a relationship. Be patient and positive. You will have several contacts to establish the rapport needed for success.
- 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.
Employee Performance Evaluation

Participation in the Peer Connection Program does not in any way guarantee advancement, promotion, or salary increases. The program is meant to inspire and support a rewarding and evolving career at UNLV. The program is designed to help provide members with support and resources to help grow their career.

Program Evaluation

During the first half of the Peer Connections Program, Peer Guides and new hire participants will complete a confidential survey to help assess the pilot. At the conclusion of the pilot, the Peer Connections Program will solicit your participation in completing a second survey. Your feedback is critical, as it will be the primary basis for making enhancements to the Peer Connections Program. Copies of the surveys are included in pages 6 – 9 of this Toolkit – these are for reference only. The actual survey will be an online form and the link emailed to you.

Communications Guidelines

Once you receive new hire contact information from the Peer Connections Program, follow the guidelines below to initiate your communications.

Follow-up with subsequent emails to check-in with the new hire about any questions or need for assistance.

Guidelines for a Welcome Message to a New Hire

- Introduce yourself; include where you work within UNLV and your position/role.
- Explain that you are available to help them through their first several months at UNLV.
- Give them your name and phone number, and 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.

Sample email to greet your new hire

TO:
SUBJECT: Welcome to UNLV

Hi (Insert new hire’s name),

Welcome to UNLV! I will be your Peer Guide as part of the Peer Connections Program for welcoming new employees. It is my objective to offer help as you settle into your new role. I will spend time showing you around campus, answering general questions you may have, and serve as a resource during your first several months.

Feel free to contact me at ext. x-xxxx or simply reply by email. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
(Insert your name)
TO: 
SUBJECT: Your Peer Guide

Hi (Insert new hire’s name)!

I hope you’re off to a good start. I just wanted to follow-up and check-in with you. How are you doing?

Let’s plan to meet up this week for coffee or lunch. In case you haven’t heard, there’s a Starbucks in the Student Union, a Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf in the Library, and an Einstein’s Bros. Bagels in the Engineering Building and in the Student Recreation and Wellness Center. Or, perhaps we might have lunch in the Dining Commons – it is buffet style and they offer employees a discount on Fridays. What sounds good to you?

Sincerely,
(Insert your name)
Thank you for volunteering as a Peer Guide. We hope that your experience has been satisfying to date. You will be asked to please complete this confidential evaluation after the initial weeks of the Peer Connections Program so that we may determine program effectiveness and needed enhancements.

### PEER CONNECTIONS PROGRAM
#### INITIAL EVALUATION BY PEER GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description/Identification of Survey Item</th>
<th>Assign a rating of ‘1’ through ‘5’ to describe your level of agreement. Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                                          | 1 = Strongly disagree  
|                                          | 2 = Disagree  
|                                          | 3 = Neither agree nor disagree  
|                                          | 4 = Agree  
|                                          | 5 = Strongly agree  |
| 1. I was satisfactorily prepared for my role as a Peer Guide. | \[ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 2. I was provided adequate time to perform my role as a Peer Guide. | \[ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 3. The new hire seemed interested in having a Peer Guide. | \[ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 4. Please provide any feedback or suggestions: |  |

Thank you for participating and providing your feedback! At the conclusion of the pilot, you will have another opportunity to provide feedback.
Thank you again for serving as a Peer Guide. We hope that you found the program rewarding. You will be asked to please complete this confidential evaluation at the conclusion of the Peer Connections Program so that we may determine the effectiveness of the program and needed enhancements.

### PEER CONNECTIONS PROGRAM
CONCLUSION EVALUATION BY PEER GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description/Identification of Survey Item</th>
<th>Assign a rating of ‘1’ through ‘5’ to describe your level of agreement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 = Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Neither agree nor disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Peer Connections Committee provided me support when/if needed.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I was provided adequate time to perform my role as a Peer Guide.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel the new hire benefited from having a Peer Guide.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Please provide any feedback or suggestions:

Thank you for your time and participation!
Welcome to UNLV! We hope that your experience has been satisfying to date. You were assigned a “Peer Guide” as part of a pilot program to enhance your “coming on board” experience with UNLV. Please take a few minutes to complete this confidential evaluation on the initial weeks of the Peer Connections Program so that we may determine program effectiveness and needed enhancements.

## PEER CONNECTIONS PROGRAM
**INITIAL EVALUATION BY NEW HIRE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description/Identification of Survey Item</th>
<th>Assign a rating of ‘1’ through ’5’ to describe your level of agreement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = Strongly disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel welcomed by my Peer Guide.</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The information provided by my Peer Guide has been helpful.</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Please provide any feedback or suggestions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your participation. At the conclusion of the program, you will have another opportunity to provide feedback.
We hope that your experience in joining UNLV has been satisfying to date. We are concluding our Peer Connections pilot program and ask that you take a few minutes to complete this confidential evaluation so that we may determine program effectiveness and needed enhancements.

### PEER CONNECTIONS PROGRAM
**CONCLUSION EVALUATION BY NEW HIRE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description/Identification of Survey Item</th>
<th>Assign a rating of ‘1’ through ‘5’ to describe your level of agreement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Scale                                    | 1 = Strongly disagree  
                                          | 2 = Disagree  
                                          | 3 = Neither agree nor disagree  
                                          | 4 = Agree  
                                          | 5 = Strongly agree |
| 1. I felt I benefited by having a Peer Guide. | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ |

2. Please provide any feedback or suggestions:

---

Thank you for your time and participation!