



MENTORING TOOLKIT

www.winthrop.edu/retention/

Started in January 2004, Winthrop's Student Mentoring Program focuses on helping freshmen students succeed.

Faculty, administrators and staff members volunteer as mentors to work with students who have experienced academic difficulties. Mentors foster supportive relationships with students and work with them to develop a plan for academic success. Mentoring does not supplant the academic advising. Mentors provide additional assistance beyond what an advisor would be expected to supply.

Eligible students who choose to participate have the option of selecting a specific mentor with whom they would like to work or of being assigned a mentor from the pool of volunteers. This is a one-year commitment and may continue longer if desired by both parties.

For additional information, please contact Shebby Neely-Goodwin (Program Coordinator) at goodwins@winthrop.edu

Mentoring Model

Each mentor will assist one student in assessing the causes of academic difficulties and in developing and implementing a plan for success by meeting with the student on a regular basis to monitor progress and provide encouragement and support.

There are many approaches to mentoring and the model below is presented only as a guide to a possible approach. Mentors should feel free to adapt the model to fit the individual needs of their student.

1. *Set up a regular meeting schedule*
Some students are intimidated by faculty and may be reluctant to take the initiative to “drop in” for a conversation, especially in the early phase of the relationship. Setting a specific time at which the student is expected to meet can be easier for such students. Many mentors find setting a weekly meeting time to be useful. Others meet less frequently but maintain contact through e-mail, telephone, or instant messaging.
2. *Get to know your student*
Enjoy each other. Helping your student to perceive faculty, administrators and staff members as caring people who want them to succeed is an important step in the process.
3. *Identify problems*
Examine the student’s GPA and performance in particular courses. Try to assess the causes of poor performance and identify “obstacles to success.”
4. *Identify possible strategies for success*
Work with the student to identify strategies that might be most helpful in overcoming his/her particular problems or obstacles.
5. *Identify resources*
Identify campus resources available to help cope with the relevant problems and make any appropriate referrals.
6. *Set goals*
Help the student to set appropriate goals and work with him/her to develop a specific plan to meet them.
7. *Encourage commitment to change*
Encourage the student to commit to the needed changes. Some mentors have used written or oral contracts. Use your best judgment about what might be most effective for your particular student.

The most common problem is getting to students to follow through on meetings and suggested strategies. If it happens to your student, do not get discouraged and do not take it personally. Many of these students fell into academic difficulty because they suffer from procrastination and poor work habits. These same tendencies might appear in the mentoring relationship. We cannot expect every student to grab onto our helping hands, but it is important that we offer them the opportunity.

Identify Problems

Students often have difficulty in pinpointing why they have not been successful. The REACH (Retention and Achievement) website contains two self-assessment tools that can help.

The first (<http://www.winthrop.edu/retention/analysis.htm>) asks the student to complete a questionnaire for each course in which he/she did not earn a C or better. It helps the student analyze why their performance in those particular courses might have been poor.

The second (<http://www.winthrop.edu/retention/checklist.htm>) helps the student to develop a checklist of obstacles that are limiting their success." These include both academic and nonacademic obstacles.

Strategies for Success

Based on the obstacles identified, work with the student to develop strategies that help overcome them.

The REACH website (<http://www.winthrop.edu/retention/strategies.htm>) lists a series of potential strategies that correspond to the obstacles the student may face. These include:

- Speak with your instructor
- Seek tutoring
- Study with a classmate
- Investigate possible learning disabilities
- Change your major
- Seek personalized help with a specialist
- Manage time more effectively
- Stop procrastinating
- Improve your study environment
- Learn to concentrate more effectively
- Take better class notes
- Learn to read more effectively
- Learn to retain information more effectively
- Deal with test anxiety
- Try career counseling
- Seek positive feedback

Resources for Success

The REACH website has a list of resources available for helping students with their obstacles to success (<http://www.winthrop.edu/retention/resources.htm>). Campus resources are also available and are included here and in the Advisor Toolkit.

- **Career Development** http://www.winthrop.edu/careers/career_development/
Offers a variety of opportunities for choosing a major and/or career path and teaches skills necessary to obtain a job. Many services are free, but some services (STRONG, MBTI, Co-op applications, etc.) have a nominal fee. Located in Crawford, it is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Call 323-2141 for appointments.
- **Counseling Services** <http://www.winthrop.edu/hcs/counselingservices-home.htm>
Individual counseling, wellness education, and testing services are available. All services are free and strictly confidential. Located in 203 Crawford (next to Health Services), open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Call 323-2233 to schedule appointment. Call ASAP as it may take a week or more to schedule an initial session. Some services are available for emergencies without an appointment. Public Safety also available for emergencies: 323-3333.
- **Disability Services** <http://www.winthrop.edu/hcs/disability.htm>
The coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities collaborates with all departments to ensure that Winthrop's programs and facilities are accessible. The Coordinator provides reasonable classroom, residence hall, and campus accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Services are free and documentation is confidential. The SSWD office is located on the first floor of Crawford Building and is open Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Visit or call 803-323-3290 (VoicerrTY) to schedule an appointment.
- **Mathematics Tutorial Center** <http://www.winthrop.edu/artscience/mathlab.htm>
Staffed by faculty and upper-level mathematics students who offer help and tutoring in math. Services are free and open to all majors. The Center is in Bancroft 165 and is open Monday through Thursday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. No appointment is needed.
- **Writing Center** <http://www.winthrop.edu/wcenter/default.htm>
Helps students through individual or small group tutoring sessions. The long-term goal of the Writing Center is to produce better writers, not better writing. Sessions are free and open to all majors. The Writing Center is located in 242 Bancroft and offers both appointments and walk-in sessions. Call 323-2138 for appointments and current hours.

Tips for Making a Referral

It may not be enough to tell the student about a resource for success. We suggest some of the following tips to ensure a student get the help they need.

1. Restate the problem as identified by the student so both of you have a common understanding of the problem.
2. Make sure the student is comfortable with the referral and understands the referral is to help the student.
3. It may be a good idea for you to contact the office personally on the students' behalf.
4. Make sure to discuss how you and the student will follow up on the use of the service.
5. Discuss with the student whether the referral was helpful and appropriate strategy for reaching success.
6. When making referrals to the Counseling/Health Center, remember that it has a professional staff, with strict confidentiality and that it may be necessary for you to call or accompany the student to the service.

Commitment to Change

Problems rarely vanish spontaneously. When driving into a ditch, closing our eyes and crossing our fingers will not help. We must slow down and turn the steering wheel. If we do not commit to change, we end up in the ditch.

The REACH website (<http://www.winthrop.edu/retention/commitment.htm>) lists a variety of possible commitments from which students might benefit. Asking your student to agree to a signed or oral contract might be a useful strategy. The sample contract below is a model only and is not meant to be proscriptive. Please feel free to use your creativity and judgment to develop a contract between you and your student.

As a student:

1. I will maintain contact with my mentor on the schedule to which we agree.
2. I will complete the student self assessment on the REACH website for each course in which I earned below a C.
3. I will bring a daytime planner and my class syllabi to review with my mentor.
4. I will follow through on the referrals suggested by my mentor.
5. I will make my mentor aware of changes in my academic work and any outside activities that might impact me academically (course withdrawal, change in work schedule, and changes in my social environment).

_____ (student signature) _____ (date)
_____ (mentor signature) _____ (date)