Peer Mentoring Tool Kit
Mission of CWIT

The Center for Women and Information Technology (CWIT), was established at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) in July 1998, dedicated to providing global leadership in achieving women's full participation in all aspects of information technology (IT). In 2006, the scope of CWIT's influence at UMBC expanded to include Engineering majors as well. Women's participation in IT and Engineering will strengthen the workforce, raise the standard of living for many women, and help to assure that technology addresses women's needs and expands the possibilities for their lives.

Vision: At UMBC, women are a minority in all majors in the College of Engineering and Information Technology (COEIT). In most majors, they are a small minority. This situation is mirrored at other universities nationwide, as well as in technical industries. The Center for Women in Technology (CWIT) is dedicated to increasing the representation of women in the creation of technology and in the engineering and information technology fields.

Mission: We aspire to collaborate with our internal and external partners to make UMBC a national model for female-friendly education in ITE and UMBC COEIT a destination for women interested in technical fields. We have identified four goals key to this aspiration:

- Sustain and strengthen a vital Scholar program for undergraduates committed to increasing the representation of women in ITE fields.
- Foster a supportive community for all women in ITE at UMBC.
- Improve gender climate in COEIT.
- Broaden the pipeline of talented women interested in ITE with K-12 outreach programs.

CWIT's Relationship to UMBC: CWIT supports UMBC's commitment to diversity at all levels and its efforts to create a campus community rich in intellectual, cultural, and ethnic diversity. CWIT helps the University achieve its regional and national mission by identifying those areas in science, technology, and engineering where women are significantly underrepresented, attracting well-qualified female students to UMBC through special scholarship initiatives such as the CWIT Scholars Program, and working with departments and other campus partners to help make UMBC a welcoming place for women in engineering and information technology. CWIT also supports the University in its efforts to attract private and public funding to achieve its mission.
Goals of the CWIT Mentoring Program

Proposed Outcomes of a Mentoring Program:

1. Increase the academic success and retention rates of new freshman and transfer women students in the College of Engineering and Information Technology.

2. Assist women in engineering and IT majors with their social and academic integration into the University and into the College of Engineering and IT.

3. Improve motivation and academic skills of both mentors and protégés.

4. Improve academic achievement of both mentors and protégés.

5. Engage and connect students with each other so that they develop a sense of belonging.

6. Help students develop confidence in communicating with faculty on an academic and personal level.

Mentor/Mentee Benefits

What are the benefits of being a Peer Mentor?

Mentoring is a two-way street, and the mentee is not the only one who benefits from the mentoring relationship. The act of mentoring allows you to receive the satisfaction that you have helped and influenced another.

Are there things you know now that you wish you had known as a beginning undergraduate student?

This is your chance to help prevent a peer from going through some of the same frustrations you may have faced as a new undergraduate student.

What are the benefits of being a Mentee?

Mentees have the benefit of learning, as a beginning undergraduate student, things that many undergraduate students take a year or more to discover. Mentees will have a resource to turn to when they don’t know whom else to ask and their mentor will be able to provide honest and open feedback. Mentees are matched with their peer mentor for the full academic year.
Definition of Mentoring

A developmental, caring, sharing, and helping relationship where one person invests time, know-how, and effort in enhancing another person’s growth, knowledge, and skills, and responds to critical needs in the life of that person in ways that prepare the individual for greater productivity or achievement in the future. (http://www.orau.gov/tdd/trainingadmin/Mentoring.pdf)

Definition of Mentor

A person looked upon for wise advice and guidance. (Webster’s II New Riverside Dictionary, Revised edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston)

Definition of Protégé

A person guided and helped especially in the furtherance of his or her career, by another, more influential person. (Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 3rd edition, Macmillan, USA, Victoria Neufeldt, Editor in Chief)

Formal vs. Informal Mentoring

Both formal (assigned) and informal (self-selected, not assigned) mentoring have been used for years to help protégés increase their confidence, instill a sense of responsibility, raise awareness of the importance of receiving a quality education, and generate both a desire and an ability to succeed personally and professionally. While informal methods of mentoring have been more successful for protégés generally, formal programs conducted properly have much to offer. In both cases, training will provide the protégé an opportunity to develop a clear plan including goals and expectations. In addition, participating in a formal program will allow the protégé and the mentor to understand the process better, which will enable them to become better informal mentors.
Twelve Strategies for Effective Mentoring:

1. **Positive attitude**: be enthusiastic and accepting of others

2. **Values**: examine beliefs and ideals in an effort to establish personal values

3. **Open-mindedness**: keep an open mind to ideas

4. **Creative problem solving**: use a creative problem solving process.

5. **Effective communication**: be an attentive listener and an assertive questioner.

6. **Discovery**: be an independent thinker.

7. **Strengths and uniqueness**: recognize individual strengths and uniqueness and build on them.

8. **Confidence**: develop self-confidence and growth.

9. **Awareness**: be aware of environment, be intuitive, and problem sensitive.

10. **Risk-taking**: be a risk-taker and an active participant, not just a spectator.

11. **Flexibility**: be flexible and adaptable with regards to attitudes and actions. Be able to see situations and people from different perspectives.

12. **Commitment**: keep your commitment to your mentee and take the initiative to reach out to her/him.
Peer Mentor (BigWIT) Roles and Responsibilities

Personal Guidelines:

♦ Be yourself and allow your mentees to be him/herself.
♦ Be a good listener.
♦ Don’t attempt to handle situations with your mentee for which you are not qualified to deal with.
♦ Be available, active, and a positive presence at CWIT events.
♦ Follow up on commitments made with your mentee.
♦ Do not betray confidential information (unless with a CWIT staff member, and the only if you are concerned for your mentee’s personal or academic wellbeing).
♦ Encourage goals and accountability throughout the mentoring process.
♦ Don’t be an “academic” advisor, tutor, professional counselor or “parent.” Instead, connect students with academic resources, faculty, instructors, advisors, tutors, help centers, study locations, libraries etc.
♦ You are not expected to know all the answers.

Be the Best You Possible and a Good Role Model:

♦ Assess yourself honestly. Keep in mind - no one is perfect. Continue to learn more about your capabilities and limitations.
♦ Continue to develop your own planning and time management skills.
♦ Seek out support from other mentors.
♦ Continue to develop yourself as a leader, engineering or IT professional, and engaged UMBC student.
♦ Take the initiative to contact your mentee. Follow through quickly when your mentee contacts you.
♦ Take responsibility for keeping the commitments you set for being a mentor.
Protégé (LilWIT) Roles and Responsibilities

Mentee Expectations:
♦ Be open and available to your Peer Mentor. Meet twice (or more) with your mentor face-to-face.
♦ Attend campus events with your Peer Mentor
♦ Attend CWIT events
♦ Communicate with your mentor through any form of communication in addition to face-to-face meetings.
♦ Utilize the many aspects of campus that your Peer Mentor will introduce you to (examples):
  • Student organizations in your major
  • Other UMBC student organizations
  • Career Services for major and career exploration
  • Shriver Center for Internships
  • Multicultural Events/Groups

Practice What You Learn

♦ Develop your own time management and planning skills. The same methods not work for everyone
♦ Get to know yourself your capabilities and limitations. Assess yourself honestly. Keep in mind that no one is perfect.
♦ Seek out support networks with your mentor
♦ Get involved in your major and student organizations in your department and at UMBC.
♦ Follow through quickly when your mentor contacts you
♦ Take responsibility for meeting objectives of your mentoring program
Setting Boundaries: What Peer Mentoring Is and Is Not

A Peer Mentor IS:

1. A campus buddy
2. A good listener
3. A campus resource guide
4. A brain-storming buddy
5. An academic advisor

A Peer Mentor is NOT:

1. A psychologist
2. A medical expert
3. A parent
4. A romantic interest
5. A connection to parties

Peer Mentoring is NOT:

1. A quick fix
2. Hierarchical
3. Prescriptive
4. Judgmental

If problems develop….

Mentors of new students in the College of Engineering and Information Technology who are not CWIT Scholars as well as CWIT Affiliates should contact Susan Martin (410-455-3109, susan@umbc.edu) immediately so action can be taken.

Mentors to new CWIT Scholars should contact Katie Glasser (410-455-8076, kglasser@umbc.edu)

Examples of things mentors should talk with Susan or Katie about:

- A mentees lack of response to your calls or e-mails
- A mentees unwillingness to meet with you, etc.
- Comments or signals that the mentee is really unhappy at UMBC or thinking of leaving school.
- Observing mentee behaviors that concern you because they could negatively impact your LilWITs academic success.
Communicating with Mentees

Contact your mentees as soon as you get their contact information. Introduce yourself and share some basic information—where you’re from, your major or professional field, etc. Answer any questions they have about campus life and give them tips on getting settled in during the first few weeks of school.

Have your first face-to-face meeting in a location that is comfortable for everyone, like the Commons or the Library. Scheduling your first meeting in an unfamiliar setting, like your room or apartment, isn’t a good idea. Taking your mentee on informal campus tour is a great way to break the ice and show them around their new home.

Make sure to exchange phone numbers and email addresses. Share copies of your schedules so you can decide, together, the best times for to get together. Invite and encourage your mentees to one or two CWIT events this Fall.

In your conversations, ask open-ended questions that can’t be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.” Here are some sample questions to help you break the ice:

• What is your hometown? High school? School you attended before UMBC?
• How were your first couple/few weeks?
• Did you have any major problems/concerns?
• What’s your break down of classes? Basically, get info on how they feel about all of their classes (i.e. which will be the hardest, easiest, have they thought about getting a tutor, do they know anyone else in the class, are they thinking about dropping).
• Do you have any tests/quizzes/papers coming up (in the next month)?
• Do you have a planner?
• Have you written down all of the important dates (finals, tests, quizzes, projects, papers)?
• Are you stressed out about anything?
• Are you working?
• What are your study habits like? Do you have designated study time everyday? On weekends?
• What organizations are you interested in?
• What is your major or what are you interested in majoring in?
• How is your roommate (or living) situation?
• Have you found a group or at least one friend that you fit in with?
• Are you home sick?
• How often do you communicate with your parent/s?

For commuters and or transfer students:
• How does UMBC compare to your previous institutions?
• What has your commute been like?
• Who else from your previous institution transferred to UMBC? What majors?
• Why did you choose UMBC?
Template Mentoring Monthly Activities

Planned activities can help ensure that mentors and protégés communicate on a regular basis. Below are some activities that take into account the nine month academic year and have worked well for CWIT.

**September: Match-up/Training**
This will serve as the initial meeting of the mentoring group in a comfortable environment where the mentors, protégés, and program staff can meet and receive training. If the protégés are new to the college environment, they may be nervous while interacting with their mentors. Mentors should keep this in mind while conversing with the group and try to help the protégés feel more comfortable.

**October: Invite protégé to lunch**
The mentor should invite his/her protégé to lunch. The mentor should select a place where both parties will feel comfortable. The conversation can begin with the possible difficulties of balancing academic and personal time. If the protégé is having issues in this area, the mentor can offer some suggestions and discuss time management. The mentor should also inquire about the protégé’s performance in his/her classes. The mentor may want to share with his/her protégé the importance of communicating with his/her professors.

**November/December: Be supportive to your protégé(s)**
As the end of the semester is approaching and final projects are due, the protégé will need the support of his/her mentor. He/she may not be available for regular meetings and telephone calls. The mentor can be helpful just by being supportive in small ways, such as sending a card or note wishing the protégé “good luck” on her or his exams. A small care package with a candy or fruit bar, eraser, or colored highlighters are always a good way to build rapport as well.

**Late January: Dinner prepared by protégé**
At the beginning of the semester, the protégé will probably be refreshed and ready to embark upon a new semester. Therefore, this will probably be more of a casual and relaxed atmosphere. The mentor and protégé can briefly discuss the last semester’s outcomes, but neither should linger on the topic of academics too long. If the protégé had unsatisfactory grades in courses, plan to keep in contact with him/her to come up with a plan of action for the next semester.

**February: Invite protégé to an on-campus event**
After the protégé has a semester under their belt, they may be looking at getting more involved on campus or gaining career experience. Therefore, mentors could invite the protégé to attend a student organization meeting or event, or make plans to attend a corporate networking event and critique each other’s resume before you go. Or plan on doing something fun on campus, like attending a performance, concert, movie, or play together.
March: Mentors vs. protégés game night
This event can be planned by the protégés. Protégés should survey the mentors to find out their favorite board games and/or activities. The protégés may want to consider having the event in the campus game room or the CWIT LLC. If the participants are feeling very athletic, consider having a mentor vs. protégé basketball or volleyball game.

April: Invite mentors to lunch
Both the mentor and protégé should be comfortable in the mentoring relationship by now. Therefore, the protégé can step out of his/her comfort zone and invite his/her mentor to lunch, possibly at the University’s dining room or the mentor’s favorite restaurant (within a college budget). The protégé should focus on the accomplishments of his/her mentor.

May: Be supportive to your protégé(s)
As the end of the semester is approaching and final projects are due, the protégé will again need the support of his/her mentor. If possible, schedule a final meeting between you and your protégé before the student returns home for the summer. Check with the program organizer to see if a more formal final get together can be scheduled as a time for reflection and goodbyes. A picnic outside the dormitory has worked well in the past.

If this is an on-going program, you may see your protégé/mentor again next year, but if this is a final meeting, you'll want to make it an opportunity to conclude the relationship with good wishes and congratulations to both participants for a job well done!
Mentoring Commitment

I will contribute to the success of the CWIT peer mentoring program by:

1. 

2. 

3. 

The goals I hope to achieve from being a mentor are:

1. 

2. 

3. 

I am committed to open and honest communication in my mentoring relationship. I will discuss and attempt to resolve any concerns or issues with my protégé as they arise. I will ensure that any issues discussed are held in confidence. I will contact CWIT staff members with any questions, concerns, or suggestions that may arise.

SIGNATURE: _________________________________ SIGNATURE: _________________________________

NAME(printed): _______________________________ NAME(printed): _______________________________