



Salve Regina University Peer Mentor Handbook

Office of International Programs
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Welcome!

We appreciate your commitment to Salve Regina's international students. Our new international students are excited about getting to know you and learning more about Newport and the United States. The International Student Peer Mentor (ISPM) program was established to provide a liaison to help new international students adjust as they begin their study abroad experience at Salve Regina University. Thank you for being willing to be a facilitator of this adjustment process and helping to make studying in the U.S. an enjoyable international experience.

Your primary goal is to assist the members of your peer mentor group with adapting and adjusting to their new surroundings and to be a friend. You, in turn, will also benefit by developing leadership skills, confidence, cultural awareness, and appreciation of other cultures.

Being a mentor involves being asked many questions. Most of the questions will be easy to answer based on your experience at Salve Regina, and perhaps with personal experience traveling abroad. Other answers will be found at the Office of International Programs (OIP) or at various departments across Salve Regina. There may be some questions that you do not know how to answer and you will find a need to do some research for the information. That is perfectly OK and it is good to recognize your limitations. You may also refer students to the OIP for advising or counseling centers if they have questions you cannot answer. The International Student Advisor serves as the program administrator. (See Appendix A for campus resources).

About The IS Peer Mentor Program

ISPM Program Mission

The ISPM program is a bridge program that connects committed student mentors with incoming international students to improve their academic achievement, social competence, and to facilitate smooth adjustment into the new environment. By sharing experiences and insights, mentors can ease the transition process of new international students by making deeper connections that enhance the quality of the new international student experience.

ISPM Program Goals and Objectives:

- To help new students adjust and transition into Salve Regina life smoothly and easily
- To help new students know how to identify campus resources in order to be academically successful
- To provide new students with a potential cultural informant to help them navigate the nuances of American culture
- To help new students actively engage in and out of class and facilitate involvement in extra-curricular clubs and student life activities
- To allow mentor students an opportunity to offer guidance and serve as a member of a collaborative support system for new students
- To facilitate foundations for long-term friendship

Organization of the mentor program

The whole program is about the new international students. Small groups of new international students will be paired up with a peer mentor (that's you!) Mentors will organize social activities on a weekly basis for their mentee groups, answer questions, and in general help the mentees have an awesome time at Salve Regina. We also encourage mentors to work with other mentors in teams where you can meet and share ideas about mentoring. You are encouraged to interact and have fun with ALL of the mentors and international students!

(Refer to Appendix B for a program structure chart.)

Being a Mentor

A mentor is defined by Merriam-Webster as a "trusted guide." Throughout the semester, this will be your role between the new international students and Salve Regina. *Some international students will need little or no guidance during their time here while others will ask for more assistance.* Whatever the case, the best way to be a mentor is to try to be of assistance should they need assistance or have questions.

Also, as a mentor to international students, your primary goal is that of being a friend. Have fun! Enjoy developing a relationship with someone from another culture who is excited about having a new friend. These students, more than likely, will be undergoing an adjustment as they begin their studies at Salve Regina. We hope you will be seen as a friend/contact that they can go to when they someone to talk to.

Keep in mind that these students have moved away from an established support network. You will be serving as a resource for them when they encounter problems. Being a mentor is a helpful gift, but

Remember: it is OK to have limitations. You are not expected to nor can you meet every need your mentee will have.

Ideal Characteristics of an Effective IS Peer Mentor:

1. Willing to help
2. Positive about American life
3. Generous with time and availability
4. Responsible and serious about helping others
5. Committed to mentees and contributes to others' success
6. Familiar with city of Newport and different Salve Regina student services
7. Has good listening skills
8. Demonstrates patience and persistence
9. Is resourceful when finding and sharing information

Mentor Responsibilities

While attending Salve Regina, your first responsibility is to be a student. Work, friends, and other extra-curricular activities also demand time. We appreciate the willingness you have to share your valuable time to help new international students feel more comfortable and at home at Salve Regina. The responsibilities for this program are outlined. How you carry out your role as a mentor will make the biggest difference in the lives of your mentees.

Late Summer - Early Fall Responsibilities:

Before the school year starts international students will come to Salve Regina for orientation. Your role as a mentor begins as soon you receive your list of mentees in the summer. We expect you to e-mail your mentees as soon as possible, to initiate the first step in beginning introductions and to find out about any concerns they may have. Mentors are encouraged to do some research to become familiar with towns, provinces, and other basic information about the home countries of your mentees.

1. Email your mentees. (See Appendix C for a sample introduction e-mail)
2. Research the home countries of your mentees.
3. Attend week-long Orientation. You will be expected to be here for 5 days starting from the day before orientation to the day after the end of international orientation.

Long-Term Individual Responsibilities:

- Attend Mentor Program meetings and events
- Actively participate in discussion and planning
- Check in regularly with the program administrator
- Submit Weekly Connectivity Reports that summarize your mentoring efforts
- Plan social get-togethers with your Mentee Groups, and/or with individual Mentees as dictated by Mentee's level of interest
- Maintain communication with Mentees via phone, e-mail, Facebook, or whatever works best. Make sure that they know you are there if they need anything or have any questions
- Participate in and host events or activities (like a coffee hour, etc. it doesn't have to be big) Communication is key.

Effective communication will help you keep in touch with other mentors, the international students and the OIP. Make sure to attend all-Mentor meetings and maintain communication with the program administrators.

Skills that You will develop as a result of being a Mentor:

- Realize the value of community involvement and participation
- Expand awareness of Salve Regina resources and Newport attractions
- Develop patience and persistence
- Improve listening skills, leadership skills, communication skills, and networking skills

- Boost confidence and build friendship across culture
- Develop interpersonal communication skills
- Enhanced self-efficacy of inter-cultural experience
- Build leadership skills (can be useful in professional development and career building)
- Improve time management skills

Orientation

Orientation will help you begin to establish a relationship with your new mentee group. Utilize this time well to get acquainted with your group members and other Mentors students. Throughout the semester you will have more opportunities to converse and deal with important adaptation issues that may arise. We do not expect you to anticipate all issues that need to be addressed. As you get to know students better, you will become more aware of their needs and they will become more comfortable in talking with you. You should encourage them to ask questions of you and may even recommend that they keep a journal/blog of their questions, concerns, and observations so that you can be sure to address them.

When you meet and get to know new international students, be sure to:

- Pronounce and spell their name correctly.
- Show interest by reading about their home country and culture.
- Allow students to be themselves in a casual atmosphere.
- Be patient and understanding of communication difficulties and cultural differences
- Share your own culture and personal experience.
- Introduce your new friends to other students, faculty, family and friends.

During orientation, your role is to be an additional resource when the OIP covers the following:

1. Finding their way around campus.
2. Campus Resources such as Campus Life, McKillop Library, The Academic Center for Excellence, Health Services, etc.
3. How to register for classes.
4. Obtaining a student ID card and using their Salve Regina email account.
5. Buying textbooks and other school supplies.
6. Hints on where to shop for groceries, clothes and household items.
7. How to use the RIPTA public transit system, how to get a cellular phone and where the bike routes are off-campus.
8. How to find a bank and open a checking account.

During Orientation there will be icebreakers, discussions, and team building. Have fun! Be warm, open and approachable. Friendliness and patience are keys to dealing with any issue that may arise. This section offers suggestions and helpful questions to perhaps use while interacting with the international students.

Cultural Differences Should be Respected.

Please be sensitive to and respectful of:

- The international students' cultural differences in the way they express their feelings, their approach to situations, and understanding of personal relationships.
- Gender differences: please be aware that some cultures delineate gender roles and that things such as an evening meal together between a male and a female can be seen as a date. (*Please Note: The IS Peer Mentor Program IS NOT A DATING SERVICE!*)
- Names: Have the international student help you practice pronouncing their names until you have it mastered. This will be encouraging to them. Do not settle for an Americanization. Ask how your international students prefer to be addressed.
- Answering questions about your country and culture without arrogance or defensiveness, and help with problems they may have encountered upon their arrival.

Possible Issues of Concern

Reassure your students that cultural adjustment is normal. Take some time to discuss some of the struggles that the students have faced or may encounter. The following is a list of some areas where difficulty may arise:

- Academic difficulty stemming from the American university system
- Misunderstandings due to cultural faux pas and language barriers
- Political, religious, and social conflicts that may arise among their fellow nationals and those of the U.S.
- Discrimination
- The impact of developments and changes in their home countries
- Social isolation, homesickness and culture shock
- Stressful situations (i.e. finances, advisors, roommates, traveling permits, or Landlords)
- Anxiety about returning home

Education Concerns

The American university system is very different than school systems in other countries. If you encounter questions that you cannot answer, guide the students to the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) or the Center for Student Development (CSD). Encourage the international students to do well in their studies and make yourself available as a resource. If your mentee is a graduate student, the course of work will be different than that of an undergraduate. Answer questions and concerns as well as you can- **remember, you don't have to know everything**. Graduate students usually have advisors that can help the international students with their academic concerns. Education systems are a good discussion topic between students.

Religious Concerns

Be respectful of others' religious, spiritual, and scientific beliefs. Religion can spark great dialogue and reveal other viewpoints; it is nevertheless a sensitive topic. Be aware how you approach the subject and of the attitude and emotions of the students when discussed. Discuss your beliefs but do not force your beliefs onto the international students. If they become uncomfortable about talking about religion and spirituality, discontinue the topic. Another time may be better for this subject matter.

After Orientation

After orientation, keep in contact with the people with whom you have established relationships. Exchange phone numbers and email addresses. It is highly encouraged to plan another social event soon after orientation to reinforce bonds and follow-up with students after their first week of school. Your responsibilities as a mentor do not end with orientation. Depending on your relationship with the international students, you will have to gauge their needs and how often you need to be in contact with them. ***Even if you have a weak relationship with your assigned student, try to maintain contact to see how they're doing throughout the semester.***

Maintain contact with the program administrator, and especially your Mentor teammates to update them about the international students and how things are going. As a mentor, you are the connection between the international students and the OIP so your updates are important to share the well-being of the international students and of the IS Peer Mentor Program. ***Suggestions are welcomed to build a better program so that the needs of the students are met.***

Throughout the year, you will have to create opportunities to meet with the international students, the other Mentors, and general student body. Use your experience from orientation and from other meetings to create these opportunities to build relationships with international students.

How to Stay Involved Throughout the Semester

The Mentor Program meetings will help you stay involved. Additionally, there are departmental and community opportunities for you and international students to exchange knowledge. Some of these programs are sponsored by OIP and some of them are hosted by students groups or other offices.

Other activities to do include:

Signing up for Campus Activities Board (CAB) events	Eat at a local restaurant
Having mentees over for a home cooked meal	Take your mentee on a campus tour
Introducing your mentees to an "Awful Awful" ice cream at Newport Creamery	Meet and discuss career goals
Take a trip to Providence	Attend a student organization event together
Attend a play	Make a snowman in the winter
Go to a movie and café afterwards	Call your mentee and chat on the phone

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Check out the art exhibits at the Salve Regina Art Museum	Join a yoga class together
Study together	
Go rollerblading or bike riding or ice skating with your mentees	
Visit a local church	

Attending Workshops sponsored by the EAP office

The English for Academic Purposes Program frequently sponsors workshops aimed at helping international students adjust socially and culturally into their new learning environment.

International Education Week

For one week in the fall semester, the OIP Department sponsors speakers and workshops to Salve Regina Community to encourage the public to take an active approach to get involved in the global community. Stay tuned to the OIP website (<http://www.salve.edu/academics/internationalPrograms>) for upcoming events.

Mentoring Tips

1. Be patient: Building trust takes time. A new student may not show it at first, but your help may be just what is needed. Be persistent.
2. Praise is power: A word of praise in a critical world works miracles in the life of a student.
3. Set Boundaries: Most mentoring relationships develop and flourish without problems.
4. Occasionally, some things come up. Mentors have an important role, but this does not include replacing family, university staff or social service professionals. A mentor can help guide a new student to the appropriate resources for additional help.
5. Understand different viewpoints: Even if you do not share his or her point of view, try to appreciate it—it shows you care.
6. Celebrate differences: Experienced mentors report that working with a person from a different background broadened their own horizon and deepened their understanding of other people and cultures.
7. Be Honest: Nobody is perfect. If you make mistakes, admit it. Say you are sorry. It is a skill that a new student may only learn from you.
8. Be There: Just the sound of a helpful voice can make a big difference in the life of a student.
9. Be Positive: Ask yourself, "What encouragement can I give if my new friend disappoints himself or herself?" Mentors are in the business of helping young people make the most of their experience here.
10. Believe: Many new students in our community struggle with self-esteem. Your faith in them can be the greatest gift you can give.
11. Stick with it! Be honest with yourself when you commit to becoming a mentor. If you're not sure about an in-depth mentoring experience, then please let the OIP know so we can accommodate you and your mentees.

(See Appendix E for Mentoring Do's and Don'ts)

(See Appendix F for Mentor/Mentee Contract)

Appendix A: Campus Resources

When calling from a Salve Regina campus phone, only dial the last four digits of the phone number.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES	Student Center, Wakehurst Room 021,	x2915
ATHLETICS	Rodgers Recreation Center	X2269
BUSINESS OFFICE	Ochre Court, 2 nd floor	X2900
REGISTRAR'S OFFICE	Ochre Court, 2 nd floor	X 2943
MERCY CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE	Our Lady of Mercy Chapel	X2326
COMMUNITY SERVICE	Wakehurst 2 nd floor	X2440
CENTER FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT	Miley Basement	X3288
COUNSELING SERVICES	Counseling Center, Miley Hall,	X2919
HEALTH SERVICES Miley	Miley Hall	X2904
OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL PROGRAMS	Walgreen, Second Floor, room 183,	X3480
ACADEMIC CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE (ACE)	McKillop Library, 2 nd floor	X 2226
BOOKSTORE	Miley Hall, Lower Level,	x2933
OFFICE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT	New Residence, Administrative Wing	x2913
COPY CENTER	McKillop Library, Lower Level	x2232
MAIL SERVICES	Wakehurst Student Mailroom, Garden Level,	x2235
MCKILLOP LIBRARY	The McKillop Library	x2330

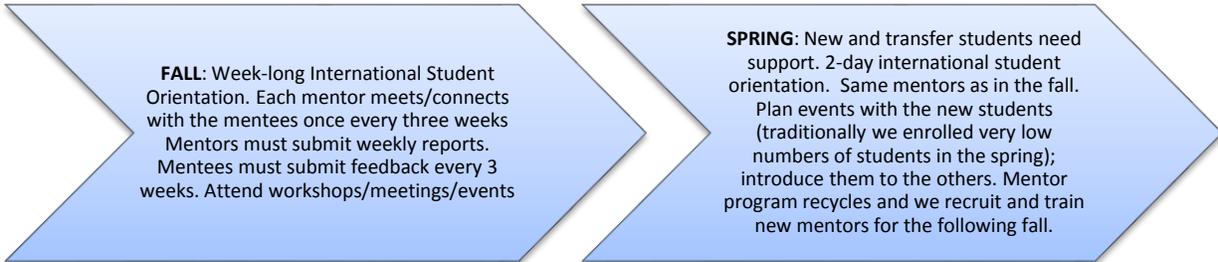
Office of International Programs (OIP)

Office of International Programs or [OIP](#) is a valuable resource, providing insight and experience to help you develop good relationships with new international students. Please contact the OIP office right away should any concerns arise with your mentees. Please check-out the OIP or other Salve Regina websites to be prepared to locate information you may need.

Salve Regina Global Citizens Club (GCC)

Use the Salve Regina International Student Association to keep in contact with international students and others interested in cross-cultural communication. GCC organizes social events and trips throughout the year.

Appendix B: Program Structure



Appendix C: Template Introductory Email

You are strongly encouraged to write your own, personalized e-mails to your mentees, but if you get stuck, here is an example for you to use:

Hi _____,

My name is _____ and I will be your mentor this year as part of the international program at Salve Regina. First off, I want to welcome you to the Salve Regina community! I am sure you will have a wonderful time in your study abroad experience!

If you have any questions or concerns about anything before or during your time in Chicago, please let me know! I am looking forward to meeting you in person at the Orientation on _____, but in the meantime we can get to know each other a little through e-mail. I'm a _____ year (major) student and this is my _____ year being involved with the international programs at Salve Regina. What are you majoring in? Do you have any clubs or interests you may want to pursue while at Salve Regina?

I don't know if you have a Facebook page, but here is a link to my page. (_____) In case you aren't familiar with Facebook, it is a popular networking site for college students. It's a great way to get and stay in touch with people!

I'm looking forward to meeting you in August!

Sincerely,

-(Your Name)

Appendix D: Weekly Connectivity Report

Office of International Programs
International Students Peer Mentor Program
Monthly Report

FOR MENTORS TO COMPLETE:

This Monthly Report must be submitted to the Program Administrator after completion of each meeting or event that is conducted with your mentees: Mentors should be meeting and/or communicating with their mentees at least once per month. Activities such as attending athletic events, scholarly events or social events should be included in this report.

Mentor Name: _____ Date: _____
Date of Event: Month: _____ Day: _____ Year: _____
Time of event: _____ AM/PM
Type of Event: Educational Informative Social Other
Location of Event: _____

Mentees who participated (Have mentees sign their names):

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____
5. _____ 6. _____

Summary:

Please provide a brief description of your meeting/communication with your mentees. Feel free to share your observations on your mentee's participation in the function. Please include other information that you feel is important.

You can submit the form via email to aida.neary@salve.edu or drop it off at Drexel Hall

Appendix E: Mentoring Do's and Don'ts:

Do:	Don't:
Get help when you need it	Date your mentor/mentee
Be friendly	Do illegal drugs
Be non-preferential	Break laws
Be timely with paperwork	Counsel
Keep the coordinator informed	Encourage "party school" reputation
Have an activity once per week	Let yourself get overwhelmed
Be outgoing	Pick favorites
Show care and concern for others	Ignore messages from your mentees
Remember to attend all scheduled events	Share private information
Use other mentors as resources	Hide from the program administrator
Interact with students	Drink with your mentor/mentee
Plan fun activities	Be afraid to ask questions
Contact the International Student Advisor for legal questions	Give immigration/legal advice
Point your mentor to his/her academic advisor when needed.	Try to be an academic advisor

Conversation Starters

Just in case you run out of things to talk about. It's good to ask your mentees questions:

Why and how did you come to the U.S?

How was the trip?

Which airports did you stop at?

How long have you been here?

Where are you from and from what part of the country?

What is home like?

What is your family like?

Do you have pictures?

What do you do when you don't study?

What do you study in your country?

What languages do you know?

What is your favorite food (sport, holiday, music, etc...) in your country?

Mentee Group Social/Mentoring Ideas

Meet for Coffee or at an on campus dining facility

Be yourself. Do what you normally would do and invite them to do it with you. Show concern when they are sick; send them a card or take them dinner

Help out with errands (many mentees will most likely not have cars)

Go to garage sales for things like furniture and lightly used pots and pans

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Give them a tour of Newport
Give them a tour of campus and help them find their classes
Meet in the Library to study
Bake cookies! Who can say no to cookies?
Introduce them to ISA and go with them to the meetings
Have them over for dinner. Let them cook for you.
Share Pictures or have game nights
Throw birthday parties, holiday parties

International Student Peer Mentor Contract

As a Peer Mentor, I commit to:

1. Contact assigned mentees during the summer. Maintain personal communication via e-mail with international students at least once a week for several weeks prior to their arrival.
2. Attend International Student Orientation in Fall and Spring
3. Meet with mentees at least once every three weeks. These meetings are as flexible as you and your mentee desire them to be: they can range from email exchanges to in-person meetings, such as going to lunch or attending a campus event together.
4. Establish a schedule for future meetings with assigned mentees
5. Submit monthly connectivity reports to the program coordinators.
6. Regularly discuss the needs and expectations of assigned mentees.
7. Provide mentees with information regarding support services available for student success at Salve Regina University.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____