Creating and Implementing a Peer Mentoring Program in a College of Agriculture
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**Why Peer Mentor Programs?**
As students enter college, they must adapt to a new, often less structured environment than their previous educational experiences. Trends in education suggest peer mentoring programs act as an effective mechanism to increase student engagement and participation, and provide targeted support.

**Theoretical Support**
Astin’s Theory of Student Involvement stresses the use of dynamic learning tools to increase student motivation. Student Involvement Theory shifts the educator into a role of facilitator to ultimately engage students to participate by choice.

**Bumpers Honors Peer Mentor Program Structure**
- Nearly all mentees reported that the mentor program was enriching to their freshmen experience.
- Most mentees found their mentor to be helpful with academic and personal questions.
- “Discuss students’ expectations Honors Program at the beginning and end of the semester and compare answers”. - Mentor
- “Mentors can be open and vulnerable about the areas where they needed help”. - Lead Mentor

**Mentor Groups (7)**

The Honors Program Director and the Graduate TA for the Bumpers Honors Perspectives course collaborated with a retention specialist from the Honors College to create the program structure:
- 2 Lead Mentors (Juniors or Seniors)
- 5 Mentors (Sophomores or Juniors)

Each peer mentor group consisted of 5 to 6 students. Research shows that a low mentor to mentee ratio better facilitates relationship building.

**Creation**
Peer mentoring experiences are typically characterized as extra-curricular.
The Bumpers Honors Peer Mentor Program was created to provide intra-curricular and extra curricular support for incoming honors students.

**Implementation**
Student mentors were selected through an application and interview process, provided with leadership and relationship skill training prior to integrating into the classroom.
Freshmen students informally reported feeling more connected to their classmates. Peer mentors described the challenges of engaging students, facilitating discussions, and managing diverse personalities.