MENTORSHIP PROGRAM CHARTER

Faculty of Engineering
Dalhousie University

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Purpose

The purpose of the Mentorship Program is to facilitate transition periods for engineering students throughout their time at Dalhousie University. The Mentorship Program will create a network of students and young professionals, connecting first and second year undergraduates, upper year undergraduates, graduate students, and young professionals. The collaborative project involves Dalhousie Diploma of Engineering Society (DES), Dalhousie Undergraduate Engineering Society (DUES), Dalhousie Engineering Graduate Society (DEGS), and registered Engineers in Training (EITs). The overall goal is to provide a formal support network for Dalhousie students based on shared academic interests. This will be accomplished by having experienced engineering professionals and students establish relationships with less experienced students. The mentors will be available to answer any non-academic questions their mentees may have throughout the course of the program. Additionally, the program will provide leadership and organizational skills for senior-year undergraduate and graduate students.

Rationale

All engineering societies and the Faculty of Engineering are interested in helping engineering students succeed. By creating these formal connections, mentors will help mentees navigate Dalhousie Engineering and/or their transition to industry. Through this program, we hope to increase engagement, persistence, and satisfaction of engineering students by providing a personal connection to the Engineering program.

Duration

Each iteration of the Mentorship Program will last a full academic year (September to May).

Diversity

Dalhousie University and the Faculty of Engineering support and celebrate a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff. The Mentorships Program encourages a broad range of individuals to participate in the program. It is important for all who participate to develop an awareness of their own attitudes and beliefs, as well as to increase their knowledge and skills in terms of how they approach issues of diversity and cultural competence.

Diversity refers to characteristics that make individuals or groups unique. Some of these characteristics include (but are not limited to): age, race, ethnicity, sex, gender, identity, (dis)ability, spirituality, language, and income. Cultural competence means an ability to interact effectively with individuals from diverse cultures. Cultural competence, knowledge, and skills are an integral part of peer mentoring because of a culturally competent approach can help students to connect with one another in a meaningful and respectful manner. It is important for everyone to be actively open to and accepting of cultural differences.

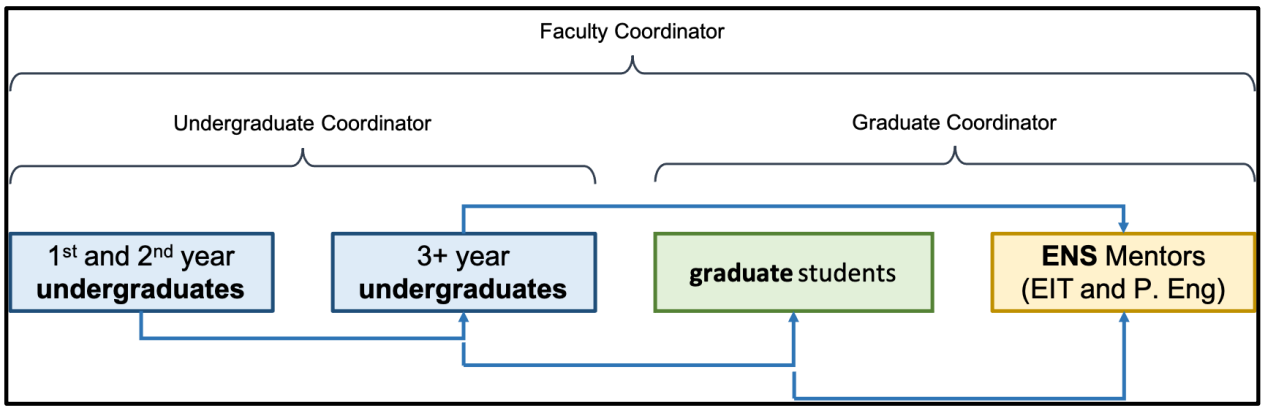
Benefits

A mentor program can be beneficial for everyone involved. The connections that people make through programs such as this can include:

- Higher student satisfaction and retention in the Faculty of Engineering
- Valuable experience in a leadership role and increased teamwork capabilities for mentors
- Importance guidance, support and advice offered to mentees

Roles

The Mentorship Program will consist of four main groups: 1st and 2nd year undergraduates, 3+ year undergraduates, graduate students, and ENS registered engineers. The mentor/mentee relationships are described in the figure below, with arrows pointing to the mentor. Additionally, the coordinator positions that will oversee the program are listed.



Faculty Coordinator

The Faculty Coordinator will be responsible for relaying information and requests from the Mentorship Program to the Faculty of Engineering. Further, they shall act as a liaison to Engineers Nova Scotia to coordinate the matching of young engineering professionals with upper year undergraduate students and graduate students.

Graduate Coordinator

In collaboration with the Undergraduate Coordinator, the Graduate Coordinator will be responsible for the general oversight of the program and correspondence between program participants and the Faculty Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator will be the point of contact for the graduate students and young professionals in the program. They will be responsible for disseminating information on program activities and requirements and responding to any requests or feedback from these participants.

Undergraduate Coordinator

In collaboration with the Graduate Coordinator, the Undergraduate Coordinator will be responsible for the general oversight of the program and correspondence between program

participants and the Faculty Coordinator. The Undergraduate Coordinator will be the point of contact for all undergraduate students participating in the Mentorship Program, whether it be as a mentor or as a mentee. They will be responsible for disseminating information on program activities and requirements and responding to any requests or feedback from these participants.

Mentors

Student Mentors

Student Mentors will consist of undergraduate and graduate engineering students who have applied to the program, meet the criteria (listed below), and have successfully completed the Engineering Mentor Training. Undergraduate mentors must have completed the first two terms of the Engineering program at Dalhousie University or, in the case of associated university students, one full term of Engineering studies at Dalhousie University, and be in Good Standing. In the case of a student returning from Academic Dismissal, Academic Probation, they must have successfully completed the Refining program. Graduate students are not required to have completed two terms of the engineering program but are expected to complete the required training and be in Good Standing.

Mentors will assist engineering students with their experience in the Faculty of Engineering community. Mentors will act as models and guides for their Mentees and support integration into the Engineering Program by providing answers to questions Mentees may have using guidelines established in training. For example, Mentors may provide study tips and best practices learned from their success and refer their Mentees to appropriate campus resources as required. Mentors are responsible for completing requirements for recording correspondence and meetings, contacting their Mentees at least once per month and responding to Mentees inquires as quickly as possible.

Young Professional Mentors

Young Professional Mentors will consist of EITs or professional engineers registered with Engineers Nova Scotia. They will have successfully completed the Engineering Mentor Training.

Mentees

Mentees will consist of undergraduate and graduate students that have applied to the program. Mentees will seek guidance from Mentors and communicate regarding subjects such as study habits, Dalhousie resources, career advice, etc. At the end of each term, Mentees will receive an evaluation form from the Mentor Coordinator. This will allow Mentees to provide feedback about the Peer Mentor Program and on their personal experience. This will help to ensure growth and success of the program.

Standards

Training

To reinforce accreditation criteria related to advice to students, all Mentors must successfully complete the Mentor Program training. Training will be available in the Fall term. Mentor training

will be valid for one calendar year. For the volunteer hours to be accredited to a Mentor's CCR account, Mentors must demonstrate that they complete a minimum of 4 volunteer hours.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a key component of the Mentor program. All discussions between the Mentee and the Mentor shall be kept in strict confidence to respect everyone's privacy and maintain a respectable Engineering Mentor Program. Everyone should be reminded that critical situations related to safety must be reported to the appropriate parties.

Reporting

Mentors are responsible for tracking all correspondence and meetings. The Mentor will also provide additional comments to aid the progress of the Engineering Mentor Program. This form will be submitted to the Program Coordinators for every in-person meeting, electronic communication (e-mails or texts) between the Mentor and their Mentee.

At the end of each term, the Mentor Coordinators will submit a report to the Faculty Coordinator. This report will then be presented to the Associate Dean of Engineering. This report will contain a summary of the uptake/feedback from the Mentors and Mentees, the cumulative number of volunteer hours from Mentors completed during the term, as well as any suggestions the Mentor Coordinator may have for future terms.

Ground Rules

The ground rules will be explained in the Engineering Mentor Training Session. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A Mentor is not a tutor: Mentors are not responsible or permitted to help a student with homework and/or studying.
- A Mentor is not an Academic Advisor: Mentors are not to give academic counselling to Mentees. For questions related to academics, the Mentor will recommend that the Mentee seek advice from an Academic Advisor.
- A Mentor shall always act to ensure they are approachable, respectful, and responsible.

All participants are expected to adhere to the standards of the Mentorship Program, demonstrate respect for others, and make time for meaningful meetings with partners.

Support

Mentors

Mentors will be required to attend an Engineering Mentor Training Session where they will be given information and handouts to share with their Mentees. They will be expected to discuss with their Mentees services offered at Dalhousie as well as any information that may help the Mentee succeed. Mentors may contact the Mentor Coordinators or the Faculty Coordinator if they have questions or concerns related to the Mentorship Program or any services required by Mentees.

Mentees

Mentees should direct any questions about the program to their Mentor. Mentees may also forward their questions and concerns to the Mentor Coordinators or the Faculty Coordinator if they have any questions or concerns related to the program.

Processes & Policies

Recruiting Mentees

Recruiting will be the responsibility of the Mentor Coordinators with the support of DUES, DES, DEGS, and the Faculty Coordinator.

Matching

All Mentees will be matched with Mentors based on discipline interest and other factors collected in the application process.

Handling Complaints

Complaints are taken from students by the Mentor Coordinators or the Faculty Coordinator and resolved as soon as possible.

Dismissal from Program

Mentors and Mentees will be dismissed from the program form unacceptable, violent, or abusive behaviour. Complaints will be taken and reviewed by the Mentor Coordinators and Faculty Coordinator. If the Mentor Coordinator or Faculty Coordinator determine a student should be removed from the program, the Associate Dean must be notified. The Faculty Coordinator must be informed of all complaints as soon as possible.

Withdrawal from the Program

As this is a voluntary program, students are permitted to withdrawal. Should a student wish to withdrawal, they should contact their Mentor Coordinator. Their partner will be notified by the Mentor Coordinator and reassigned by the Faculty Coordinator.

Strategies for Effective Mentoring

Ask open ended questions. Try to avoid questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no. Questions beginning with How, What and Why generally help to get a conversation started:

- Tell me how things are going so far.
- What are you most excited about?
- What do you think about Engineering?
- Is there anything that I can do to help?

Use your resources. It is important to remember that 'I don't know' is sometimes the correct answer. There is nothing wrong with not knowing an answer, but make sure you find the answer and follow up.

Use effective problem solving. You are there to help your mentee. If they present a problem, using the following steps to help them to make decisions and find solutions:

- Identify the problem
- Discuss the problem
- List possible solutions
- Allow your mentee to select the best solution
- Follow up

Hone your listening skills. Many times, we assume we know what the person is trying to say. Take your time to really listen and make sure you understand. Sometimes repeating back what you understand the person to be saying in your own words is a useful strategy. Remember to:

- Maintain good eye contact.
- Be aware of non-verbal cues.
- Respond appropriately (answer or follow up later).
- Be careful not to interrupt.
- Be honest if you do not know the answer or need help with a situation.