



## Asian American Students in Action (AASIA)

# Mentoring Guide

### Mission

AASIA is designed to assist Asian and Pacific Islander American (APIA) students who are new to University Park with their adjustment. In AASIA, first-year, transfer, or change-of-assignment students are provided with upper-class mentors who are high-achieving and actively engaged. AASIA strives to cultivate meaningful mentoring relationships that foster the holistic development of our participants.

### Core Values

- We believe in serving the needs of the APIA population that are overlooked by many traditional institutional programs and services as a result of being labeled the “model minority.”
- We embrace the cultural diversity within the APIA community. In recruiting students and developing programs, we strive to include all subgroups who identify as APIA.
- We believe the social, intellectual, emotional development of APIA students is of equal importance to the pursuit of academic excellence. The individual attention provided by the mentors is critical in meeting these developmental needs.
- We believe in the importance of promoting a culture of mentoring in the entire APIA community. The benefits that APIA students reap from positive mentoring relationships at Penn State will motivate them to seek mentoring relationships with others as they move beyond the University.

## AASIA Roles and Responsibilities

### Mentee Responsibilities

- Meeting your mentor on a regular basis
- Keeping appointments that you and your mentor agree on
- Attending AASIA program events throughout the year
- Meeting with coordinators on a monthly basis

## **Mentor Responsibilities**

There are 20 mentors for AASIA who serve as resources and support for incoming APIA students. Specifically, mentors have the following responsibilities:

- Meeting with coordinators on a monthly basis
- Maintaining weekly contact with mentees through phone calls, e-mails, text messages, and face-to-face interactions (preferred)
- Participating in program events
- Empowering mentees to get involved
- Monitoring and supporting the progress of their mentees

## **Coordinator Responsibilities**

AASIA has 4-6 coordinators who work directly with the program advisors to monitor the overall success of the program. The coordinators have the following responsibilities:

- Recruiting, selecting, and training mentors
- Monitoring the mentor and mentee relationships
- Meeting monthly with mentors and mentees to provide training or to address any problems
- Evaluating the mentors' performances
- Planning and coordinating social and educational events

Coordinator positions will be filled as needed.

## **Getting Started with AASIA**

AASIA holds several events throughout the year for mentees to meet one another and for mentors to engage in activities with their mentees. The matching of mentors and mentees will take place in the first two weeks of the fall semester. The very first event will be a social event in which the mentees will have the opportunity to interact with all the mentors. After the event all mentees will be asked to select the three mentors with whom they would prefer to be matched. Within a few days, the coordinators and the AASIA program advisors will match mentors with mentees and notify all participants with whom they have been matched. At that point, the mentoring relationships are ready to be developed.

## General Guidelines

Mentors are expected to assist mentees with both curricular and extracurricular issues, since both will influence the academic performance of the students. A proactive approach that helps mentees to recognize the importance of taking preventive actions to achieve academic success is recommended. The following may be helpful to mentors in getting started.

1. Early intervention is essential. Deal immediately with important issues that will impact student success at the University, for example:
  - Course load (total number of credits)
  - Amount of time devoted to studying
  - Place where student studies
  - Using the library
  - Ability to make friends
  - Purchase of textbooks
  - Forming study groups
  - Positive interactions with professors
  - Using free tutoring and other services of the University Learning Centers
2. The more personalized and frequent the interaction, the more positive the outcome will be, for example:
  - A phone call once a week is more effective than an e-mail once every two weeks
  - Meeting face-to-face once a week is more effective than a phone call once a week
3. When assisting college students to achieve their academic potential, “No News” is probably not “Good News”

## Your Role as an AASIA mentor

Once you have been matched with your mentee, it is time to begin to establish the mentoring relationship. Your mentee will be looking to you for knowledge, wisdom, and feedback. Be honest and realistic. The following are suggestions to guide you:

- Try to include the mentee in as many activities that you enjoy as possible.

- The relationship should be a personal time commitment, but should not involve loaning funds, cars, or other personal things.
- Do as much as possible to inform the mentee about services available to them on campus.
- If you and your mentee cannot resolve problems that develop in your relationship, contact your coordinator as soon as possible.
- Discuss the mentee's interests and goals.
- Tell the student about your background and interests.
- Talk about the field in which the mentee is interested.
- Attend a recreational, multicultural, educational or sporting event on campus.
- Grab a cup of coffee together.
- Listen; let the mentee "talk out" situations.
- Discuss the mentee's semester and courses.

## **Ideas for Mentoring Activities**

1. Set some mentoring goals.
2. Tackle some homework.
3. Make dinner.
4. Go out to dinner.
5. Make popcorn and talk.
6. Go to a movie.
7. Go to a concert.
8. Shoot some hoops.
9. Go to the library.
10. Just hang out.
11. Learn about pop music.
12. Talk about life.
13. Talk about planning a career.
14. Talk about college.
15. Work on a resume.
16. Talk about dressing for success.
17. Do a mock interview.
18. Talk about networking.
19. Talk about how to find a job.
20. Talk about balancing school and life.
21. Talk about living within one's means.

22. Talk about credit cards.
23. Go holiday shopping.
24. Go to a house of worship.
25. Talk about relationships.
26. Talk about personal values.
27. Talk about the future.
28. Go to a play.
29. Visit the Bank of America Career Services Center.
30. Meet with other mentor/mentee pairs.
31. Go to listen to a speaker on campus (e.g. President Spanier's State of the University Address).
32. Work out on campus.
33. Visit the Creamery.
34. Attend the Fall Involvement Fair.
35. Go ice skating at the Ice Pavilion.
36. Attend a sporting event on campus.
37. Check out Late Night Penn State.

## Advice for Mentees

### 1. Maintain regular contact

Set a regular schedule if possible. For example, you may want to meet for lunch with your mentor every Friday. You should also make plans at the beginning of the semester to attend all AASIA program events.

### 2. Respect your mentor's time

Most mentors are very active on campus. Make the most of your meetings together. Find out the best time to contact him or her between meetings.

### 3. Internalize what you apply and learn

You can learn a great deal from your mentor. He or she may offer advice and suggestions. Give the suggestions a try and take the advice to heart. Let your mentor know what the outcome was. Mentors like to know the results of their efforts.

### 4. Follow through

Follow through on what you say you are going to do. This means returning phone calls, showing up for meetings, replying to e-mails and so forth. **Nothing is more discouraging to a mentor than a mentee who does not follow through.** If you are not able to keep a commitment, let your mentor know as soon as possible, and try to make alternative arrangements.

## 5. Show appreciation

Let your mentor know how much you appreciate him or her. A “thank you” goes a long way in nurturing your relationship. Try to be specific in your feedback. Let your mentor know what he or she did and how it helped you.

## 6. Give back

Think of ways you could provide assistance to your mentor. Maybe you have an hour or two to help your mentor out. By giving back you build a mutually beneficial relationship.

## Advice for Mentors

### 1. Make your mentoring relationship a priority

Research shows that effective mentoring relationships can be developed in as little as two hours per month. Making the time to mentor someone is worthwhile.

### 2. Meet over breakfast or lunch

You have to eat anyway, so why not meet over a meal. You can make more effective use of your time by combining activities. You can enjoy a meal and discuss important issues with your mentee.

### 3. Help your student network

Introduce your mentee to other students who may be able to connect him or her to organizations or resources. Perhaps there are friends or others in the community your mentee could benefit from meeting. Your only time commitment will be making a few introductions. Learning to network is something that all students should learn while in college.

### 4. Help your student prepare for a summer job or internship

Offer to review your mentee’s resume or cover letter. You might also want to make suggestions on good work experiences to prepare them for employment after college.

## Ten Tips for Effective Mentoring

- 1) **Maintain Regular Contact.** Mentors should assume they are the givers in the relationship. Consistent contact models dependability and builds trust. At least weekly contact is recommended.
- 2) **Always Be Honest.** Trust and respect are the foundations on which mentorships are built.
- 3) **Avoid Being Judgmental of a Protégé’s Life Situation.** Acceptance without conditions communicates that your concern comes without strings attached.
- 4) **Avoid Excessive Gift Giving.** And don’t do for a protégé what she/he can do for her/himself. Your greatest gift is to help a person discover his or her own solutions to problems.
- 5) **Don’t Expect to Have All the Answers.** Sometimes just listening attentively is all people need.

- 6) ***Help Your Protégé Access Resources and Expand Support Networks.*** Discuss the importance of maintaining positive relationships.
- 7) ***Be Clear About Your Expectations and Your Boundaries.*** Set up ground rules and communicate them clearly.
- 8) ***Avoid Being Overwhelmed by Your Protégé's Problems.*** Remain calm and dispassionate to help protégé solve problems.
- 9) ***Respect Confidentiality.***
- 10) ***If the Relationship Seems to Stall, Hang in There.***

Most importantly, have fun and enjoy the experience. We have so much to learn from one another. Thanks for choosing to be a part of AASIA. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ed McKeon ([eam214@psu.edu](mailto:eam214@psu.edu)) or Moran He ([muh164@psu.edu](mailto:muh164@psu.edu)).

The three sources used for the Mentoring Guide are as follows:

- "A How-To Guide for Mentors and Students" (FastStart)
- "Tips on Mentoring" ([www.mentoringgroup.com](http://www.mentoringgroup.com))
- "A Year's Worth of Mentoring Activities" ([www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org))