



POD (Peer-Onsite-Distance) Mentoring Group Pilot—Fall 2009

Process and Expectations for Group Mentors

WHO—Each POD will be formed on the basis of the affinity or interest (degree option, club theme, etc.) that you choose. If there are students you already mentor who you'd like to be in your POD, please let us know. In the case of PODs based on degree options, we will randomly select students beyond those you choose, and they will be asked to "opt out" if they do not wish to be in the POD. Each POD will have 15 to 25 students in it.

Initial PODS will be hand-picked and hand-loaded. In the future, we are anticipating a system in which student will be able to sign up for PODS in the same way one registers for a class.

WHAT—POD mentoring is, by design, *primarily* a social or group activity, and involves both traditional mentoring (but, of a group) and informal peer mentoring within the group. It's like a workshop that continues through time—or, a class. Thus, you'll want to find ways to "create community" in the POD, and the first layer of interaction with your POD should involve the whole group. The fundamental activity of the group should be to engage in academic or career-oriented conversation, both related to the classes students are taking and the futures that they face. The conversations should meet student needs, which should be ascertained by the faculty member early in the process. As much as possible, you'll want the content of the mentoring to be accessible to all in the POD. As a second layer of interaction, you should assist individual students in the POD with class scheduling and other personal academic planning issues.

WHEN—You selected between 10 and 14 hours per semester to devote to your POD, and you can divide that time as you see fit.

WHERE— Probably the best arrangement is a "hybrid" approach, with some of your time spent communicating with students online through a WebCT course shell, and some onsite meetings as well when needed. This is your choice, but you should try to ascertain the needs of the students in your POD and create an arrangement that is best for all. You can use your office hours for onsite meetings or WebCT mentoring activity.

Finally, please note that this is a pilot program, and thus we expect to experiment and assess and adjust as we move forward. We are still working out a system for students to opt-in to PODS, and we will update you as things fall into place. Your patience and insight is appreciated as we refine the program and process!