

# Peer Coaching Strategic Plan

## Vision

Increase retention by helping freshmen students feel connected to Dixie State University and knowledgeable of campus resources through a competent peer mentoring program.

## Values

**Student-centered:** Providing students with a wide variety of growth opportunities, learning experiences, and transformative mentoring to address their needs, interests, and aspirations

**Inclusive:** Intentionally engaging with group and individual differences in ways that increase awareness and equity, foster empathic understanding of others, and providing a welcoming atmosphere for all

**Accountable:** Working with honesty, transparency, and respect for others while holding ourselves accountable for our actions and modeling those behaviors to our students

**Collaborative:** Recognizing our interdependencies, we operate with a willingness to be helpful, thoughtful, considerate, and cooperative

**Excellent:** Continuously trailblazing as a program demonstrating thorough knowledge with contagious enthusiasm

## Goals

1. Promote student success by increasing student persistence, retention, and degree completion while enhancing transferable skills and encouraging personal growth
2. Provide student engagement opportunities and increase student awareness of and access to those opportunities
3. Strengthen and expand peer mentoring program to meet the ever changing and growing needs of the freshmen class at Dixie State University
4. Create comprehensive training program to prepare peer coaches for the demands of mentoring students
5. Increase Fall to Spring and Fall to Fall retention rates of first-time freshmen population
6. Create co-curricular activities for freshmen class to foster sense of connection and belonging to DSU

## Strategies

### Goal 1

**Strategy 1:** Increase retention and persistence rates for first-time freshmen by assigning a peer coach to strategically-identified at-risk students.

**Action:** Develop procedures on how new freshmen are assigned to peer mentors.

### Goal 2

**Strategy 1:** Hold co-curricular activities throughout the year for freshmen to develop the social, academic and practical aspects of a college experience.

**Action:** Coordinate with other DSU auxiliaries, such as student government, to foster engagement, and improve attendance, in social activities.

### Goal 3

**Strategy 1:** Hire an appropriate amount of student workers and staff to manage freshmen population.

**Action:** Advertise student positions on Handshake. Secure necessary funding for mentoring initiatives.

**Strategy 2:** Prioritize peer coach training and responsibilities according to the student populations they service.

**Action:** Develop a priority range of need for peer mentors and adapt training models to support the specific needs of that range.

**Strategy 3:** Develop at-risk index to determine which students require the most intensive peer coach interactions.

**Action:** Work with advisement and relevant faculty members to develop key components of a risk score.

### Goal 4

**Strategy 1:** Create training course with companion manual to shape effective peer coach mentors.

**Action:** Develop an extensive training program this spring to properly prepare student mentors for the rigors of mentoring.

**Strategy 2:** Create comprehensive interview process to find the right personalities to be peer mentors.

**Action:** Utilize the experience of previous peer coaches to refine the search and interview process.

### Goal 5

**Strategy 1:** Require peer coaches to interact with specific student populations a specific number of times each semester. Require specific benchmarks to be met by both the peer coach and mentee throughout the semester to ensure proper academic progress is made.

**Action:** Determine stakeholders and what their specific expectations are then create requirements according to need and desired result.

**Strategy 2:** Peer coaches will document every interaction they have with their assigned students and will report any instances that indicate a high risk of failing academically and/or socially.

**Action:** Create clearly defined reporting process via common debrief form used throughout campus by all mentoring programs. Train mentors on early alert initiatives such as Starfish.

## Goal 6

**Strategy 1:** Assign portion of peer coaches to work with freshmen students to identify and execute engaging co-curricular activities.

**Action:** Newly hired peer coaches will be assigned to unique co-curricular themes and develop activities that can be used to engage incoming new freshmen.

## Program Measurement

Peer mentoring efforts will strive for fall to fall retention rate of new freshmen will be 67%.

Fall to spring registration of students participating in structured enrollment, at minimum, meets the previous year's registration total of 64% by the start of the spring semester.

There will be a minimum of 1000 entries of peer coach interactions by the end of the fall semester.

Peer coaches and the program's effectiveness will be evaluated and adjusted at midterms and the end of the fall semester.

Coordination with academics to create supplemental instruction begins throughout the 2017-2018 school year and some form of the program is being piloted by summer/fall of 2018.

Fall to Fall retention rate of structured enrollment students reaches 38% by 2018.

## Five Year Plan (2017-2022)

**Year 1 Action Items:** Create training program for peer mentors, hire 25 peer coaches, assign student population, evaluate effectiveness, and revise as needed.

### Year 1 Benchmarks:

1. Assign mentors to 25% of incoming freshmen class and test effectiveness of peer coach efforts.
2. Program has clear purpose and has identified which students need the most focus.
3. Funding model for peer coaches is sustainable and opens door for expansion of the program to larger student population
4. Program efforts are clearly measurable and some demonstrable impact on student persistence and retention

**Year 2 Action Items:** Revise training program, expand peer coach program to approximately 35 peer coaches, assign student population, create peer coach leadership council, evaluate effectiveness, create intensive care model utilizing risk score, and revise as needed

### Year 2 Benchmarks:

1. Assign mentors to 50% of incoming student population with varying degrees of intervention according to Risk factors
2. Maintain detailed debriefs of every peer coach/student interaction

3. Increase fall to fall retention of mentored population to 45%
4. Funding model for peer coaches is sustainable and opens door for expansion of the program to larger student population
5. Program efforts are clearly measurable and some demonstrable impact on student persistence and retention
6. Program value is strong enough to justify final enlargement of program and addition of full time position to assist Director of Peer Coaching in program operations

**Year 3 Action Items:** Hire full time position to assist peer mentoring program, revise training program, maintenance as needed

1. Assign mentors to 60% of incoming freshmen student population with varying degrees of intervention according to Risk factors
2. Maintain detailed debriefs of every peer coach/student interaction
3. Increase fall to fall retention of mentored population to 48%
4. Funding model for peer coaches is sustainable and opens door for expansion of the program to larger student population
5. Program efforts are clearly measurable and show demonstrable impact on student persistence and retention

**Year 4 Action Items:** Revise training program, expand mentoring program (funds permitting) maintenance as needed

1. Assign mentors to 60% of incoming freshmen student population with varying degrees of intervention according to Risk factors
2. Maintain detailed debriefs of every peer coach/student interaction
3. Increase fall to fall retention of mentored population to 52%
4. Funding model for peer coaches is sustainable and opens door for expansion of the program to larger student population
5. Program efforts are clearly measurable and show demonstrable impact on student persistence and retention

**Year 5 Action Items:** Hire full time position to assist peer mentoring program, revise training program, maintenance as needed

1. Assign mentors to 70% of incoming freshmen student population with varying degrees of intervention according to Risk factors
2. Maintain detailed debriefs of every peer coach/student interaction
3. Increase fall to fall retention of mentored population to 55%
4. Funding model for peer coaches is sustainable and opens door for expansion of the program to larger student population
5. Program efforts are clearly measurable and show demonstrable impact on student persistence and retention