Welcome!

The International Student Experience Exchange (ISEE) mentor program was established in Spring 2012 to connect current DePaul students with new international students to help them adjust as they begin their study abroad experience at DePaul University. Thank you for being willing to be a facilitator of this adjustment process and helping to make studying abroad an enjoyable international experience.

Your primary goal is to assist the members of your peer mentor group with adapting and adjusting to their new surroundings and to be a friend. You, in turn, will also benefit by developing leadership skills, confidence, cultural awareness, and appreciation of other cultures.

Being a mentor involves being asked many questions. Most of the questions will be easy to answer based on your experience at DePaul, and perhaps with personal experience traveling abroad. Other answers will be found at the Office for International Students and Scholars or at various departments across DePaul. There may be some questions that you do not know how to answer and you will find a need to do some research for the information. That is perfectly OK and it is good to recognize your limitations. You may also refer students to the OISS office for advising or counseling centers if they have questions you cannot answer.

About The ISEE Peer Mentor Program

ISEE Peer Mentor Program Mission
The International Student Experience Exchange is a bridge program that connects committed student mentors with incoming international students to improve their academic achievement, social competence, and to facilitate smooth adjustment into the new environment. By sharing experiences and insights, mentors can ease the transition process of new international students by making deeper connections that enhance the quality of the new international student experience.

ISEE Peer Mentor Program Goals and Objectives:

- To help new students adjust and transition into DePaul life smoothly and easily
- To help new students know how to identify campus resources in order to be academically successful
- To provide new students with a potential cultural informant to help them navigate the nuances of American culture
- To help new students actively engage in and out of class and facilitate involvement in extra-curricular clubs and student life activities
- To allow mentor students an opportunity to offer guidance and serve as a member of a collaborative support system for new students
- To facilitate foundations for long-term friendship
Organization of the ISEE Mentor Program
Let’s start at the beginning. Each Peer Mentor will be assigned to at least 3 new student mentees. ISEE Peer Mentors will be put into Mentor Pairs, to become a Mentoring Team. Together, the Mentors and new student Mentees will form a small ISEE Peer Group. Mentors will organize social activities on a weekly basis for their mentee groups, answer questions, and help the mentees have an awesome time while here at DePaul. The ISEE Grouping structure looks like this:

Being a Mentor
A mentor is defined by Merriam-Webster as a “trusted guide.” Throughout the quarter, this will be your role between the new international students and DePaul. Some international students will need little or no guidance during their time here while others will ask for more assistance. Whatever the case, the best way to be a mentor is to try to be of assistance should they need assistance or have questions.

Also, as a mentor to international students, your primary goal is that of being a friend. Have fun! Enjoy developing a relationship with someone from another culture who is excited about having a new friend. These students, more than likely, will be undergoing an adjustment as they begin their studies at DePaul. We hope you will be seen as a friend/contact that they can go to when they someone to talk to.
Keep in mind that these students have moved away from an established support network. You will be serving as a resource for them when they encounter problems. Being a mentor is a helpful gift, but remember: it is OK to have limitations. You are not expected to nor can you meet every need your mentee will have.

Ideal Characteristics of an Effective ISEE Peer Mentor:
1. Willing to help
2. Positive about American life
3. Generous with time and availability
4. Responsible and serious about helping others
5. Committed to mentees and contributes to others’ success
6. Familiar with city of Chicago and different DePaul student services
7. Has good listening skills
8. Demonstrates patience and persistence
9. Is resourceful when finding and sharing information

Mentor Responsibilities
While attending DePaul, your first responsibility is to be a student. Work, friends, and other extracurricular activities also demand time. We appreciate the willingness you have to share your valuable time to help new international students feel more comfortable and at home at DePaul. The responsibilities for this program are outlined. How you carry out your role as a mentor will make the biggest difference in the lives of your mentees.

Outline of Responsibilities:
Your role as a mentor begins as soon as you received your list of mentees.
1. Attend Mandatory Mentor Training.
2. Email your mentees. (See Appendix for a sample introduction e-mail) to initiate the first step in beginning introductions and to find out about any concerns they may have.
3. Attend the Kick Off event with your Mentees
4. Contact your Mentees each week and discuss relevant topics. Some relevant topics include:
   a. Week One = Exploring Chicago and DePaul and getting settled
   b. Week Two = How to get involved in Student Life
   c. Week Three = Observations on American Culture
   d. Week Four = How to befriend or date an American
   e. Week Five = MIDTERMS (no contact required)
   f. Week Six = How to deal with Culture Shock
   g. Week Seven = How to stay healthy at DePaul
   h. Week Eight = How to stay safe in Chicago
   i. Week Nine = Lessons from participating in the ISEE Program
   j. Week Ten = FINAL EXAMS (no contact required)
5. Bring New Student Mentees to on-campus events (Keep reading for a list of fun events!)
6. Attend Professional Development workshop for Mentors (Resume Writing in Fall; Interview skills in Winter)
7. Three times per quarter, Post photos and brief descriptions of ISEE get together events on ISEE Facebook page and Orgsync page.
8. Nominate most-involved new student Mentees for awards at Wrap Up event.
9. Attend the ISEE Wrap Up event with your Mentees at the end of the quarter.
10. Work with your assigned Student Leader Committee Member throughout the quarter for extra support.

**Skills that You will develop as a result of being a Mentor:**
1. Realize the value of community involvement and participation
2. Expand awareness of DePaul resources and Chicago attractions
3. Develop patience and persistence
4. Improve listening skills, leadership skills, communication skills, and networking skills
5. Boost confidence and build friendship across culture
6. Develop interpersonal communication skills
7. Enhanced self-efficacy of inter-cultural experience
8. Build leadership skills (can be useful in professional development and career building)
9. Improve time management skills

**Kick-Off Events**
Kick-Off events will help you begin to establish a relationship with your new mentee group. Utilize this time well to get acquainted with your group members and other Mentors students. When you meet and get to know new international students, be sure to:
- Pronounce and spell their name correctly.
- Show interest by reading about their home country and culture.
- Allow students to be themselves in a casual atmosphere.
- Be patient and understanding of communication difficulties and cultural differences
- Share your own culture and personal experience.
- Introduce your new friends to other students, faculty, family and friends.

At a Kick Off event, through email, or at a later time, we suggest that you go over the following items with your Mentee Group:
1. Finding their way around campus.
2. Campus Resources such as Academic Advising Centers, DePaul Housing, the library, the Counseling Center, the Student Life Office, the Campus Recreation Center, the Health Center, and other resources.
3. How to use Campus Connection and D2L if students are unsure what classes to take, guide them to their respective Advising Center for their major.
4. Obtaining a student ID card and using their DePaul email account.
5. Buying textbooks and other school supplies.
6. Hints on where to shop for groceries, clothes and household items.
7. How to use the CTA public transit system, how to get a cellular phone and where the bike routes are off-campus.
8. How to find a bank and open a checking account.
9. What students do for fun!
During the Kick-Off Events

During the Kick-Off Events, there will be icebreakers, discussions, and team building. Have fun! Be warm, open and approachable. Friendliness and patience are keys to dealing with any issue that may arise. This section offers suggestions and helpful questions to perhaps use while interacting with the international students.

Cultural Differences Should be Respected

Please be sensitive to and respectful of:
- The international students’ cultural differences in the way they express their feelings, their approach to situations, and understanding of personal relationships.
- Gender differences: please be aware that some cultures delineate gender roles and that things such as an evening meal together between a male and a female can be seen as a date. (Please Note: The ISEE Peer Mentor Program IS NOT A DATING SERVICE!)
- Have the international student help you practice pronouncing their names until you have it mastered. This will be encouraging to them. Do not settle for an Americanization. Ask how your international students prefer to be addressed.
- Answering questions about your country and culture without arrogance or defensiveness, and help with problems they may have encountered upon their arrival.

Possible Issues of Concern

Reassure your students that cultural adjustment is normal. Take some time to discuss some of the struggles that the students have faced or may encounter. The following is a list of some areas where difficulty may arise:
  - Academic difficulty stemming from the American university system
  - Misunderstandings due to cultural faux pas and language barriers
  - Political, religious, and social conflicts that may arise among their fellow nationals and those of the U.S.
  - Discrimination
  - The impact of developments and changes in their home countries
  - Social isolation, homesickness and culture shock
  - Stressful situations (i.e. finances, advisors, roommates, traveling permits, or Landlords)
  - Anxiety about returning home

Education Concerns

The American university system is very different than school systems in other countries. If you encounter questions that you cannot answer, guide them to people or Advising Centers that can help. Encourage the international students to do well in their studies and make yourself available as a resource. If your mentee is a graduate student, their course of work will be different than those of an undergraduate. Answer questions and concerns as well as you can- remember, you don’t have to know everything. Graduate students usually have advisors that can help the international students with their academic concerns. Education systems are a good discussion topic between students.
**Religious Concerns**
Be respectful of others’ religious, spiritual, and scientific beliefs. Religion can spark great dialogue and reveal other viewpoints; it is still a sensitive topic. Be aware how you approach the subject and of the attitude and emotions of the students when discussed. Discuss your beliefs but do not force your beliefs onto the international students. If they become uncomfortable about talking about religion and spirituality, discontinue the topic. Another time may be better for this subject matter and you can also contact University Ministry for guidance in these matters.

**After the Kick-Off Events**
After the Kick-Off Events, keep in contact with the people you made relationships with. Plan another social event soon after the Kick-Off Events to reinforce bonds and follow-up with students after their first week of school. Your responsibilities as a mentor do not end with the Kick-Off Events. Depending on your relationship with the international students, you will have to gauge their needs and how often you need to be in contact with them. Even if you have a weak relationship with your assigned student, try to maintain contact to see how they’re doing throughout the quarter.

Maintain contact with the ISEE Student Leaders via email at ISEEprogram@depaul.edu, and especially your Mentor Teammates to update them about the international students and how things are going. As a mentor, you are the connection between the international students and the OISS Department so your updates are important to share the well-being of the international students and of the ISEE Peer Mentor Program. Suggestions are appreciated to build a better program so that the needs of the students are met.

Throughout the year, you will have to create opportunities to meet with the international students, the other Mentors, and general student body. Use your experience from the Kick-Off Events and from other meetings to create these opportunities to build relationships with international students.

**How to Stay Involved Throughout the Quarter**
The ISEE Program Calendar should help you to stay involved. To check the calendar online, please visit: [http://international.depaul.edu/AboutUs/NewsandEvents/index.asp](http://international.depaul.edu/AboutUs/NewsandEvents/index.asp) frequently for weekly events.

Additionally, there are departmental and community opportunities for you and international students to exchange knowledge. Some of these programs are sponsored by OISS and some of them are hosted by students. For example you can attend:

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<tr>
<th>1. Bon Appetit</th>
<th>2. International Coffee Hours</th>
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<td>OISS hosts an outing for students on the first Friday of every month to a new ethnic restaurant out in the city of Chicago. To learn about dates, times and prices, contact: <a href="mailto:oiss@depaul.edu">oiss@depaul.edu</a></td>
<td>IPO hosts a free coffee hour twice per quarter where American students and international students are invited to come, play games and enjoy food and beverages. To learn about dates and times, please email: <a href="mailto:internationalprograms@depaul.edu">internationalprograms@depaul.edu</a></td>
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3. **Campus Recreation**  
Campus Recreation hosts camping trips, kayaking trips, rock-wall climbing events and so much more. To learn about fun events, please visit:  
http://campusrec.depaul.edu/events/Pages/default.aspx

4. **Writing Center**  
UCWBL (University Center for Writing Based Learning) hosts Conversation Partners where international students can make appointments with American students to practice spoken English to improve conversation skills. To learn about making an appointment, visit:  
http://condor.depaul.edu/writing/what/Writing%20Center/convo.html

5. **Office of Student Involvement**  
OSI coordinates over 300 student clubs here on campus. To learn more, visit:  
http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/involve

6. **Athletics**  
Go to a Blue Demons Basketball game! To learn more, please visit:  
http://www.depaulbluedemons.com/  
Center for Intercultural Programs:  
http://www.studentaffairs.depaul.edu/cip/  
Go for a Neighborhood tour and learn more about Chicago!

**Other activities to do include:**
- Having mentees over for a home cooked meal  
- Enjoying ice cream at a Chicago restaurant  
- Play miniature golf at Navy Pier  
- Attend a play  
- Go to a movie and café afterwards  
- Check out the art exhibits at the DePaul Art Museum  
- Study together  
- Go rollerblading or bike riding with your mentees  
- Meet for Coffee or at an on campus dining facility  
- Show concern when they are sick; send them a card or take them dinner  
- Give them a tour of Downtown  
- Meet in the Library to study  
- Let them cook for you.  
- Bake cookies! Who can say no to cookies?  
- Share Pictures or have game nights  
- Throw birthday parties, holiday parties  
- Visit a local church  
- Eat at a local restaurant  
- Take your mentee on a campus tour  
- Meet and discuss career goals  
- Attend a student organization event together  
- Make a snowman in the winter  
- Call your mentee and chat on the phone  
- Play racquetball at the Ray Meyer  
- Have a picnic at Millenium Park  
- Help out with errands (rare access to cars)  
- Go to garage sales for used pots and pans  
- Give a tour around campus  
- Introduce them to DISO and go with them to some club meetings

**DePaul International Student Organization (DISO)**
Use the DePaul International Student Organization to keep in contact with international students and others interested in cross-cultural communication. DISO organizes social events and trips throughout the year.
International Education Week
For one week in Fall Quarter, the IPO Department sponsors speakers and workshops to DePaul Community to encourage the public to take an active approach to get involved in the global community. Stay tuned for flyers and posters about IE Week.

Mentoring Tips
1. **Be There:** Just the sound of a helpful voice can make a big difference in the life of a student.
2. **Be patient:** Building trust takes time. A new student may not show it at first, but your help may be just what is needed. Be persistent.
3. **Praise is power:** A word of praise in a critical world works miracles in the life of a student.
4. **Set Boundaries:** Most mentoring relationships develop and flourish without problems. Occasionally, some things come up. Mentors have an important role, but this does not include replacing family, university staff or social service professionals. A mentor can help guide a new student to the appropriate resources for additional help.
5. **Understand Different Viewpoints:** Even if you do not share his or her point of view, try to appreciate it—it shows you care.
6. **Celebrate Differences:** Experienced mentors report that working with a person from a different background broadened their own horizon and deepened their understanding of other people and cultures.
7. **Be Honest:** Nobody is perfect. If you make mistakes, admit it. Say you are sorry. It is a skill that a new student may only learn from you.
8. **Be Positive:** Ask yourself, “What encouragement can I give if my new friend disappoints himself or herself?” Mentors are in the business of helping young people make the most of their experience here.
9. **Believe:** Many new students in our community struggle with self-esteem. Your faith in them can be the greatest gift you can give.
10. **Stick with it!** Be honest with yourself when you commit to becoming a mentor. If you’re not sure about an in-depth mentoring experience, then please let the OISS office know so we can accommodate you and your mentees.

Mentoring Do’s and Don’ts:

**DO**
- Get help when you need it
- Interact with students
- Plan fun activities
- Be friendly
- Be non-preferential
- Be timely with paperwork
- Keep the coordinator informed
- Have an activity once per week
- Be outgoing
- Use other mentors as resources
- Remember to attend all scheduled events
- Show care and concern for others

**DON’T**
- Don’t date your mentor/mentee
- Don’t drink with your mentor/mentee
- Don’t do illegal drugs
- Don’t break laws
- Don’t counsel
- Don’t encourage “party school” reputation
- Don’t let yourself get overwhelmed
- Don’t pick favorites
- Don’t ignore messages from your mentees
- Don’t be afraid to ask questions
- Don’t share private information
- Don’t hide from the ISEE coordinators
Appendix A: Campus Resources

When calling from a DePaul campus phone, only dial the last five digits of the phone number.

Office for International Students and Scholars
312.362.8376  DPC 9300

Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS)
Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) is a valuable resource, providing insight and experience to help you develop good relationships with new international students. Please contact the OISS office right away should any concerns arise with your mentees. Please check-out the OISS or other DePaul websites to be prepared to locate information you may need.

Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS)
Appendix B: Template Introductory Email

You are strongly encouraged to write your own, personalized e-mails to your mentees, but if you get stuck, here is an example for you to use:

Hi _________,

My name is __________ and I will be your mentor this year as part of the international program at DePaul. First off, I want to welcome you to the DePaul community! I am sure you will have a wonderful time in your study abroad experience!

If you have any questions or concerns about anything before or during your time in Chicago, please let me know! I am looking forward to meeting you in person at the Orientation on ________, but in the meantime we can get to know each other a little through e-mail. I'm a ______ year [major] student and this is my ______ year being involved with the international programs at DePaul. What are you majoring in? Do you have any clubs or interests you may want to pursue while at DePaul?

I don't know if you have a facebook page, but here is a link to my page. (_________) In case you aren't familiar with facebook, it is a popular networking site for college students. It's a great way to get and stay in touch with people!

I'm looking forward to meeting you in August!
Sincerely,
-(Your Name)
Appendix C: List of Awards at Wrap Up Ceremony

**Most Active Mentee Award:** Each mentee who successfully attends all ISEE mentor weekly meetings scheduled with their ISEE Mentors will receive an award at the end of the quarter!

**Most Outstanding Event Award:** One ISEE Mentor will be awarded a prize at the end of the quarter for planning a super creative event that gets mentees interacting with other DePaul students on or off-campus.

**Best Mentor Award:** Mentees will be allowed to nominate their ISEE mentor for the BEST Mentor Award in honor of mentors who go above and beyond to provide guidance to their assigned mentees. This award will be given at the end of the quarter at a special wrap-up event.

**Bulldog Award:** Any ISEE Mentee that turns in all of his or her paperwork at the end of the quarter will receive a Bulldog Award for having what we call “Bulldog Tenacity” in submitting all 8 of their connectivity reports.

**Volunteer Service Award:** Any ISEE participant who demonstrates leadership in helping international students to participate in volunteer community service will be honored at the wrap up event.

**Alumni Service Award:** Any ISEE Alumni that stays connected to the ISEE Program and continues to support the program will be honored at the wrap up event.