



El Camino College

Puente Mentor Handbook

Dear Mentors:

Congratulations! You are now a valuable team member of the Puente Project. The Puente Project is a writing, mentoring, and counseling program to prepare students to transfer to four-year institutions. The goal of the program is to increase the number of Puente students who graduate from high school, enroll in four-year colleges and universities, and return to the community as mentors and leaders to future generations. As the original learning community, Puente integrates the skills of an English teacher, a counselor and a mentor into a team structure which supports students in pursuing their academic and career goals. Most Puente mentors are professionals from the business, government and educational communities. Evaluations of Puente students show that they significantly improved their writing skills and are succeeding academically, they state that their mentors have helped them achieve success.

This Mentor Orientation and Handbook is intended to serve as a guide for mentors to clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations.

Buena Suerte!

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Thoughts on Mentoring

"A mentor is a person with greater experience in one or more areas passing on that knowledge and experience to another through a relationship of mutual influence and learning." (Montgomery)

"When you direct people to do something you give them a step by step process to follow... When you give people principles you empower them to govern themselves and create their own processes." (Covey)

"Mentoring is mostly about small victories, subtle changes over a defined course of time, moments of breakthroughs--some frustration, and no guarantees of success; however, the rewards are endless..." (Freedman)

"Don't be afraid of the / Space between your dreams / And reality. If you can dream it
You can make it so." Bela Davis

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." Eleanor
Roosevelt

"College is a place where a student ought to learn not so much how to make a living, but
how to live." Dr. William A. Nolen

"Nobody but nobody can make it out here alone." Maya Angelou

"Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will
vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of the day." ~ Thomas Jefferson

Questions about Mentoring

What are the characteristics and/or qualifications to become a mentor?

Mentors are successful and caring professionals in the community. They are individuals that give their time unselfishly. Mentors possess a desired skill or experience and are willing to share their knowledge. Mentors are willing to make a commitment to their mentees.

Why should I become involved?

- Because young people need positive, successful adult role models.
- Because young people need guidance in setting and achieving goals
- Because a relationship works two ways. You stand to gain insights of a young person.
- Because helping them succeed is a great source of satisfaction.

How much of my time will it take?

We ask that you spend 3-4 hours a month with your mentee(s). Your ECC Puente Team will keep you informed of any events or activities where you and your mentee(s) can meet. Time devoted to mentoring is a very important issue. You must realistically assess the time you have during the month to devote to mentoring.

How long is the commitment?

As a mentor for the Puente Program, we ask that you commit yourself for a period of two consecutive semesters, beginning in the fall. In the past many of our mentors have continued to work with the students (unofficially) beyond the agreed commitment.

How is the matching done?

Your ECC Puente Team will match you with a student according to similar background and interest. If for any reason the match is not suitable, we can partner you with a new mentee. It is important that both the mentor and mentee(s) feel comfortable working with each other.

How do I start my relationship with my mentee?

Your ECC Puente Team will instruct the student to initiate the contact. However, if a substantial amount of time has passed, go ahead and contact your mentee.

Are these students ready to have a mentor?

The Puente team has prepared their students in advance for the mentoring experience. The team works with the students and explains to them how important and lucky they are to have this opportunity through Puente.

At first, students may seem a little shy, quiet or intimidated. But as you share more about each other your relationship will expand. Puente students are aware and grateful that you are volunteering your time and experience. Through your modeling, they will see the importance of giving back to the community.

What happens if I can no longer be a mentor?

If you find that you can no longer continue mentoring, we ask that you inform the Puente Team as soon as possible. We also ask that you take the time to inform your mentee of the situation. The students are aware that you are busy and professional individuals. We are sure they will be grateful for any time you have spent with them. Mentoring does not have to be a lifetime commitment.

Who do I go to if any issues or concerns come up?

Any questions, worries, or concerns you have regarding your mentee(s) or the mentor program, we ask that you bring to your

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Who Are Mentors?

A mentor is someone, who, along with parents, provides young people with support, counsel, friendship reinforcement and a constructive example. Mentors are good listeners, people who care, people who want to help young people bring out the strengths that are already there. Mentors share with students who their own mentors have been and how they helped.

Mentoring Ideas

- Share with students your personal, academic and career experiences.
- Meet with students at the your work site.
- Introduce students to your colleagues.
- Work on appropriate projects related to your field.
- Provide resources for student writing assignments and encourage questions.
- Assist students in obtaining scholarships and internships.
- Make students feel comfortable about asking questions.
- Provide students with ideas they can use in their future to network with other professionals as students move on in their academic lives.
- Demonstrate that success is possible without abandoning cultural identity
- Meet with your mentee(s) at least once a month.
- Advise students about possible careers, pointing out both advantages and disadvantages, and possible alternatives.
- Set your mentoring goals together
- Tackle some homework.
- Make dinner together.
- Make popcorn and talk.
- Go to a movie.
- Go to a concert.
- Shoot some hoops.
- Go to the library together.
- Just hang out.
- Talk about life.
- Give a tour of your current job.
- Talk about your first job.
- Talk about planning a career.

Mentors Avoid...

- Taking the place of the student's friends or family.
- Taking sides on personal or family issues.
- Attempting to resolve personal or family issues.
- Criticizing student's behavior or dress.
- Lending money or giving gifts.
- Forgetting to return a student's phone call as soon as possible.
- Missing appointments, as it could affect student's grade or self-esteem.
- Imposing personal values on students.
- Preaching or lecturing.
- Discussing any issues that are uncomfortable for the student.
- Giving up on the mentor/ student relationship.
- Hesitating to call the Puente Coordinators if student misses appointments or does not return calls.

Tips for an Effective Student Relationship:

- Ask if you can meet their parents or guardians.
- Tell your secretary or colleague your student's name so that when he/she calls the student will be asked to leave a message for you. Remember, your busy schedule may not match the student's busy schedule.
- Prepare for your meeting with the student.
- During your first meeting, try to develop an understanding with your student as to what you will discuss or work on over the course of the academic year.
- Stay in touch with the student between quarterly meetings. Give the student your business card, and if appropriate, your home phone number.
- If a student has indicated an interest in your field or profession, it would benefit the student if you explain the education or experience it requires.
- Try to make the student feel at ease if you notice the student is uncomfortable or nervous.
- Discuss your schedule and ask about the students schedule.
- Share how you dealt with adversity.
- Send notes of encouragement.
- Ask about their current jobs.
- Suggest way to deal with "negative voices" in life.
- Ask them when they can meet and for how long
- Ask about their school work.
- Meet with them at a mutually convenient location; make sure it's a public and safe place (i.e. school, work, park, restaurant, church, library, and museum).
- Listen. Talk. Learn. Enjoy your new friends!
- Use your imagination. Be creative!