UNIV 110: First Year Foundations

Peer Guide Position Information

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Structure & Instruction

UNIV 110: Foundations for Self-Discovery and Lifelong Learning is designed to provide new students with the knowledge, tools, and resources to shape their experiences and to succeed at Rice. The course will combine classroom discussion, information from various campus departments, self-assessments and reflections, and intentional activities to allow students a safe and purposeful opportunity to discover more about themselves and the campus around them as well as establish a basis for personal growth in college and into their careers.

The course will utilize a co-instruction model, partnering a professional staff member with two upperclassmen students who will serve as Peer Guides during the semester. This team will work collaboratively, sharing responsibility for the course lessons, instruction, and student follow-up. Peer Guides will offer honest, appropriate, and meaningful examples to supplement the classroom discussions, facilitate activities and conversations in class, provide timely and honest feedback to instructors and students, and serve as an additional resource for students.

Course Objectives

Objective #1: To facilitate the student’s own exploration of self-identity and individuation while addressing the fundamental questions of: Who am I? Who do I want to be? How do I fit into this new environment? How do I define success in college? How do I develop and exhibit my own personal values?

Objective #2: To help each student begin taking ownership for establishing his or her own self-expectations and become more intentional in shaping his or her own college experiences by considering: How do my choices reflect on my goals, values, and needs? What support systems exist that can help me reach my goals and uphold my values? What can I do to overcome and learn from challenges I may face?

Course Content

The curriculum has been developed to focus on key issues and concerns of new students during their transition to the academic rigors, social factors, and personal growth that they will experience at Rice. There are five topic areas that have been identified as major components of the course:

- **Wellbeing in College**—developing and maintaining mental, personal, & physical wellness; fiscal & time management, identifying wants and needs relating to college
- **Managing Interpersonal Relationships**—effective communication, conflict resolution, understanding the culture and norms of Rice, establishing healthy boundaries
- **Identity Development**—analysis of personal values, understanding identity (racial, gender, cultural, etc.), impact of identity on decision-making
- **Academic Exploration & Career Development**—learning and study styles analyses, professional guidelines and etiquette, career and major assessments, identifying pathways to special opportunities
- **Leadership Development**—introduction to styles, concepts, and various meanings of leadership at Rice and in professional contexts, defining experiences to shape leadership, understanding the concept of effective teamwork
POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

Peer Guide Duties

Peer Guides may be called upon in any or all of the following capacities:

Before the Semester

- Complete training and pre-semester preparations with instructors
- Promote First Year Foundations course to new students and campus departments
- Provide input on course content including classroom discussions, guest presenters, assignments, and more

During the Semester

- Assist instructors in building community and creating an environment that promotes openness and acceptance
- Meet weekly with your co-instructors to plan and prepare for the upcoming week’s classes
- Facilitate classroom activities for both small groups and entire class sessions
- Conduct mid- and end of semester evaluations regarding the progress of the course
- Provide appropriate and relevant examples from the perspective of an upperclassmen at Rice
- Interact with students through various means such as out-of-class contact hours and via social media portals

After the Semester

- Assist in the recruitment, selection, and training of future Peer Guides
- Offer constructive feedback to improve course instruction and Peer Guide selection and development in the future

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and that Peer Guides may be called upon to perform tasks or assume roles that are not specifically outlined in this description.

Estimated Time Commitment

The position of Peer Guide will require a significant amount of time and dedication. There may be additional needs, meetings, or trainings required of Peer Guides throughout the semester. The information outlined below provides a basic idea of what one should expect and should be used to determine if candidates are able to fully commit to the role of Peer Guide.

- Peer Guides and instructors will meet for a brief training and goal setting session before the semester. *(6-8 hours in late Fall or early Spring)*
- Peer Guide must attend all class meetings unless approve by their instructor in advance. *(2-3 hours each week)*
- Peer Guides will meet on a weekly basis with instructors to prepare materials and lessons for upcoming classes and to evaluate the direction of the course or special considerations for students in section. *(1-2 hours each week)*
- Peer Guides may hold out-of-class contact hours or meet informally with students throughout the semester. *(1-2 hours each week as needed)*
- Peer Guides will provide insight on and assist with recruitment, selection, and training of future Peer Guides. *(4-6 hours at the end of the semester)*

You should consider your entire semester and all commitments (academic, professional, extracurricular, personal, etc.) when deciding if you are truly able to devote time and energy to serve as a Peer Guide. This role has the potential for commitment beyond the semester as well for some Peer Guides.
**DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS**

A successful Peer Guide will:

- Be understanding and accepting of the diverse backgrounds and cultures of all students and professionals
- Adapt enthusiastically and effectively to situations that may arise in the classroom and in the role of Peer Guide
- Provide relevant examples of student experiences that correspond with classroom discussion when appropriate
- Offer a broad perspective to reach students of varying interest levels, on different educational paths, and at other Colleges
- Establish and adhere to mature professional boundaries with students, faculty, and staff
- Communicate and facilitate effectively in large and small group settings
- Balance their role with the various other commitments they may have throughout the semester
- Advocate for students as well as himself or herself regarding needs or issues that may arise
- Model appropriate behaviors in areas such as wellness, academic responsibility, and personal responsibility
- Always put the needs of the students in the course first, understanding that the course runs most successfully when the students' voices are primary
- Uphold the RICE Standards of Responsibility, Integrity, Community, and Excellence
- Respect and maintain confidentiality regarding student and staff information, self-disclosure, and discussions

Peer Guides must be in good academic and judicial standing at the time of selection and remain in good standing throughout the duration of their appointment. It is up to the discretion of First Year Programs to establish good standing and First Year Programs reserves the right to make exceptions on a case by case basis.

**POSITION BENEFITS**

Students who serve as Peer Guides will receive experience or growth in the following areas:

- Course development, instruction, and evaluation for a class of 10-15 students
- Presentation and facilitation experience in large and small group sessions
- Connections and relationships with various professionals across campus
- In-depth understanding of the college student experience and transition particularly at Rice

Peer Guides will also receive 1 hour of course credit for their involvement in the class and will be able to register for COLL 200: Teaching Practicum for Peer Guides.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions or concerns about the information in this packet, feel free to contact Araceli Lopez, Assistant Director of Student Success Initiatives at al14@rice.edu or 713-348-4373.