

PEER ADVISING PROGRAM: Research, Development, & Implementation

The Leonhard Center for the
Enhancement of Engineering Education

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WHY - Research

The Peer Advising Program is an innovative advising approach that will increase the engagement of pre-major students within the College of Engineering. It will meet the students' need for information as well as provide a peer system for exchanging accurate information. In our development, we benchmarked our program with several existing internal Penn State programs. We also received feedback from fellow institutions within the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA).

BLUEprint
Peer
Mentoring

GLOBAL
PENN STATE

Global
Engineering
Fellows

NACADA | THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY
FOR ACADEMIC ADVISING

Figure 1. PSU BLUEprint Peer Mentoring Logo.

Figure 2. PSU Global Penn State Logo.

Figure 3. PSU Global Engineering Fellows Logo.

Figure 4. NACADA Logo.

WHAT - Development

Mission Statement: Engineering Peer Advising Leaders (EPALs) will advance the College of Engineering's mission by offering technical and advising support to first- and second-year students. EPALs strive to promote academic excellence and student success by contributing to the intellectual and personal growth of students and by encouraging students to develop self-advocacy skills.

During the first year of the program, an ongoing assessment project will take place to measure the extent to which the program is meeting its intended goals. Based on the findings, recommendations will be made for the 2020-2021 school year.

Program Goals:

- Increase student engagement and learning in the College of Engineering
- Provide basic information about College and University resources
- Advance EAC goals by supporting and encouraging pre-major students



WHO & HOW - Practical Implementation

EPALs provide technological support to engineering students struggling with specific Penn State platforms, including LionPATH, Canvas, Starfish, etc. They are knowledgeable on basic College of Engineering information such as deadlines and timelines of processes related to academic advising.

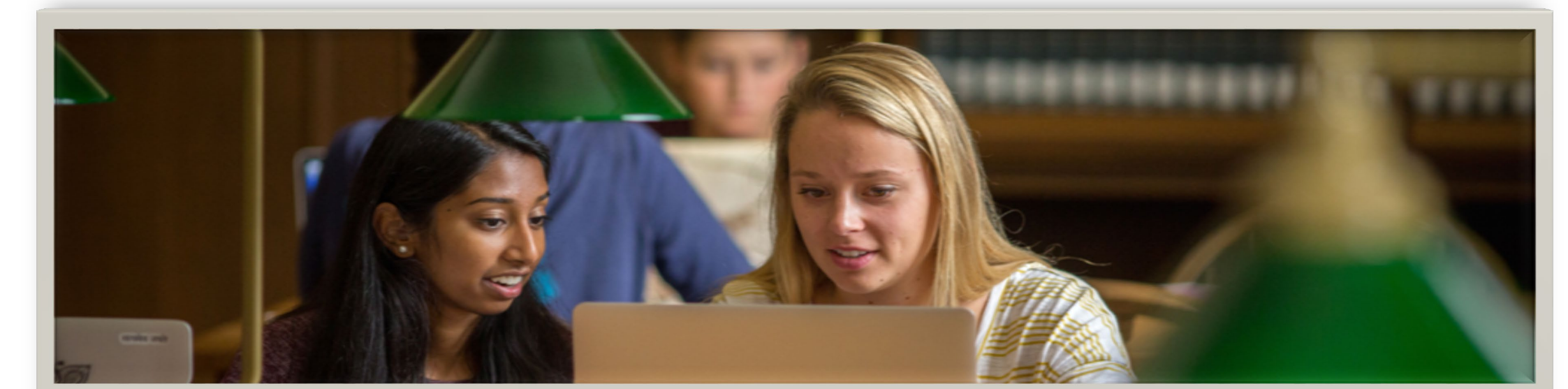
EPALs are general resources for students looking for academic support, hoping to connect with other people in the Penn State community, or requesting information about other opportunities Penn State has to offer.

A quick glance at our current EPAL cohort:

- 7 juniors, 1 sophomore
- Average GPA: 3.59
- Students are:
 - Self-aware, empathetic, patient, with strong 1-on-1 communication skills
 - Committed to helping others
 - Attentive to detail
 - High academic achievers
 - Dependable

The EPALs gain:

- Leadership experience
- Professional development
- Conference presentation experience
- 1-on-1 communication skills
- Collaboration & teamwork experience



WHEN - Timeline

The first EPAL cohort was trained at the end of the Spring 2019 semester and officially started holding walk-in hours in the Fall semester of 2019.

At the end of the Fall 2019 semester, we will begin the recruiting, nominating, and interviewing process for the next EPAL cohort.

In the future, we hope to implement a self-sustaining model of the program consisting of two returning "lead" Peer Advisers acting as program supervisors.

Acknowledgments

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References

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- Kuba, Sarah E. "THE ROLE OF PEER ADVISING IN THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE." *UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON*, 2010, pp. 1-108.