

The Project for New Mexico Graduates of Color



A Training Manual for PNMGC Mentors and Mentees

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2015/2018/2019/2021



Peer Mentoring
PNMGC

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INTRODUCTION

This training manual is designed to serve as a resource for our PNMGC participants. The intent is to provide various tools and strategies necessary to become effective mentees and mentors, while developing successful peer-to-peer relationships throughout the process.

We aim to work constantly towards improving the training for our members. If you have any comments and/or suggestions, please contact us via email at gradpeer@unm.edu.

In 2022, PNMGC will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary and its commitment to serving underrepresented students. The team would like to take this opportunity to express gratitude to the founding members, constituents, and participants who helped to build the foundation of PNMGC throughout the years.

OUR TEAM



Valerie Chavez



Shaikh Ahmad



Bryan Baldizan

PART ONE - THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING

MENTORING PHILOSOPHY: A BRIEF HISTORY

PNMGC began in the 2002-2003 academic year by a group of graduate students of color who came together to establish a program dedicated to promoting and supporting the academic success of students and scholars at the University of New Mexico. Representing a cross-section of academic disciplines, PNMGC's founding graduate students identified a need to engage and support underrepresented students across diverse backgrounds, identities, and academic interests. Over time, the program originally named Peer Mentoring Graduates of Color (PMGC) evolved into the Project for New Mexico Graduates of Color (PNMGC).

PNMGC serves underrepresented students—both undergraduates and graduates—utilizing peer mentorship approaches in creating academic, social, and cultural communities of support, as well as other useful opportunities and resources. The mentoring philosophy, used by PNMGC, reflects the diversity of the organization and the broad spectrum of students we serve.

PNMGC believes in the power of peer support relationships to help students of all backgrounds succeed academically, professionally, and personally. Through peer mentorship, we positively engage students' identities, strengths, and interests to create leaders on campus and in the community.

The foundational intent of PNMGC's mentoring program is in establishing, developing, and maintaining mentee-mentor partnerships in which underrepresented graduate students' particular concerns, issues, and experiences may be expressed and addressed. These concerns, issues, and experiences may vary for each individual participant, and may be the result of a diversity of factors including culture, family background, socio-economic status, sexual identification, etc. Matching mentees with graduate student mentors who understand the challenges which underrepresented students face can lead to the academic success of these students in graduate school. Our program is not a one-size-fits-all mentoring model, but instead, reflects the individualized and dynamic needs, issues, experiences, and concerns of the particular mentees and mentors involved.

WHY MENTORING MATTERS?

Mentoring has always played an important role in higher education—often in the form of faculty-student, hierarchical, relationships. However, the benefits and different forms of mentoring that take place at universities and colleges are generally not a priority for administrators, faculty, or students. As a result, mentoring in higher education is usually not implemented as a campus-wide resource, and thus is limited to “at-risk” populations, and often requires little to no training for its prospective mentors and mentees.

Although mentoring often lacks institutional support and is stigmatized as a practice that only benefits “at risk” or “minority” students, the positive advantages of mentoring—including increased retention, higher GPAs, less time to completion, and preparation for post-university life—extends across academic disciplines, cultures, backgrounds, and genders.



PART TWO - THE PRACTICE OF MENTORING THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

PNMGC utilizes a ‘peer mentoring’ approach, creating relationships that are, first and foremost, academic in nature. Peer mentoring is used as a tool to support degree completion for underrepresented students and increase the number of faculty and administrators who are people of color, first-generation, from low socio-economic backgrounds, or who have diverse identities. In this way, peer mentoring is one approach used to address educational justice and access to higher education.

Additionally, PNMGC uses the terms ‘mentor’ and ‘mentee’ to help participants think about their roles and expectations, while making it clear that peer mentoring relationships are mutually beneficial, and that both partners will both mentor and be mentored. PNMGC believes that regardless of age, degrees, or academic interest areas, all students can draw upon their backgrounds and experiences to help each other succeed. Another key component of the PNMGC Peer Mentoring Program is flexibility. We encourage mentors and mentees to seek-out and utilize a variety of avenues to communicate with one another—scheduled face-to-face interactions, via social media or text, video conferencing, email, or other means, as convenient.

As students, PNMGC understands that flexibility is the key to success and, as such, we strive to continually engage with students in troubleshooting communication and other mentorship issues in order to better support their peer mentoring efforts. Our program also works to help students become more fully integrated within the UNM campus community. Studies indicate that students who are actively engaged on campus benefit from a more enriched college experience, demonstrate better academic performance, and meet with greater professional success and sense of well-being following graduation (2013 Gallup-Purdue Index Survey).

“The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.”

Steven Spielberg

In establishing, developing, and maintaining a successful and meaningful mentoring partnership, be mindful of the following tips:

1. **Know your population**—Who are the students you are working with? What are their backgrounds and specific needs? Do not assume what your mentee is like or what their needs are or will be. Underrepresented students in particular, may experience unique obstacles that you should make yourself aware of at the outset of your relationship-building.
2. **Be a friend**—Don't act like an advisor, professor, boss, or parent. Often, these are persons who are associated with setting rules or being critical. Your role is to be a positive figure and influence in the student's life. If your mentor/mentee thinks you will be critical or judgmental, they may not open up to you. Focus on establishing a bond—a feeling of partnership—while mutually enjoying and benefitting from your time together.
3. **Don't preach about values**—Be careful not to tell your assigned mentor/mentee how to think or act. Instead, listen, lead, and teach by example.
4. **Have realistic goals and expectations**—Setting goals is essential to mentoring. Discuss personal, professional, and relationship goals in your initial meetings. Building a trusting relationship is a process that requires time and commitment.
5. **Establish boundaries**—Have an open and honest discussion about boundaries—how often will you communicate, by what means, and when? If you have family obligations each weekend, let your mentee know that at the outset. If you would rather not receive phone calls or texts in the evening, communicate that. A mentoring relationship does not require that you compromise your free time, or that it interferes with your job, family, or other personal obligations. Discussing and establishing boundaries is vital to successful relationship-building.
6. **Have fun together**—Fun is not trivial or superfluous. Creating opportunities to have fun is important to building and maintaining a relationship, and to “re-charging.”
7. **Give your mentor/mentee voice and choice**—Communicate to your mentor/mentee that you value them and respect their input. Reinforce the development of decision-making, communication, and active listening skills. If your mentor/mentee is shy, offer a variety of options for activity.
8. **Be positive**—Be direct in letting your mentor/mentee know that you are not there to judge, but to offer honest and supportive feedback. Offer concrete assistance, when

possible, through sharing of your own experiences. Always remember, you are there to add value, while being a positive influence and resource.

- 9. Be an active listener**—Engaged listening allows your mentor/mentee to vent, which may often be their principal need. When listening, you are signaling that you are a friend, not an authority figure. Give advice sparingly and make sure it is *solution-focused*, not judgmental. If you must convey concern, do so in a way that is reassuring and accepting.
- 10. Take responsibility for the relationship**—Maintain positive communication and consistent contact, even if it is just to say that you will need to miss a scheduled meeting. Provide feedback.

Why Students Say They Don't Have a Mentor

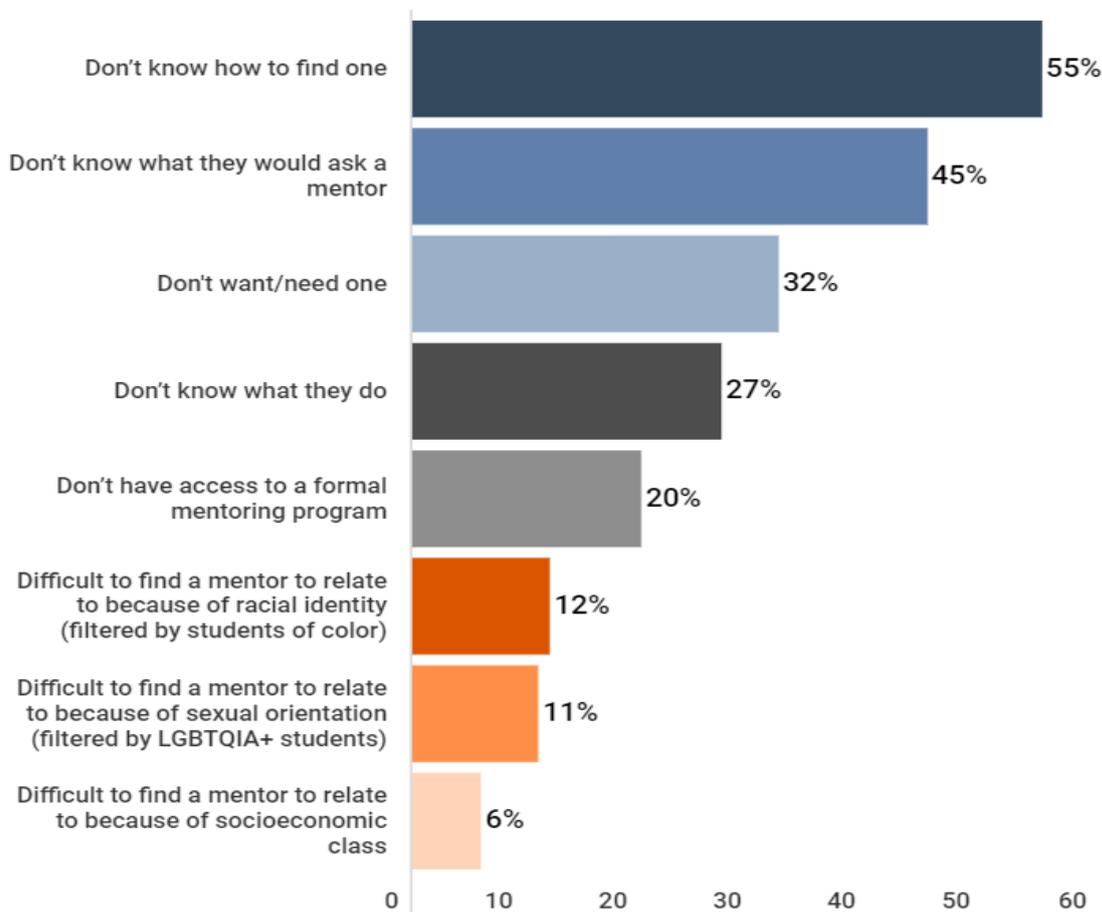


Figure 1 Inside Higher Ed—Students Need Mentors, and More Help Making Those Connections, By Melissa Ezarik.

According to the University of New Mexico Office of Institutional Analytics, between 2010-2015 19.2% students graduated in 5 years who entered as first-time students. 46.8% first-time students during the same time did not graduate. Unfortunately, the data from the OIA also reflects that minority ethnic groups such as American Indian, African American, Hispanic and Native Hawaiians are adversely affected when student outcomes by demographics are measured, since more than 50% of the students did not graduate in these minority groups.

Therefore, the significance of having great mentors at the university level cannot be overstated. Students who have multiple mentors can benefit from a diversity of perspectives. They are likely to:

- ✚ Remain in college and graduate successfully. (Ashtiani & Feliciano 2012; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling 1996; Campbell and Campbell 1997; O'Brian 2014).
- ✚ Get ready in a professional manner for life after graduation with a profound network. (Mallik, T. B. (2021, November). Inside Higher Ed. The Benefits of Having Multiple Mentors. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2021/11/15/benefits-phds-having-multiple-mentors-opinion>).
- ✚ Have access to constellation of support when experiencing difficulties. (Lunsford, L., & Baker, V. (2016, September). Great mentoring in graduate school. A Quick Start Guide for Protégés. Retrieved from https://cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/CGS_OPS_Mentoring2016.pdf

WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF A MENTEE & MENTOR?

A **mentee** is a student who has recognized that they could benefit from the guidance of a mentor and may have an idea of what they would like to achieve through a mentorship relationship. They are committed to their education, open to receiving constructive and supportive feedback, and ready to meet new people or have new experiences. Ultimately, a mentee must be able to communicate well with others, be willing to engage in thoughtful discussion, and be committed to actively participate in their mentoring partnership.

A **mentor** is a friendly and relatable resource to help support and guide students through their time at UNM. Peer mentors will help demystify the undergraduate & graduate school experience, while offering encouragement and constructive feedback. Peer mentors can provide insight into classes, professors, campus and/or community resources, research opportunities, thesis, and dissertation information, developing professional or academic leadership, and important degree milestones and timelines. Peer mentors are knowledgeable in the student experience, outside of research and coursework; they are likely aware of what is required in dealing with the confusion, uncertainty, and stress of undergraduate and graduate life. Additionally, a peer mentor can expand a mentee's social and resource network at UNM.

In conclusion, the mentee-mentor relationship is a dynamic and organic partnership that will change and grow over time. While both the mentee and mentor have proscribed roles based on their expressed preferences and needs, they also share a unique and individualized relationship which is non-hierarchical, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial. That is to say that, at times, and as their experiences, needs, and circumstances change through the semester, each may serve and support the other with suggestions, shared perceptions, insights, and information. On behalf of PNMGC, we wish you a wonderful mentorship experience, and stand ready to assist you along the way.

Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in
the right direction- John C. Crosby

PART THREE – PARTICIPANT TOOLS & RESOURCES

QUICK GUIDE: A PARTICIPANT NAVIGATION TOOL

1. Beginning-of-Semester Application Access:

Note: This is a requirement for both mentees and mentors.

A. Sign Up-

pnmgc.unm.edu > Peer Mentorship Program > Mentee or Mentor Application

2. Mentorship Tracking Form Access:

Note: This is a requirement for mentors only.

A. Logging Monthly Mentorship Sessions-

pnmgc.unm.edu > Peer Mentorship Program > Mentoring Session Tracking Form

3. End-of-Semester Scholarship Access:

Note: This is a requirement for the scholarship for both mentees and mentors who completed program requirements.

A. Fill Out Application

-pnmgc.unm.edu > Peer Mentorship Program > Scholarship Application

4. Other PNMGC Webpage Resources:

A. Programmatic Information –
pnmgc.unm.edu > About Us

B. Alumni Spotlight –
pnmgc.unm.edu > Alumni Spotlight

C. Mentorship Articles –
pnmgc.unm.edu > Articles

D. Funding Resources –
pnmgc.unm.edu > Funding

E. Events Calendar –
pnmgc.unm.edu > Workshop & Events

SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFICATION CRITERIA/ CHECKLIST

- ✚ A Single Orientation (In Person/ In Office/ Virtual).
- ✚ At Least Two Workshops Throughout the Semester.
- ✚ At Least One Social Dialogue. (Please Note: Some of Our Events Are Interchangeable. This Means A Workshop Can Be Replaced by A Social Dialogue Where Applicable Or Vice Versa).
- ✚ At Least One Meeting Between Mentee & Mentor Every Month Throughout the Semester.
- ✚ At Least 250 Words on the End-of-Semester Evaluation.
- ✚ Must be a Registered Full-time Student at UNM.

PNMGC ALUMNI & PARTICIPANT QUOTES

- ✚ This is my first-time having mentor. I really need someone to help me make decisions. Someone to guide me in order to avoid regrettable mistakes. I will always want to participate till I graduate.
My mentor is really helpful in diverse ways. He constantly makes sure things are working well for me. He is ever willingly to hear me out whenever I have issues. Whenever am not sure of what to do, he just comes through to help. (Samuel Takyi)
- ✚ The experience is worth it. Learning from people of different cultural background is very good. The willingness to assist especially with the fact that I'm a first time in the university. But the diversity I have seen has given me a sort of assurance that success is possible. (Bala Mohammed)
- ✚ This semester was hard for me and many in the program. With PNMGC we have a community that's there to support whatever needs we may have. I love the events and being involved as a mentor. It feels great to help others achieve success. (Bryan Baldizan)
- ✚ This experience was very unique and exciting, because the mentor-mentee relationship was very good. I had the chance to see my mentor in action, how he applied to his grad program. This was useful, because it gave me the chance to see my options regarding a grad program. One obstacle, that I did encounter was the times that the workshops were on. Although, I participated in most workshops, there were some workshops that I really wanted to go. But they were not aligned with my schedule. I would suggest having more late afternoon workshops, as students have more time. Another opportunity that I wanted to share was the career services workshop. It got me thinking early, about what I wanted to do for my future. Marty definitely clarified my career path. This was an awesome workshop, and I definitely look forward to having it again. Also, the social event dialogues are very interesting, because we get the chance to mingle with other students that are in the program. We got to exchange ideas and projects; I definitely want those types of dialogues going in the future. Another feedback that I would provide is having the staff make connections with the participants, because I felt really disconnected at times with the program. Maybe if we had monthly check-ins with PNMGC staff, then that would be great. That way, they can tell us about upcoming events and workshops. But I really liked my mentor and the relationship that I have with him, he is very knowledgeable about campus. (Erick Hernandez)

- ✚ It was an amazing program that helped me adjust to college. Having a mentor guide me and show me the resources that are available for me was the best thing could happen. (Andrea Pasmay)
- ✚ It was a pleasure participating as a mentor in PNMGC during the 2019 Spring Semester. I not only learned new ideas from the various workshops I attended, but I also had the privilege to mentor four wonderful students, who I know learned a lot from the various workshops they attended. I witnessed how the workshops broaden their intellectual perspectives, as they would often share their respective insights of what they learned from the various sessions they attended. I, too, learned from my mentees in the way that I became more aware of the importance and responsibility of being a mentor. Often, in our leadership positions, we feel that students do not pay attention to the advisement we offered them, but through the one-on-one sessions I had with my mentees, I realized that, indeed, they took into consideration my advice, and that gesture, is very fulfilling. This is the second semester I participate in PNMGC as a mentor, and through this second experience, I feel stronger as mentor. I firmly believe that PNMGC does a great job in exposing UNM students to important issues by offering workshops with diverse topics. From the previous time and on this occasion, I noticed how my students-mentees appreciated the various workshops. PNMGC has allowed me to exercise my role of a leader, and has exposed me to meet new students, like Paulina, who had a wonderful time this semester, and who would like to participate again in the 2019 Fall semester. Thank you all for the wonderful work you do. Blessings! (Marcial Martinez)
- ✚ I hit a bump toward the end of the semester, but the amazing staff helped me right away to resolve it. (Chantel Trujillo)
- ✚ The PNMGC workshops are very informative and interesting. I had a great experience attending the workshops. It was an awesome learning experience. Through the mentoring program, I am able to discuss problems related to research, coursework and the Department expectations to be on track. This has been helpful in navigating the topics that I would like to work on for my Dissertation. (Kritika Sen)
- ✚ Being with PNMGC for the last 4 semesters in a row, I see myself very much attached to this organization apart from my classes and workplace. This is because of my interest in learning new things, cultural and behavioral aspects of others, exploring stuff that I barely have an idea on, and get the grasp by practicing them more. It has always been a pleasure to be in workshops, social dialogues, or events arranged by PNMGC. (Moumita Ghosh)
- ✚ I was able to form a friendship with someone I never would have even met. Sometimes I feel that he helps me more than I helped him! (Sarah Buddenborg)

✚ This my first time participating the Project for New Mexico Graduates of Color. I did not know what to expect when I first joined and completed my application. I am happy to say that this turned out to be quite a fulfilling and enriching experience. PNMGC helped revitalize me in continuing my graduate studies and find and build a community along with other people of color.

I really appreciated finding other students from around New Mexico and international students and make new connections with them. We got to share our unique experiences and find commonalities among all the experiences we shared. The program really facilitated this process with the social mixers. This was an opportunity to meet and mingle we the other students. Moreover, it was also interesting to interact with students in other programs. Usually, as graduate students we are isolated within our respective departments and rarely get to interact with people in other schools and department. In the PNMGC I found myself interacting people from so many other departments and get to understand more about their disciplines and the research and work they are involved and developing. (Eduardo Garcia)

✚ I really liked the atmosphere at PNMGC activities, it made me feel welcome and safe, it has allowed me to be vulnerable, it is inspiring, nice people. (Karlina Wiederhold)

✚ As usual the experience was very good, and it has always been a learning experience. We get to go to different workshops than the field we are related to. The IRB even was very helpful in knowing about the process and importance of reviewing any surveys. This semester it was also easier to attend the workshop. Even though I could not stay for the whole event most of the time, I was able to stay I for most of the time. One obstacle in the semester, not related to PNMGC, was I took a very difficult course with a difficult person. I got a lot of stress due to this course. I wish I could better handle it. This is the reason I think adding a workshop on stress management would be helpful for most of future students.

The opportunity I valued was I was able to mentor a gentleman from Brazil from a different career path. It was a great experience to know about him, his place and his studies. I felt even more glad that I could help him even if it was small.

Organizations like PNMGC help student in getting to know college and getting know similar yet so different people from different fonts of life. It gives them platform to realize everyone has one thing or the other going in life and its okay to fall behind. Everybody has their own hustling to do, most important thing is you keep moving however slow it may be. Thank you for giving students like me with such a great platform. All the best for future semesters. My best wishes. (Mohit Khadka)

✚ My financial management is very poor, but this program has expounded my view at a greater length as to how to manage my income. The 6 keys to financial success given by Brian Cochran (Financial Planner, CFP, CKA) during his talk is really working for me now.

The 6 keys are:

1. Spend less than you make
2. Be prudent about debt
3. Build liquidity
4. Set long term goals
5. Act like a manager not an owner
6. Give generously

In addition, the topic of discussion on why is it important to set boundary as a graduate student has helped me significantly. The steps provided by the speaker on how to set a boundary has now become part and parcel of me.

The speakers (both ladies) said in order to set a boundary, one has to be assertive, use I statement, State one's need and finally the speaker provided a template. I am indeed grateful for this awesome experience. (Azeez Musa)

PNMGC'S IMPACT IN NUMBERS (PAST 5 YEARS)

Estimated Number of Events:	Number of Service Hours In Office:	Total Participants:	Number of Collaborators/ Partners:
Average: At least 7/Semester	At Least 3 Project Assistants	Average: 55/Semester	On Campus: 15 OFF Campus: 10
14 Events/Year	20 Hours/Week	Approximately 550 Participants Mentor/Mentee & Other Members	
70 Events in 5 Years	9600 Approx. Hours Excluding Summer		

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Gallery:





