

e-college mentoring

Preparing high school students for college success through instruction and mentoring.

e-college mentoring Step by Step Directions for College Disability Coordinators

e-college mentoring is an eight week program designed to prepare high school students with disabilities for the realities of college. It is unique in that it incorporates mentoring through email by a college student with a disability from the college that the high school student plans to attend.

In addition to better preparing high school students for success in college, there are several other benefits to involvement in the e-college program. Mentors demonstrate increased self-esteem and confidence, both from being asked to participate initially and from the assistance they are able to provide. Also, participating in e-college is an easy way of marketing your school to prospective students.

e-college has the support of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the Minnesota Department of Education. Additional information can be found by visiting www.nlsec.org and clicking on the “e-college” link in the lower right-hand corner, or by contacting one of these coordinators:

Georgia Robillard - Lake Superior College - g.robillard@lsc.edu

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Emily Norenberg - University of MN-Duluth - enorenbe@d.umn.edu

All documents that are ***Bold and Italicized*** are available as free down loads at: www.nlsec.org (Click on Secondary Transition in the Quick Links, then e-college).

Steps for providing a college mentor:

1. About two weeks into the beginning of each semester, begin the process of locating potential mentors.
 - a. A sample recruitment email is provided on the following pages. A training and recruitment video will soon be available.
 - b. Mentors should be at least second-year students, in good academic standing, who have declared their disability.
2. In early to mid-September and again in late January or early February, you may receive one or more emails from high school teachers requesting an e-college mentor for student(s) who have expressed their intent to enroll in your campus. The email will include relevant information about the student(s). See [***High School Student Data Form.***](#)

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3. Reviewing your current students, match the high school student (mentee) to the college student (mentor) as closely as possible based on their major/course of study. If the high school student has a low incidence disability such as a hearing impairment, physical impairment, or Autism Spectrum Disorder, matching by disability may be more appropriate than matching by the course of study.
4. Send an announcement of the mentoring opportunity to the college student you have selected. A sample email follows. You can also create your own email or approach the student in person for their agreement to participate.
5. When a student agrees to be a mentor:
 - Email the high school teacher the first name of the college mentor and their college email address. See [High School Step by Step](#).
 - Email the college mentor the high school teacher's email address so they know from whom to expect an email.
 - Provide college mentor with the [Tips for Mentors](#) document and the website where they can download or view the e-college [Guide](#) booklet (www.nlsec.org). The Guide identifies the weekly topics and offers email tips.
 - Remind the college mentor that all emails go through the high school teacher, so they do not need to be concerned about undue or inappropriate contact from their mentee.
 - Be available to assist the high school teacher or mentor if there are communication issues between mentor and mentee. This may include contacting the mentor if lack of emailing occurs.

Optional Steps:

- Inform the college mentor that you will be available to provide them with information or suggestions if they are unsure of how to respond to an email. Some mentors may ask for your input or advice on how to respond to a question related to a specific college admission process. Your involvement strengthens your relationships with your students and allows you to be a part of assisting a prospective student.
- At the end of the program, offer mentors a token of appreciation (a certificate of completion, a memento from the college, a party to share their stories). Remind the mentors that this volunteer effort is an excellent addition to any resume.

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Email Example to College Student to Request Participation as a Mentor

Have you ever thought about serving as a mentor? Disability Resources is working with local high schools to coordinate an e-mentoring program for high school students with disabilities thinking about attending college. I think you'd be a great mentor and hope you would consider participating in this program.

The e-mentoring program, e-college, requires a minimal time commitment. Here is how it would work:

1. Colleges create a pool of mentor candidates.
2. A high school student identifies that they are thinking about attending a 4-year college and want to be paired with a college mentor.
3. The college student and high school student are matched according to major/academic interest area.
4. The high school student sends one email a week to their college mentor, for a course of 8 weeks.
5. The college mentor writes one response email per week, for a course of 8 weeks.

As you're thinking about this, here are a few other things to consider:

- the expected time commitment is about 30 minutes per week.
- all emails are sent by the cooperating high school teacher, so no personal contact information is revealed to the student.
- the high school student has a list of topics to discuss with you, so your task is to simply provide encouraging but honest, timely responses to their emails.

If you're interested in being involved with this program, let me know! I will then be in touch when there is a high school student to match you with, and to let you know the next step.

Thank you for your consideration!

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Example following mentor/mentee match.

Great news!

Recently I asked if you'd be willing to serve as a mentor to a high school student with a disability. I have matched you with the following student:

High School Student: First name only

Student's Interest Area: NAME

Coordinating Teacher: NAME and email address

So, what happens next?

In the next week, you should receive an email from the coordinating teacher who will discuss what day you can usually expect to receive an email from the student and other planning factors. The program should officially be underway by next week!

Keep in mind that all communication is exchanged through the cooperating high school teacher. It is the student's job to initiate contact with you, the mentor. As the mentor, it is your job to try to respond within 24 hours of the student email. And remember, when you respond to the student's email, simply reply to the coordinating teacher's email address.

I'm attaching a guide for college mentors. I know you're busy, but please take a few minutes to look at this. Pay special attention to pages 5 – 13, as these are the weekly topics that the student will be emailing you about. This weekly guide gives some tips and ideas on how to respond to the student's email.

Lastly, I'm here to answer any questions you might have. If there are things that I haven't covered or you haven't heard from the coordinating teacher within the next week, let me know right away. I'm here to support you in this process.

Thanks again for being a mentor!