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Access & Disability  
Services

# Empowering Through Connection: The Role of the Peer Mentor

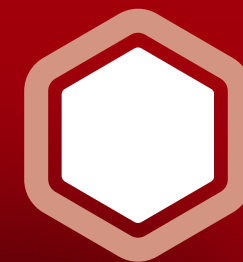
**AHEAD SPRING CONFERENCE 2024**

Presented By

Justo Garcia and Angie Maxey

**University of St. Thomas - Houston**

**Office of Access & Disability Services**



# Training Overview

Participants will gain an understanding of the role of peer mentors within the Office of Disability Services

## Essential Questions

- How do peer mentors support students with disabilities academically, socially, and emotionally?
- What are the key components of designing and implementing a peer mentorship program?



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# UST Houston



- ADS serves 284 registered out of the 4000+ students enrolled at UST.
- The average classroom size at UST is 20 students
- UST offers support services such as Tutoring Services, Counseling and Wellness Services, Student Success Center, as well as accommodations support.
- In addition, UST's Pragmatic Studies is an associate and bachelor's degree program dedicated to students with disabilities.



# The Role of the Peer Mentor

**01**

## **Academic Support and Skill Development**

Peer mentors focus on the development of academic skills including time management, organization, and communication

**02**

## **Social And Emotional Support**

Peer mentors encourage student participation in campus events and support students with accommodation requests for campus events.

**03**

## **Support with Self-Advocacy and Empowerment**

Peer mentors support student understanding of their strengths, their rights, and how to effectively communicate their needs.



# Peer Mentoring is not:



-  **Academic Tutor**
-  **Counselor**
-  **Professional Staff**



# Designing the Peer Mentor Program



**Establish Goals and Objectives (Student Success Grant)**



**Recruitment and Selection of Peer Mentors**



**Training and Ongoing Support for Mentors**



**Establish Boundaries and Expectations**

# Structured Implementation



- Matching Mentors with Mentees
- Structured Mentor Mentee Interactions
- Monitoring and Evaluating Program Effectiveness





# Meet Our Team

"These Peer Mentors...provide holistic support to empower students to achieve their academic, career, and personal goals."-UST News



**Katie Crouch**



**Monse Aguirre**



**Justo Garcia**  
Advisor



**Albertine Payne**



**Max Pham**



# Case Studies

## Our Success Stories

### Adaljesus!

Adaljesus started as a mentee and, through the PMP, was inspired to join ADS as a Student Worker!

### Katie!

Katie has grown and found her voice as a Peer Mentor, offering support and leadership in how we promote accessibility on our campus!

### Glean

Accessibility Tools are essential for students seeking support with their academics. Glean has bridged a gap for students who use it for the courses and studying.



# Challenges and Solutions

- 1 Marketing and Outreach**
- 2 Perceived Stigma**
- 3 Confidentiality and Privacy Concerns**





# Future Direction and Opportunity

## ● **Collecting Feedback for Informing Goals**

Assessment Surveys provided to students to collect data on how to further support student needs.

## ● **Program Expansion**

Through CLP, new students have been added to the Peer Mentoring Team for Fall 2024

## ● **Accessibility on Campus**

Developing social media campaigns to promote accessibility on campus.



# Q&A

"The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves." — Steven Spielberg



**713-525-3546**



**[access@stthom.edu](mailto:access@stthom.edu)**



**[www.stthom.edu/access](http://www.stthom.edu/access)**

