

RISE Connects
Program Evaluation Report

SECTION 1: Program Description

RISE Connects is an undergraduate mentoring program in SBS RISE of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. SBS RISE (Remedying Inequity through Student Engagement) aims to support students who self-identify as first-generation, economically disadvantaged students or students of color within the college. It aims to provide historically marginalized students in higher education with academic and social support, personal and leadership development, etc.

RISE Connects is one branch of SBS RISE. According to the "SBS RISE Peer Mentoring Program Manual," the objectives for the RISE Connect mentoring program include:

1) Assist students in feeling more connected to the campus and their educational goals. 2) Support students in developing or refining their ability to articulate and formulate plans to actively pursue and achieve their academic and career goals. 3) Help students in their transition to the college environment and navigate their programs of study. 4) Make students aware of the resources available to them on campus and in the community and encourage them to make use of them. 6) Help students to develop or refine their study skills and time management abilities which are so important to student success. 7) Inform students of the organizations and clubs that the university has to offer, help them to get involved, or even start their club if they feel that one is needed but not offered. 8) Enhance student leadership skills. 9) Monitor student academic performance. 10) Provide opportunities for students to build academic, social, and professional networks through seminars, events, co-curricular activities, and industry mentors. 13) Foster a growth mindset.¹

RISE Connects pairs first-year and second-year students with junior or senior students to provide support and guidance to navigate the newcomers' transition into college. The program includes monthly meetings to support mentors, using logs to track the interactions of each mentor and mentee pair. Additionally, it organizes events for networking opportunities.

SECTION 2: Evaluation Methodology

The program evaluation is anticipated to use measurements to assess the program's effectiveness from the perspective of both mentees and mentors.

2.1 Measurements:

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¹ "RISE Connects - Peer Mentoring Program manual_FA23_SP24," Google Docs, accessed February 19, 2025, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uFD_xX2PITuk__gh2xLbbi76kFPC4cR2MKhjjk5Y5cI/edit?usp=drive_web&ouid=109443244001542565539&usp=embed_facebook.

For mentors, questions evaluated the mentors' perceptions of the training experience, the mentors' working relationship with their mentees, the mentors' feelings on the effectiveness of the monthly training model, and the mentors' self-ratings of their perceived growth during their time in RISE Connects.

The questionnaire also assesses mentees' experiences working with mentors to understand their journey in the program. The survey questions about the formats used for communication measure mentees' support from mentors. In addition, how mentees' growth in the program is evaluated through the measurements related to personal development.

The evaluation survey also assesses the RISE Connect event through participants' satisfaction, comments, and suggestions. The overall program is measured through respondents' satisfaction, the things the mentors and mentees like about the mentoring program, things they might want to change, and whether they would introduce the program to their friends.

2.2 Data types:

The survey collects qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data in the evaluation is mainly discrete data (or whole numbers) as data are from the Likert scale, a total number of goals, and others. Binary and narrative are the two main types of qualitative data as they gather information about respondents' roles, whether they attend the activities, and express their ideas about their experience in the program and suggestions to it.

2.3 Data collecting process:

The questionnaires are developed in-house through the program staff and distributed through email to everyone in the program. It uses conditional questions to direct the respondents to the section that applies to them. The introduction discloses the number of questions in the survey and the time spent to complete the survey. About ethics, this survey is anonymous, and participants could quit at any time without consequences.

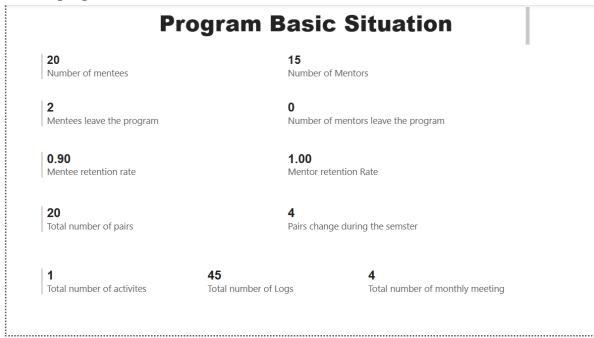
The data collection period was between December 5, 2024, and January 8, 2025. The target population is 35, and the total number of respondents is 15, composed of nine mentors and five mentees, resulting in a response rate of 42.9%. The evaluation survey is presented in Appendix 1.

2.4 Data analysis process

The quantitative data are analyzed through mean, median, and standard deviation and visualized through pie charts and bar graphs. The qualitative data is analyzed by manually extracting the keywords and visualizing them through the word cloud.

SECTION 3: Findings

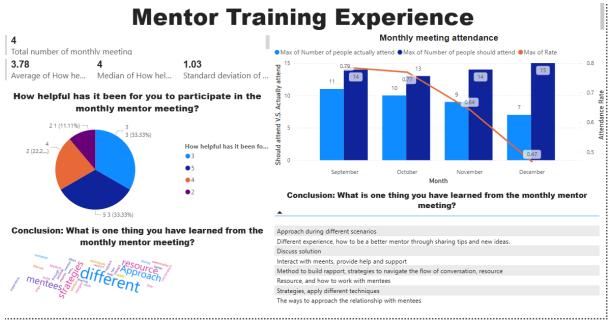
3. 1 The program basic situation



(Picture 1)

There are 20 mentees, 15 mentors, and 20 pairs of mentors and mentees in the SBS RISE Connects Mentoring program in the Fall 2024 semester. Two mentees and zero mentors left the program, and four pairs changed during the semester. Accordingly, the retention rate for mentees is 0.90 (90%), and for mentors is one (100%). There were 45 mentor and mentee meetings reported through the log filled by mentors. In Fall 2024, the program held four monthly meetings for mentors. In addition, the program hosts one activity, which aims to gather mentors and mentees together and socialize.

3.2 Mentor Training Experience



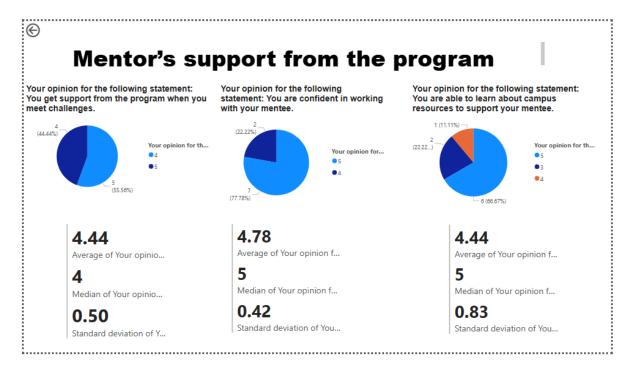
(Picture 2)

There are four mentor meetings in the Fall 2024 semester. In September, 14 mentors were expected to attend the monthly meeting, and 11 mentors attended. The participation rate is 79%. In October, 13 mentors were expected to attend the monthly meeting, and 10 mentors attended the meeting. The participation rate is 77%. In November, 14 mentors were expected to attend the monthly meeting, and nine mentors attended the meeting. The participation rate is 64%. In December, 15 people were expected to attend the meeting, and seven people attended the meeting. The participation rate is 47%.

For the close-ended question "How helpful has it been for you to participate in the monthly mentor meeting?", there is one person chose "2," which is "Somewhat unhelpful," three people chose "3," which is "Neither helpful nor unhelpful," two people chose "4," which is "Somewhat helpful," three people chose "5," which is "Very helpful." The average is 3.78, the median is 4, and the standard deviation is 1.03.

Regarding the open-ended question, "What is one thing you have learned from the monthly mentor meeting?" the words "different," "strategies," "Approach," and "resource" frequently appear in the answer.

3.3 Mentor's support from the program



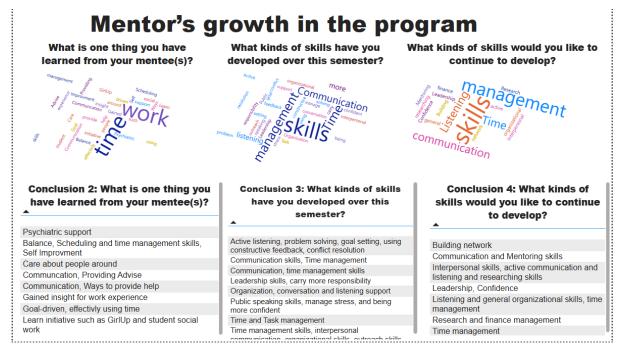
(Picture 3)

For the close-ended question "Your opinion for the following statement: You get support from the program when you meet challenges," there are five people (55.56%) chose "4," which is "Agree," and four people chose "5," which is "Strongly Agree." The average is 4.44, the median is 4, and the standard deviation is 0.5.

For the close-ended question "Your opinion for the following statement: You can learn about campus resources to support your mentee," there are two people (22.2%) chose 4, which "Agree," and seven people (77.8%) chose 5, which is "Strongly Agree." The average is 4.78, the median is 5, the standard deviation is 0.42.

For the close-ended question "Your opinion for the following statement: You are confident in working with your mentee," there are two people (22.2%) chose "3", which is "Neutral," and one person (11.11%) chose "4," which is "Agree," and six people (66.7%) chose "5," which is "Strongly Agree." The average is 4.44, the median is 5, and the standard deviation is 0.83.

3.4 Mentor's growth in the program



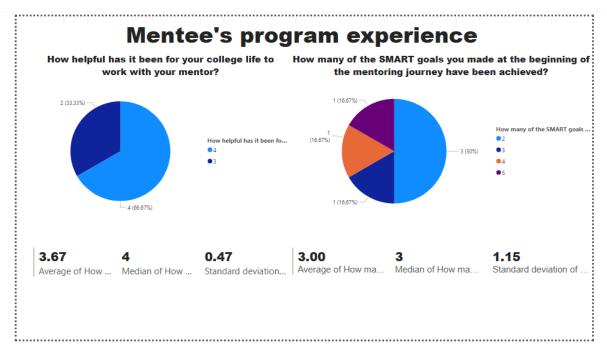
(Picture 4)

Regarding the open-ended question, "What is one thing you have learned from your mentee(s)?" The words "work" and "time" frequently appear in the answer.

Regarding the open-ended question, "What kinds of skills have you developed over this semester?" The words "skills," "Communication," "management," and "Time" frequently appear in the answer.

Regarding the open-ended question, "What kinds of skills would you like to continue to develop?" The words "skills", "Communication," "management," "Listening," and "Time" frequently appear in the answer.

3.5 Mentee's program experience

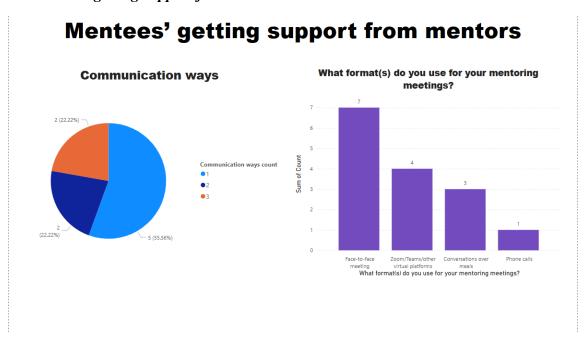


(Picture 5)

For the close-ended question, "How helpful has it been for your college life to work with your mentor?" two people (33.3%) chose "3", which is "Neither helpful nor unhelpful," and four people (66.6%) chose "4," which is "Somewhat helpful." The average is 3.67, the median is 4, and the standard deviation is 0.47.

For the mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions, "How many of the SMART goals you made at the beginning of the mentoring journey have been achieved?" three people (50%) chose "2", one person (16.67%) chose "3," one person (16.67%) chose "4," and one person (16.67%) chose "5." The average is 3.00, the median is 3, and the standard deviation is 1.15.

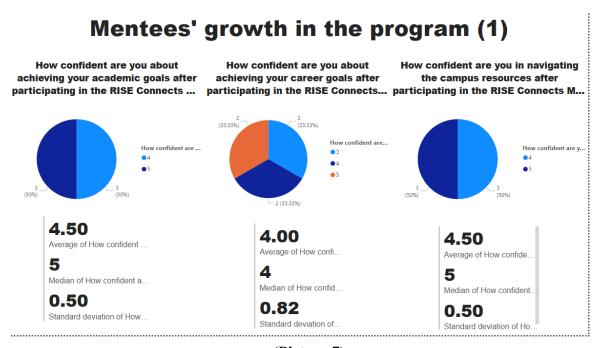
3.6 Mentees' getting support from mentors



(Picture 6)

For the mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions, "What format(s) do you use for your mentoring meetings?" five people (55.56%) chose "1" communication way(s), two people (22.22%) chose "2" communication way(s), and two people (22.22%) chose "3" communication way(s). For the format used for the meeting, "Face-to-face meeting" is reported seven times, "Zoom/Teams/other virtual platforms" are reported four times, "Conversations over meals" are reported three times, and "Phone calls" are reported one time.

3.7 Mentees' growth in the program



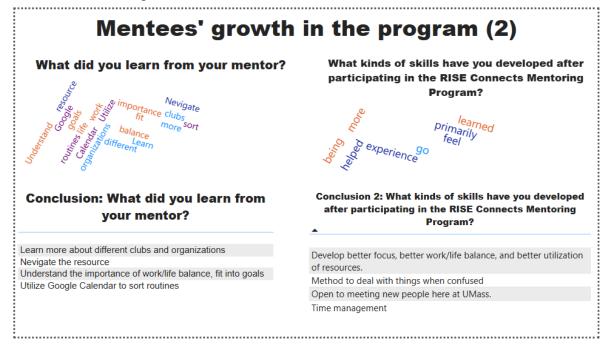
(Picture 7)

For the close-ended question, "How confident are you in navigating the campus resources after participating in the RISE Connects Mentoring Program?" three people (50%) chose "4", which is "Fairly confident," and three people (50%) chose "5," which is "Completely confident." The average is 4.50, the median is 5, and the standard deviation is 0.50.

For the close-ended question, "How confident are you about achieving your academic goals after participating in the RISE Connects Mentoring Program?" two people (33.33%) chose "3", which is "Somewhat confident," two people (33.33%) chose "4", which is "Fairly confident," and two people (33.33%) chose "5," which is "Completely confident." The average is 4.00, the median is 4, and the standard deviation is 0.82.

For the close-ended question, "How confident are you about achieving your career goals after participating in the RISE Connects Mentoring Program?" three people (50%) chose "4",

which is "Fairly confident," and three people (50 %) chose "5," which is "Completely confident." The average is 4.50, the median is 5, and the standard deviation is 0.50.

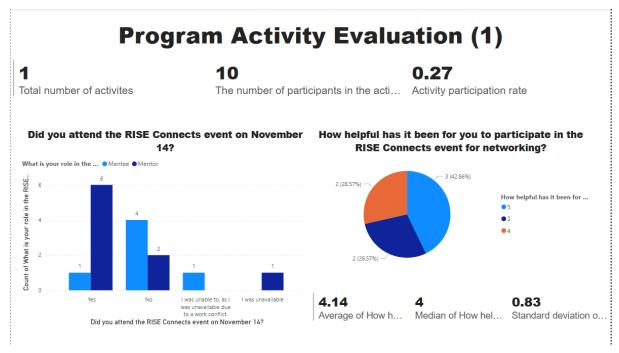


(Picture 8)

Regarding the open-ended question, "What kinds of skills would you like to continue to develop?" There are no words that frequently appear in the answer.

Regarding the open-ended question, "What kinds of skills have you developed after participating in the RISE Connects Mentoring Program?" There are no words that frequently appear in the answer.

3.8 Program activity evaluation



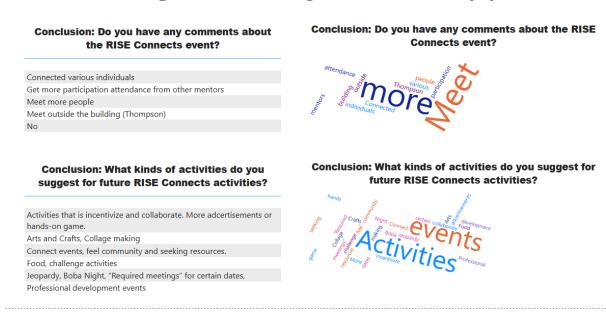
(Picture 9)

In the fall of 2024, the SBS RISE Connect program produced one total number of activities. Ten people participated in the event, and the participant rate would be around 0.27.

For the question, "Did you attend the RISE Connects event on November 14?" One mentee chose "yes," six mentors chose "yes," four mentees chose "No," two mentors chose "No," and one mentee and mentor chose "unavailable."

For the question, "How helpful has it been for you to participate in the RISE Connects event for networking?" two respondents (28.57%) select "3," which is "Neither helpful nor unhelpful," two respondents (28.57%) select "4," which is "Somewhat helpful," and three people (42.86%) select "5," which is "Very helpful." The average is 4.14, the median is 4, and the standard deviation is 0.83.

Program activity Evaluation (2)

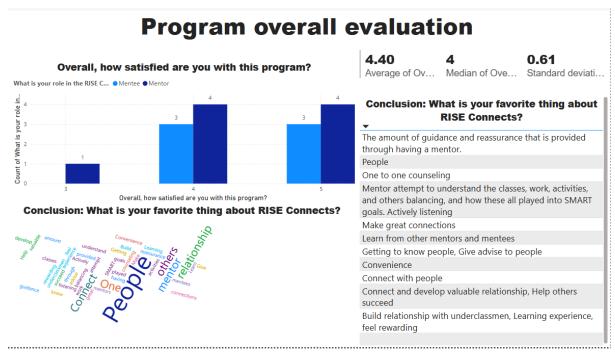


(Picture 10)

Regarding the open-ended question, "Do you have any comments about the RISE Connects event?" The words "more" and "Meet" frequently appear in the answer.

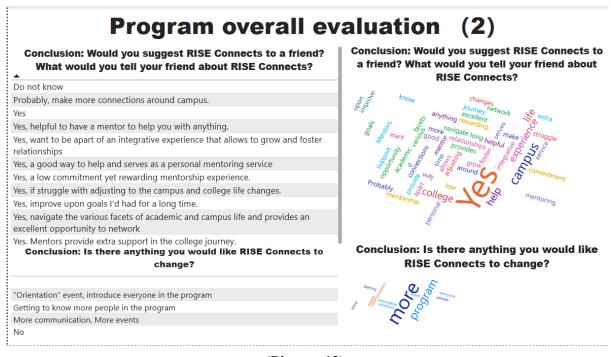
Regarding the open-ended question, "What kinds of activities do you suggest for future RISE Connects activities?" The words "events" and "Activities" frequently appear in the answer.

3.9 Program overall evaluation



For the question, "Overall, how satisfied are you with this program?" One mentor chose "3," which is "neutral," three mentees and four mentors chose "4," which is "satisfied," and three mentees and four mentors chose "5," which is "very satisfied." The average is 4.40, the median is 4, and the standard deviation is 0.61.

Regarding the open-ended question, "What is your favorite thing about RISE Connects?" The words "People," "others," "mentor," "relationship," "one," and "Connect" frequently appear in the answer.



(Picture 12)

Regarding the open-ended question, "Is there anything you would like RISE Connects to change?" The words "more" and "program" frequently appear in the answer.

Regarding the open-ended question, "Would you suggest RISE Connects to a friend? What would you tell your friend about RISE Connects?" The words "Yes," "college," "experience," "life," "campus," and "help" frequently appear in the answer.

SECTION 4: Interpretation and Reflection

4.1 The program basic situation

According to the number provided related to the basic information about the SBS R1SE Connect program, the retention rate for mentees and mentors is high because one is 0.9 and the other is 1.0. There are 20 pairs of mentors and mentees, but only record 45 of their meetings. It means that each pair has two meetings per semester on average, which is not

enough for the period from late October to early December, because the expectation for mentors stated in the manual: "Mentors are expected to spend approximately one hour each week with their mentees." It might caused by the mentor and mentee being too busy in their lives to complete the meeting, or they complete the meeting but fail to follow through with the log completion.

4.2 Mentor Training Experience

According to the monthly meeting attendance record, the attendance rate hugely declined in December as final exams season was approaching. Besides, the average participation rate is 0.668, which shows there is space to increase the number of participants for monthly meetings. For the question related to the helpfulness of monthly meetings, the percentage, average, and median show the monthly meeting is somewhat helpful for the monthly meeting. About the things mentors learn through the monthly meeting, the frequent words appearing in the word cloud show that mentors learn various resources on campus and strategies to build relationships with mentees, which fit with the program goals like getting to know the available resources on campus, and fit relationship emphasis in six key dimensions for Mentors.¹

4.3 Mentor support from the program

According to the data collected from the respondents, mentors are likely to agree that they feel supported from the program when facing challenges. They also feel confident working with their mentees and have a chance to learn campus resources that are helpful for mentees, which is shown by the average and median for the responses above four. Therefore, the staff in the program and monthly mentor meetings are effective for mentors to feel comfortable about their role

4.4 How mentors grew in the program

According to the word cloud, time-management skills are the most common skills mentors learn from their mentees. Other things are not showing in the word cloud, which indicates than different mentors learn different things from their mentees. The word cloud for the skill mentor developed over the semester demonstrates that listening, communication, and time management are the most common skills students develop in the program. These fit with the OARS model for communication skills (including open-ended questions, affirming and active listening skills, and reflective listening) that need to build a positive mentoring relationship. In addition, although there are other skills that mentors want to develop in the future, time management and communication skills are the top two skills that respondents want to keep progressing.

4.5 Mentee program experience

According to the respondents, mentees are more likely to feel the mentoring program is somewhat helpful based on the percentage, mean, and median score. Besides, according to the data, graphic, and chart in section 3.5, mentees have achieved around two to three of their SMART goals in the past semester. It shows the mentor and mentee are heading toward achieving the goal they made at the beginning of the semester, and mentors provide adequate assistance to their mentees.

4.6 Mentees getting support from mentors

According to the pie chart and bar graph in section 3.6, the mentors and mentees usually use one way to connect, preferring the face-to-face format. It is also worth noticing that other formats like "Zoom/Teams/other virtual platforms," "Conversations over meals" are also frequently used by mentors and mentees through constant communication. Accordingly, mentors and mentees used various ways to keep close contact.

4.7 Mentees' growth in the program

According to the percentage, average, and median, the mentoring program is approaching its objectives, like assisting students achieve academic and career goals while fostering a sense of connection to the campus. In addition, no frequent words appeared in the word cloud. It shows mentees learned a variety of stuff from their mentors, like navigating resources, work-life balance, and wanting to develop various skills in the future, like better focus and problem-solving. Thus, mentees came into the program with diverse purposes, gained lots of things from the program, and wanted to continue to develop varied skills.

4.8 Program activity evaluation

According to the number of events and participation rate, it shows that many people did not attend the event. It is also worth noting mentors are more likely to join the event than mentees. However, it is great to find that most respondents report this event is helpful or very helpful for networking.

About the comments for the meeting, the frequency of words in the word cloud shows the people in the previous event want to meet more people in the future event, and there is one student who suggests meeting at an outdoor place, which is in front of Thompson building.

Regarding the activities suggested for the future mentoring program event, respondents have various ideas, such as incentivizing and collaborating activities, games related to arts and crafts, food, etc.

4.9 Program overall evaluation

According to the bar graph, word cloud, and table, most mentors and mentees feel satisfied or very satisfied about the program. Mentors and mentees have various thoughts about what their favorite things are for the program, and the most common one is building connections

with people. It shows that the dimension of relationship emphasis for the mentoring program is achieved.

About what RISE Connects should change in the future, three respondents, a combination of mentors and mentees, gave suggestions like providing orientation events, getting to know more people in the program, more communication between members, and having more events like mentors and mentees gathering that meet other people in the program.

Almost all the respondents said "yes" when asked if they would recommend this program to their friends. Respondents, with a combination of mentors and mentees, have diverse reasons for recommendation, such as getting support and help adjusting to college life. It shows that mentors and mentees saw varied benefits from this program.

SECTION 5: Recommendations

5.1 About the survey

- 1) To boost the response rate, a) the survey can be spread earlier so respondents have more time to fill it out before the final week, and b) ask mentors a favor to encourage their mentees to complete their survey.
- 2) Spread the survey earlier so respondents have more time to fill it out before the final week and boost the response rate.
- 3) Compare the data from Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 to evaluate the efficiency of change made based on the evaluation for the Fall 2024 semester.

5.2 About the program development

- 1) Create an automatic email to remind the mentor to fill out the log after the meeting.
- 2) Program staff should consider increasing communication frequency with mentors and mentees to ensure the pairs collaborate effectively and provide support when needed. These will be accomplished by sending a check-in email monthly or bi-monthly to each pair with the flexibility to adjust the frequency based on the actual situation.
- 4) Provide more program events for mentors and mentees to meet together, and provide some fun events like craft drawing, table games, and other group activities.

Appendix 1:

Leave Blank As Purpose

Program Basic Situation

20

Number of mentees

15

Number of Mentors

2

Mentees leave the program

0

Number of mentors leave the program

0.90

Mentee retention rate

1.00

Mentor retention Rate

20

Total number of pairs

4

Pairs change during the semster

1

Total number of activites

45

Total number of Logs

4

Total number of monthly meeting



Mentor Training Experience

4

Total number of monthly meeting

3.78

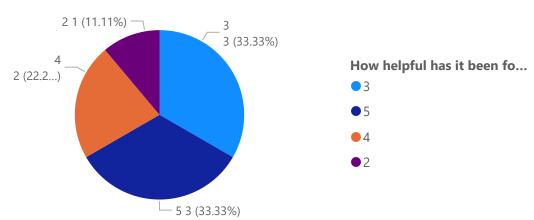
4

Average of How he... Median of How hel...

Standard deviation of ...

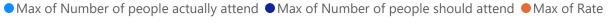
1.03

How helpful has it been for you to participate in the monthly mentor meeting?



Conclusion: What is one thing you have learned from the monthly mentor meeting?

Monthly meeting attendance





Conclusion: What is one thing you have learned from the monthly mentor meeting?

Approach during different scenarios

Different experience, how to be a better mentor through sharing tips and new ideas.

Discuss solution

Interact with meents, provide help and support

Method to build rapport, strategies to navigate the flow of conversation, resource

Resource, and how to work with mentees

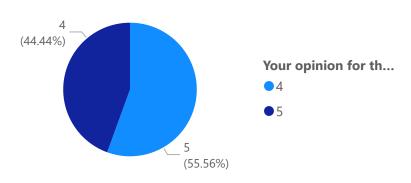
Strategies, apply different techniques

The ways to approach the relationship with mentees

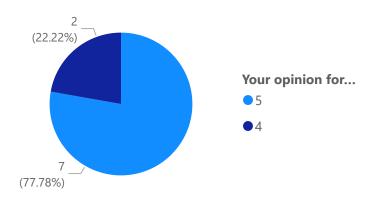


Mentor's support from the program

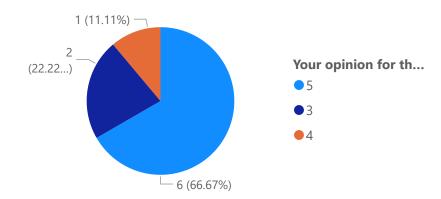
Your opinion for the following statement: You get support from the program when you meet challenges.



Your opinion for the following statement: You are confident in working with your mentee.



Your opinion for the following statement: You are able to learn about campus resources to support your mentee.



4.44

Average of Your opinio...

4

Median of Your opinio...

0.50

Standard deviation of Y...

4.78

Average of Your opinion f...

5

Median of Your opinion f...

0.42

Standard deviation of You...

4.44

Average of Your opinion f...

5

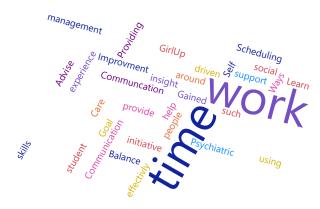
Median of Your opinion f...

0.83

Standard deviation of You...

Mentor's growth in the program

What is one thing you have learned from your mentee(s)?



What kinds of skills have you developed over this semester?



What kinds of skills would you like to continue to develop?

Conclusion 2: What is one thing you have learned from your mentee(s)?

Psychiatric support

Balance, Scheduling and time management skills, Self Improvment

Care about people around

Communcation, Providing Advise

Communication, Ways to provide help

Gained insight for work experience

Goal-driven, effectivly using time

Learn initiative such as GirlUp and student social work

Conclusion 3: What kinds of skills have you developed over this semester?

Active listening, problem solving, goal setting, using constructive feedback, conflict resolution

Communication skills, Time management

Communication, time management skills

Leadership skills, carry more responsibility

Organization, conversation and listening support

Public speaking skills, manage stress, and being more confident

Time and Task management

Time management skills, interpersonal communication organizational skills outreach skills

Conclusion 4: What kinds of skills would you like to continue to develop?

Building network

Communication and Mentoring skills

Interpersonal skills, active communication and listening and researching skills

Leadership, Confidence

Listening and general organizational skills, time management

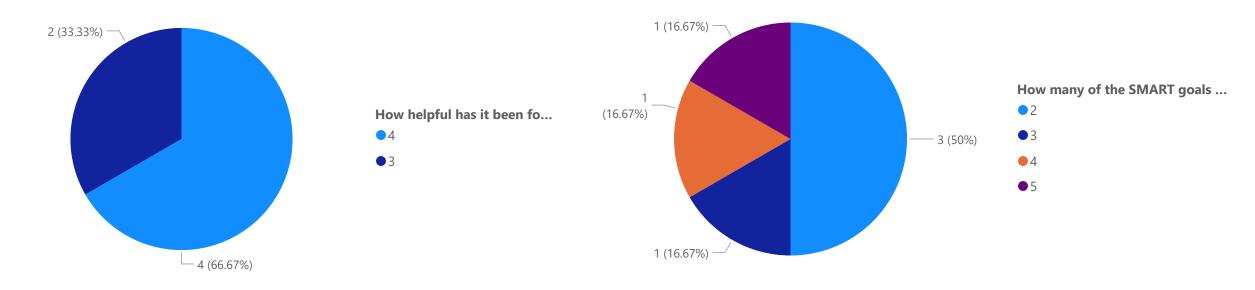
Research and finance management

Time management

Mentee's program experience

How helpful has it been for your college life to work with your mentor?

How many of the SMART goals you made at the beginning of the mentoring journey have been achieved?



3.67 Average of How ... Median of How ... Standard deviation... | Average of How ma... Median of How ma...

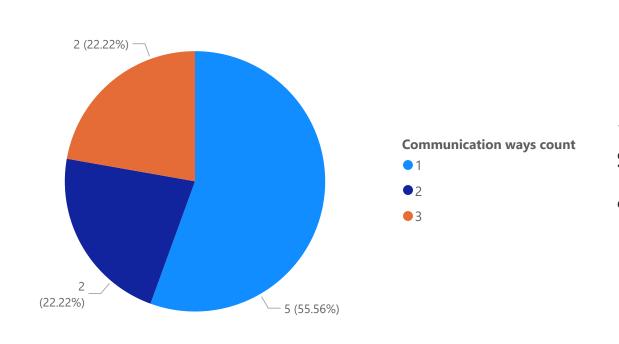
0.47

3.00

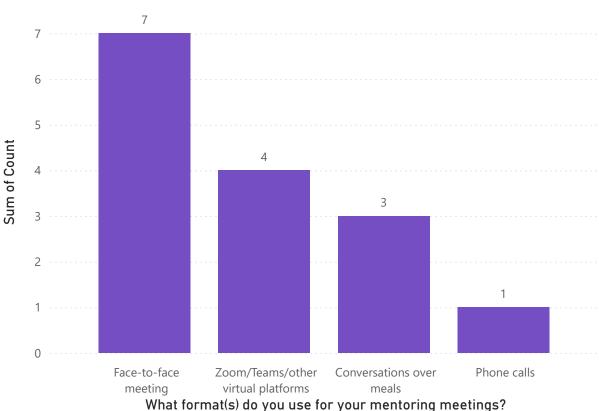
1.15 Standard deviation of ...

Mentees' getting support from mentors

Communication ways



What format(s) do you use for your mentoring meetings?

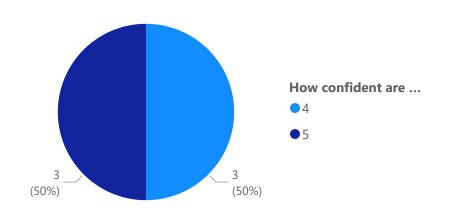


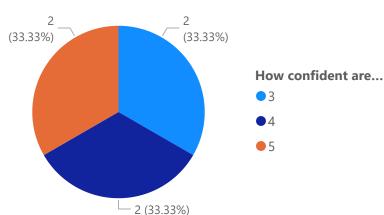
Mentees' growth in the program (1)

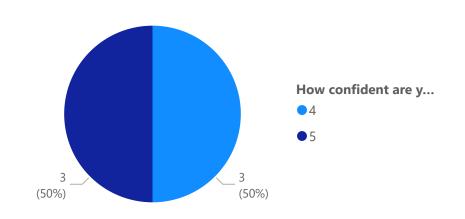
How confident are you about achieving your academic goals after participating in the RISE Connects ...

How confident are you about achieving your career goals after

How confident are you in navigating the campus resources after participating in the RISE Connects... participating in the RISE Connects M...







4.50

Average of How confident ...

5

Median of How confident a...

0.50

Standard deviation of How...

4.00

Average of How confi...

Median of How confid...

0.82

Standard deviation of...

4.50

Average of How confide...

5

Median of How confident...

Standard deviation of Ho

Mentees' growth in the program (2)

What did you learn from your mentor?



Conclusion: What did you learn from your mentor?

Learn more about different clubs and organizations
Nevigate the resource
Understand the importance of work/life balance, fit into goals
Utilize Google Calendar to sort routines

What kinds of skills have you developed after participating in the RISE Connects Mentoring Program?



Conclusion 2: What kinds of skills have you developed after participating in the RISE Connects Mentoring Program?

Develop better focus, better work/life balance, and better utilization of resources.

Method to deal with things when confused

Open to meeting new people here at UMass.

Time management

Program Activity Evaluation (1)

Total number of activites

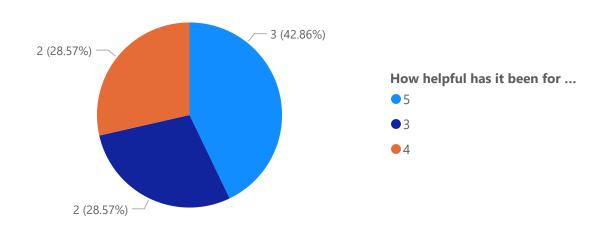
0.27

The number of participants in the acti... Activity participation rate

Did you attend the RISE Connects event on November 14?

What is your role in the ... ● Mentee ● Mentor Count of What is your role in the RISE. Yes I was unavailable No was unavailable due to a work conflict. Did you attend the RISE Connects event on November 14?

How helpful has it been for you to participate in the **RISE Connects event for networking?**



4.14 Average of How h...

Median of How hel... Standard deviation o...

0.83

Program activity Evaluation (2)

Conclusion: Do you have any comments about the RISE Connects event?

Connected various individuals

Get more participation attendance from other mentors

Meet more people

Meet outside the building (Thompson)

No

Conclusion: What kinds of activities do you suggest for future RISE Connects activities?

Activities that is incentivize and collaborate. More adcertisements or hands-on game.

Arts and Crafts, Collage making

Connect events, feel community and seeking resources.

Food, challenge activities

Jeopardy, Boba Night, "Required meetings" for certain dates,

Professional development events

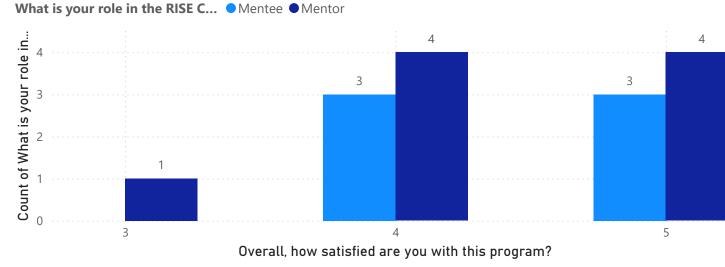
Conclusion: Do you have any comments about the RISE Connects event?



Conclusion: What kinds of activities do you suggest for future RISE Connects activities?

Program overall evaluation

Overall, how satisfied are you with this program?



Conclusion: What is your favorite thing about RISE Connects?

4.40

0.61

Average of Ov... Median of Ove... Standard deviati...

Conclusion: What is your favorite thing about RISE Connects?

The amount of guidance and reassurance that is provided through having a mentor.

People

One to one counseling

Mentor attempt to understand the classes, work, activities, and others balancing, and how these all played into SMART goals. Actively listening

Make great connections

Learn from other mentors and mentees

Getting to know people, Give advise to people

Convenience

Connect with people

Connect and develop valuable relationship, Help others succeed

Build relationship with underclassmen, Learning experience, feel rewarding

Program overall evaluation (2)

Conclusion: Would you suggest RISE Connects to a friend? What would you tell your friend about RISE Connects?

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Do not know

Probably, make more connections around campus.

Yes

Yes, helpful to have a mentor to help you with anything.

Yes, want to be apart of an integrative experience that allows to grow and foster relationships

Yes, a good way to help and serves as a personal mentoring service

Yes, a low commitment yet rewarding mentorship experience.

Yes, if struggle with adjusting to the campus and college life changes.

Yes, improve upon goals I'd had for a long time.

Yes, navigate the various facets of academic and campus life and provides an excellent opportunity to network

Yes. Mentors provide extra support in the college journey.

Conclusion: Is there anything you would like RISE Connects to change?

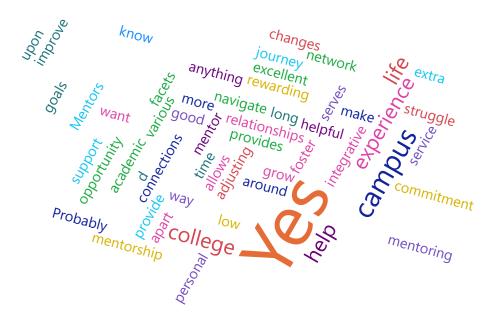
"Orientation" event, introduce everyone in the program

Getting to know more people in the program

More communication, More events

No

Conclusion: Would you suggest RISE Connects to a friend? What would you tell your friend about RISE Connects?



Conclusion: Is there anything you would like RISE Connects to change?