

# INTERVIEW AN UPPERCLASSMAN: THE VALUE OF PEER MENTORSHIP TO FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS IN AN ORIENTATION COURSE

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## About the Program

- Endorsement of course material from a student's peer is more essential to motivation than an instructor's endorsement (Shin et al., 2017).
- All students in the AHS Department are required to take an orientation course in their first semester, AEE 103, where topics such as academic planning, goal setting, and time management are taught.
- To reinforce the material taught, the "Interview an Upperclassman" assignment was introduced in the Fall of 2022.

## How it Works

- Before the start of the semester: send email for nominations of outstanding upperclassmen to faculty.
- After nomination collection: Inform upperclassmen of their nomination, explain the program expectations: one 30 minute interview with 2 students.
- After upperclassmen are confirmed: Compile list of upperclassmen. Assignment is introduced midway through semester and due at the end. AEE 103 students sign up and must interview in-person.

"Sydney was able to give me a student's point of view on classes. She told me that it was ok not to do amazing in literally every class and that many other factors help to determine your success... this really helped me calm down."  
-Lance, AEE 103 Student



"This experience was incredibly special because I remember being exactly where the freshmen were... it made me realize that while I am only a little further ahead of them, I've learned a lot during that time."

-Sydney, AHS Upperclassman

## Results to Date

- 90 students have completed the assignment.
- An estimated 95% of first-year students said they found the advice of their assigned upperclassman valuable (Pulled from reflection assignment).
- "[Student]'s discussion on his transition from living in a small town to attending NC State resonated with me because I came from a small town as well. It made me feel like I had someone who understood."
- "Her answers have provided me lots of comfort and insight on the things that individuals don't usually think to ask or are not clear in orientation sessions, information sessions, and intro courses."

## Advice to Others

- Solicit nominations of trusted upperclassmen from a trusted group of colleagues.
- Short biographies about the upperclassmen can be helpful to first-year student as they sign up for someone to interview.
- Face to face interviewing should be encouraged.
- Making sure no upperclassman has to do more than two interviews is ideal.