How Do I Get a Mentor?

As faculty you will be assigned a mentor by University Studies (UNST). Our program uses a unique process designed for our Freshman Inquiry (FRINQ) and Sophomore Inquiry (SINQ) courses.

This process occurs each year and begins at the end of fall term. During these 9 months we recruit, hire, train, and schedule your mentors with appropriate skills for their role in the UNST curriculum to support your students in their learning.

Hiring
Recruitment begins in earnest during November with PSU's general scholarship, which closes in mid-January. We encourage faculty and staff to work closely with departments to identify excellent candidates to apply for these positions. What follows is the hiring process by term:

Winter	Recruiting and Interviews (over 220 applicants)
Spring	Training New Mentors (45–50 new mentor finalists)
Summer	Hiring Mentors and Scheduling (new mentors and returning mentors)
Fall	Mentoring begins in FRINQ and SINQ (90 total mentors in UNST)

Training
Mentors serve 1–3 years before graduating from PSU with top leadership skills and professional job experiences. Mentor training is intensive and ongoing:

Spring	New Mentors take Mentoring in Higher Education course (4 credits)
Fall	Fall Mentor Training Conference (4 days)
Ongoing	Mentor ePortfolios and CBLs (community based leadership hours)

Mentors must have the following skill sets and knowledge:
- Introduction to Pedagogy and Learning Theory in UNST
- Lesson Planning and Syllabus Design
- Running Effective Classroom Discussions
- "Learning How to Learn" Across the Disciplines
- Writing, Critical Reading, and Research
- Basic Technology and ePortfolio Support
- Engaging Diverse Classrooms
- PSU Campus Resources and Support Centers
- Conflict Resolution

Scheduling
In 2010 an innovative PSU and UNST faculty member, Dr. Joshua Fost, helped redefine the scheduling process. With the addition of 2011 Google Summer of Code funds, OIT created an electronic scheduler that assigns mentors for all 90 FRINQ/SINQs using the following parameters:
1. Mentor Schedules (over 90+ mentors have different schedules each term)
2. Course and Theme Preferences (mentors rank top 10 choices that work)
3. Faculty Preferences (you need to directly contact your mentor of choice)

Over 80% of mentors get matched to one of their top 3 selections. Due to program size and other factors, it is not feasible to schedule mentors by hand or to handpick mentors for your classes. However, this scheduler greatly improves our ability to ensure you have a trained mentor who is ready to work in your UNST course.

Timeline
We would love to schedule your mentor as early as possible. In reality, we work within parameters that are more complex and require longer timelines for hiring and scheduling your mentor each term. These circumstances affect when we can finally assign your mentors, which is usually toward the end of summer or end of term. As an example, the following factors affect when we can schedule your mentors:

- Release of budgets and funds (approvals) to hire our mentors
- UNST enrollment trends for FRINQ/SINQ courses
- Logistics of scheduling 90+ mentors with varying schedules each term