

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

TASK FORCE ON RACIAL EQUITY

WORKING GROUP LEADERSHIP

STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS WORKING GROUP

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

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TITLE: First Year Inspiring Dukes (FYI Dukes)

PROBLEM:

Mentors are proven to foster quality relationships, provide guidance, empower, elevate and encourage others. The known benefits of mentoring for youth range from increased graduation rates, increased retention, positive focus and interest in school, enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence and improved interpersonal skills just to name a few. Mentoring has been linked in studies to social-emotional development benefits,

improvements in youth perceptions of parental involvement, and better chances of matriculating through

higher education (Adopted from Federal Mentoring Council and Jekielek, Moore, & Hair, 2020). During orientation, the FROGS program does a great “drive-thru” approach with introducing first-year students to the university. However, I recently spoke with a parent of a freshman from the Tidewater region, when asked, how had her son’s first year been going, she mentioned, “It’s going great! If it weren’t for his FROGS, he may have experienced more difficulty.” Instead of “drive-thru/short” introduction experience for [first-years](#), why not extend the FROGS’ services to more of a “buddy approach” for the first year?

RECOMMENDATION:

FROGS, Centennial Scholars, and/or the Student Leadership Council (CMSS) and organizations under the CMSS umbrella serve as upperclassmen FYIDukes Buddies as early as when the deposits and ONEBOOK is distributed. The mentoring/buddy responsibility would require a commitment by the Big Buddy throughout the first and second semesters of the Freshman’s first year. Students would be assigned via a survey included in the ONEBOOK. The peer mentoring program would be similar to the following programs:

<https://oaaa.virginia.edu/peer-advisor-program-0>

<https://dos.vt.edu/First-Gen/first-peer-mentor.html>

<https://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/success/peer-mentor-program/>

See following page for Success Measures

RATIONALE:

The first-year student would have someone to share the successes and challenges as they adjust to JMU culture. They would have someone who to help them navigate the university, inform them of the services and resources available, and seek help early before they might find themselves in a difficult situation. The mentors and mentees would meet to discuss life learning skills such as time management, goal setting, teamwork, and getting connected to campus in a positive manner.