



GIRIJANANDA CHOWDHURY UNIVERSITY

STUDENT MENTORING

A successful mentor is not just an advisor but a role model, guide, and colleague -
CHRIS PALMER (APA, 2019).

Foreword:

The young and adolescent undergraduate students admitted to the universities are in a transitional phase in their lives to adulthood. This is an exciting yet difficult time. Confusion in making the right choice of subjects, choosing the correct career path and for many, getting into a new independent environ in the university, away from the family and home could be disturbing for them. The apprehension and the anxiety about the future cause considerable pain, depression and distraction from studies in the students. Universities have institutional mechanisms of coaching, counselling and mentoring the students in addressing their issues and problems. Each of these three exercises has different meanings, connotations and implications as briefly stated below:

- **Coaching:** A structured process to enable students to achieve their academic goals.
- **Counselling:** A professional guidance to enable students to negotiate with their emotional challenges.
- **Mentoring:** A more involved and regular partnership with the students to guide them in taking the right decisions about their academic career, future professional career and overall well-being.

A few important definitions related to the mentoring policy are:

- **Mentor:** A teacher of the University who is assigned to a single or a group of students to provide regular guidance with respect to the students' academic, professional and personal matters of concern.
- **Mentee:** A student of the University who is attached to a teacher (Mentor), for guidance, advice, and support in their pursuit of studies, for a successful professional career and for ensuring physical, mental and moral well-being.
- **Chief Mentor:** A senior faculty member, who is responsible for coordinating with all mentor-mentee groups of the University.

Mentoring Cell at GCU

Girijananda Chowdhury University (GCU) has a robust mechanism for mentoring the students. As a part of the University's mentoring policy, GCU has set up a Mentoring Cell to facilitate smooth coordination between various departments and students on the issues related to the academic, professional, emotional and personal matters. The same consists of at least one faculty member from each academic school.

Every student is attached to experienced teacher-mentors. The process of mentoring continues till the students complete their academic programmes and leave the university. However, often it transforms into life-long relationships. Besides, the teacher-based mentoring system, GCU also has Peer mentoring of junior students by selected, achieved senior students.

The Mentoring Cell operates at two levels:

Individual levels: Works on the basis of regular mentor-mentee communication and interaction.

Department level: Works through regular tripartite parent-student-teacher meetings.

Objectives of Student Mentoring at GCU:

- To empower students for academic pursuit, career, or entrepreneurship.
- To promote the personal well-being of students, promoting their social skills and functionality.
- To build and enhance capacity of the students to take up any vocation of their choice.
- To enable them to develop into virtuous human beings equipped to face societal challenges.

- To enable the students in developing respect for nature and environment for a sustainable world in alignment with India's commitment to the *United Nations' Sustainable Development* goals.
- To encourage the students for involvement in extracurricular and co-curricular activities.
- To sensitize students to become responsible, disciplined, and socially conscious human beings through values of empathy, integrity, and dedication.
- To respect inclusivity and diversity across gender, culture and religion.
- To capacitate students on assertive skills in refraining from any addictive habits.
- To orient students about the *Academic Bank of Credits* and accreditation of their participation in any activity.
- To enable the students to avail the opportunities of learning in the digital platform.

Principles of Student Mentoring:

The underlying principle and philosophy of the Mentoring Cell of the University is premised on certain core values, such as:

- Respect for the mentor-mentee relationship, which involves maintaining confidentiality.
- Instilling the importance of punctuality, discipline and commitment into the mentor-mentee relationship.
- Inspiring introspection and then encouraging, motivating and enabling the students in setting their benchmarks and achieving their academic goals.
- Instilling strong value system into the personalities of the students.
- Promoting the skills of mentoring like, active listening, keen observation, building rapport and trust and the skills of negotiation on the part of the mentors.

Pre-requisites for the Mentoring Process:

The following exercises are to be completed prior to the Commencement of the Mentoring processes.

- List of admitted students are to be forwarded to the Chief Mentor from the Administration.
- Assignment of faculty members as mentors of students.
- Announcement of the list of mentor-mentee.

The Mentoring process begins with the following:

- Introduction of students to the respective mentors during the Students' Induction Programme. A mentor may belong to departments other than from the departments to which the students are enrolled.

- Mentee-submission of the filled in profiles to the concerned mentors.
- Announcement of the provision for change of mentor in the event of course change by students, in due course of time to the students.

Guidelines for Student Mentoring

The Mentoring Cell of GCU has set up guidelines in the form of Dos and Don'ts for both Mentors and Mentees to make the process of mentoring effective and purposeful:

Dos for Mentors:

- A mentee is to be considered respectfully, as an individual with self-esteem and independent mindset.
- The merit, strength and capacity of the students should be assessed while setting expectations for them.
- Confidentiality about the problems and issues of the mentees should be maintained.
- The privacy of the mentees should be respected.
- The problems of the mentee should be approached with understanding, affection and humility.
- Record of the interactions, assessments, advices and feedback received from the mentees should be maintained meticulously and forwarded to the Chief Mentor for further necessary action and maintenance in the central documentation system, (Enterprise Resource Planning - ERP), for future reference.
- Student progress records, as documented by the mentor are to be communicated to the parents, guardians at the end of each semester and for discussion in the parent-teacher meetings.
- Healthy life-style for the overall well-being of the mentee should be emphasized and ensured.

Don'ts for Mentors:

- The number of mentees should not be more than one can manage.
- Decisions or suggestions of the mentor should not be imposed on the mentees, forcefully.
- There should be avoidance of being judgmental, presumptive and prejudicial in the approaches of the mentor.
- The credit for the academic achievements of the mentees' should not be undermined and claimed by mentor.
- Any act of indiscipline by the mentee/s, should be addressed with a strategy of reform.

Dos for Mentees:

The Mentees are expected to avail the mentoring facility by becoming:

- Proactive in approaching the mentor for any guidance and support.
- Frank in sharing the challenges, aspirations, and progress, honestly.
- Mindful to the advice of the mentor.
- Punctual and committed in attending the scheduled meeting with mentors.
- Introspective about implementing and complying with the advices of the mentors and through self analysis.
- Respectful to the mentor and maintaining a professional demeanor throughout the mentoring relationship.

Don'ts for Mentees:

- Unreasonable requests at the cost of mentors valuable time and resources be avoided.
- Mentor's advices, constructive criticism, should not be dismissed or non-complied with.
- Efforts to implement or follow the advices of the mentors should not be stopped in the face of initial difficulties.

Note: Generally, students should meet their mentor every 15 days.