

PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

Women in Science and Engineering Roundtable (WISER)

ABOUT WISER

The Women in Science and Engineering Roundtable (WISER) promotes the inclusion and success of all women pursuing a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)-related career at Case Western Reserve University through leadership, mentorship, and outreach.

WISER's Peer Mentoring Program supports undergraduate students pursuing STEM degrees by fostering a sense of community at Case Western Reserve University, easing the transition to college, and helping solidify future career and educational goals.

WHY MENTORING?

Women constitute 47% of the workforce in the United States. In STEM fields, however, women represent only a fraction of the workforce. While some STEM fields are nearing gender parity (such as the life sciences and mathematics), women remain underrepresented in many others. In 2016, only 14% of women were employed in engineering occupations, 25% in computer occupations, and 39% in the physical sciences.¹

The underrepresentation of women in STEM fields is a complex issue and many efforts have been made to attract and retain women in these fields. One of the most successful methods is mentoring.²

Undergraduate mentoring experiences have been shown to provide psychosocial support and help with career planning, goal setting, and role modeling.³ Mentoring relationships can provide a sense of belonging and help develop science identity, which contribute to student retention and persistence in STEM.^{4,5}

continued on back page



"Overall, participating in the WISER Peer Mentoring Program and my relationship with Stephanie, my mentor, were both helpful in determining that I both enjoyed civil engineering and could be successful in it! I finished my master's degree about 2.5 years ago, and I'm currently preparing for my engineering licencing exams. I'm thankful that I had Stephanie as a mentor during my freshman year and a role model throughout my college career."

WISER PEER MENTORING MODEL

Our Peer Mentoring Program pairs first-year WISER students with upper-level WISER students to foster a sense of community and provide valuable resources and insights to help orient mentees to their STEM programs. Mentors are matched with mentees based on academic and professional goals, interests, activities, and mentoring relationship expectations.

Mentors and mentees are expected to...

- Attend two kickoff events in the fall semester
- Check in regularly with their partner, including at least one meeting a month
- Attend one WISER event or meeting per semester with their partner
- Participate in the program evaluation
- Attend the WISER Awards Banquet in the spring semester



"I instantly fell in love with WISER peer mentoring, it opened my eyes to amazing women on this campus. I found so many inspirational role models, and people who I aspire to be one day. I even found my undergraduate research position through my WISER mentor."

REFERENCES

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3. Gershenfeld, S. (2014). A review of undergraduate mentoring programs. *Review of Educational Research*, 84(3), 365-391.
4. Zaniwski, A. M., & Reinholz, D. (2016). Increasing STEM success: a near-peer mentoring program in the physical sciences. *International Journal of STEM Education*, 3(14), 1-12.
5. Hernandez, P. R., Bloodhart, C., Barnes, R. T., Adams, A. S., Clinton, S. M., Pollack, I., Godfrey, E., Burt, M., & Fischer, E. V. (2017). Promoting professional identity, motivation, and persistence: benefits of an informal mentoring program for female undergraduate students. *PLoS ONE*, 12(11), 1-16.