

FAQ's about Bard Mentor Program

What is the Bard Mentor Program? It is simple really. Bard is a new experience for incoming students. A good way to help people new to a place is to offer the support and friendship of people already part of that community. So the Bard Mentor Program was developed. Bard is a people place. What you derive from your experience at Bard is relative to the relationships you build with professors, advisors, peer counselors, deans, people responsible for keeping you safe, those that clean the dorms, administrative staff, etc. The Mentor Program allows you to establish yet another series of relationships.

Who are the Mentees? This program is open and optional to all incoming first year and transfer students.

Who are the Mentors? We are people who work in the Bard community. Though faculty or deans aren't usually asked to participate, mentor volunteers are employed in such places as the President's and Vice President's offices, Registrar's office, Office of Development, Alumnae Office, the bookstore, Buildings & Grounds, the food service, librarians, environmental resource center...the list goes on. All of us work here on campus and volunteer for the Mentor Program because we are interested in having the opportunity to interact and share with Bard students. Because we work on campus we are familiar with our extended grounds and all it has to offer. Because we live in the area we have the ability to share with you some of what's available off-campus. Some of us have young kids or college-age kids of our own, some are artists, some love to cook and invite students over, some like to hike, canoe, garden, write. A mentor can be someone to go to for clarification, for a head's up on who to ask a question of or how to get something done, for support if you have doubts about something....*this* list goes on too!

Who runs this program?

Janet Stetson Associate Director of Admission Stetson@bard.edu

Bethany Nohlgren Director of the First Year Experience Nohlgren@bard.edu

What are some of the things mentor groups have done in the past? Dinner at the home of your mentor. Apple or pumpkin picking at one of the many local orchards. Shopping trip to Rhinebeck's farmer's market. Celebrating birthdays with REAL cakes. Frisbee games overlooking the Hudson River. Walks to explore Bard's amazing campus and picnics under trees. Pancake dinners at midnight in the admissions office. A place to go for Thanksgiving if you don't go home. Evening s'mores around an outdoor fire in October. Going as a group to a basketball game or a theater performance.

Do mentees have any input in what the group does for activities? Sure. Mentors are always interested in what you might want to do. There is plenty of opportunity to make plans as a group.

How many students are in a group? This all depends on how many students choose to be part of the Mentor Program in any given year. Typically 6-8 students per mentor is optimum. Often times two or three groups organize an activity together – a field game, hosting an international meal, or a hiking trip have all examples of past gatherings that incorporated more than one group.

How are groups decided on? Bethany Nohlgren and I simply try to create a balance – of men and women, of international students and students from the states. We try not to put roommates in the same group. The idea is to mix it up but maintain a balance.

How often do the groups meet? This is very much up to each mentor. Since people work and many have families, we have to fit this into our lives. Typically two to four times a semester at least. Some of us offer up opportunities with more regularity and know we won't get the whole group each time but also enjoy the smaller configuration of the group.

Am I obligated to go to every gathering? Absolutely not. This is intended to be fun and casual. We understand there will be times an activity conflicts with something else you have going on at Bard. Or maybe the chosen activity is not your cup of tea. Participation is up to you.

On the other hand, groups that have a high level of participation typically get to know one another better, develop closer relationships with their mentors, and find acclimating to Bard that much easier. Then activities flow more freely and new ideas grow out of communication. Participation is obviously encouraged.

Will this cost me anything? No. We make an effort to utilize the plethora of activities and opportunities right here in front of us that are mostly cost-free. Mentors have a budget to draw from as well. There have been instances when a group decides on something that might require each student to pay (like going to a movie at Upstate Films in Rhinebeck), but it is always optional.

Can I join later in the semester? Yes.

How do I join the Bard Mentor Program? You have two options. Come to the August 19th meeting at 4pm at the Laszlo Z. Bitó '60 Auditorium in the Reem and Kayden Center for Science and Computation to hear about the program, ask questions and sign up if you'd like. Or email Janet Stetson at Stetson@bard.edu if you already know you want to be included.

