2014-2015 CEC/CEC-PD MENTORING PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

Program was instituted as a result of a recommendation from the Work Group on Student Affairs (2006).

In 2007, CEC’s Department of Membership and Unit Services contacted the Pioneers Division to determine if it would be interested in collaborating with CEC to co-sponsor such a mentoring program. Pioneers Board agreed to the co-sponsorship.

The design for the pilot for the Program was developed in 2007, approved by the Pioneers Board and the CEC staff. The CEC BOD acknowledged that a recommendation from a BOD appointed work group was being implemented.

Pilot ran from 8/2007 through 5/2008; was evaluated by all participants; a report describing the design and operation of the Program, as well as the results from the evaluation, was filed with the Pioneers Board and the CEC Executive Director. It was determined, based on this report and the observations of the CEC liaison staff to the pilot (Assistant CEC Director and Senior Director of Membership and Units), that the pilot should be implemented a program offered by the Council.

In 2008, the Mentoring Program was included as part of CEC’s strategic plan.

Program is now in its seventh year of operation.

In 2010, the Mentoring Program developed a formal relationship with the IDEA Partnership working through the relationship that was already present with CEC.

CEC MISSION MATCH

The Mentoring matches the mission of CEC by:

- Establishing and conducting programs and activities for the membership.
- Providing technical support and cutting-edge information to its members.
- Supporting individuals who are entering the profession.
- Supporting student chapters.
- Encouraging and assisting student members to transition to professional members.
MENTORING PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of the Mentoring Program is to create a supportive and information sharing virtual relationship between volunteer CEC members in the role of mentors and CEC student members from selected CEC student chapters as the mentees.

This relationship is built through sharing:
• the resources of CEC;
• general state-of-the art special education material (currently: standards, technology apps, formative assessment, bullying, Race to the Top for selected school systems);
• suggestions related to specific student learning/management situations;
• experiences of the mentor relevant to the mentee’s questions/comments;
• the resources now available to the mentors through the relationship with the IDEA Partnership.

PARTICIPANTS

Mentors are all CEC members with more than five years of professional membership in CEC. Field experience ranges from 5- 30+ years. All mentors are volunteers and receive no type of reimbursement, stipends, etc. from CEC nor the Pioneers. Twenty mentors have continued with the Program since its inception. The CEC leadership is quite visible in the Program with 9 past presidents of CEC; an executive director of a CEC division; twenty-one current/past presidents of divisions and state/provincial units; and 9 Clarissa Hug nominee/winners.

Mentees are CEC student members (undergraduate and graduate) who are members of CEC student chapters that have made application to CEC for participation in the Program. All mentees have been juniors and above. This is the third year that mentees have been invited to participate in the Program for a second year (9 are repeats).

There are currently 19 CEC student chapters involved in the Program; growing from 5. Three have been in the Program since the Pilot. Each faculty advisor from the student chapter selects the students to participate as the mentees and remains the “face-to-face” contact with the student if communication breaks down during the virtual mentoring process.

Initially, there were 26 mentors; there are now 99. Mentees have increased from 39-101 during the five years of operation. The number of graduate students has increased from 2 - 18.

CEC staff from the Membership and Unit Development Unit support the Program. There is one volunteer coordinator for the Program who is responsible for the operations of the Program.
MATCHES OF MENTOR WITH MENTEES

Mentors and mentees are manually matched by the coordinator of the program. Matches are made on the information electronically submitted by the mentors and mentees. The match is based on the interests/experiences of both the mentee and mentor; first by exceptionality category and by age level (early childhood - transition) and then by geographic match.

DURATION OF THE MENTORING

The Mentoring Program runs on a yearly basis (August-May).

This year was the second year that mentees who were still student CEC members could return to the Program if interested.

Mentors are asked at the end of each year if they desire to continue in the program and the number of mentees (1-2) would they like to mentor.

New students join the Program each year and are recruited by the faculty advisor of the participating CEC student chapter.

The average time spent by the mentors in the mentoring process varies at times of the year, but usually no more than 1-3 hours per month.

About 25% of the mentors and mentees maintain some type of relationship after the conclusion of the "forma" mentoring process.

TYPES OF MENTORING IN THE PROGRAM

Over the past seven years, the most common types of mentoring are:

- Information about the current issues in the field
- Content area modifications/adaptations
- Suggestions for working with an individual student
- Personal support for the mentee
- Reference sources for papers, reports, dissertations, etc.
- Tips for paperwork responsibilities
- Job search skills
- Information about CEC’s programs, benefits, and services
• Help with resume’ building
• Encouragement for the student member to transition to a professional member using the Student 2 Professional Member Campaign
• Working as a member of a team (inclusive of parents)

SUPPPORT FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

MENTORS are provided with the following support system:
• Assistance from the Program coordinator to address questions, provide direction, intervene when there is a communication breakdown, etc.
• Specific written guidelines for mentors.
• Section on the CEC website created especially for mentors, mentees.
• A prepared list of tips and suggested topics for discussion.
• Monthly Information Sharing e-mails with suggestions and information to share if applicable to the particular mentoring relationship (prepared and sent by the coordinator).
• Access to the materials/resources from the IDEA partnership.
• A Information Sharing email for the Mentoring Program under the auspices of CEC where mentors can pose questions to other mentors; request assistance/suggestions from other mentors; and share ideas and tips.

MENTEES are provided with:
• Written guidelines for mentees.
• A listing of what may be offered to the mentees by the mentors during the mentoring process.
• On site assistance from the faculty advisor when there is a communication breakdown with the mentor

FACULTY ADVISORS are provided with:
• Access to the Program coordinator to investigate the break-down in communication.
• Written guidelines.
• Conference call once a year with CEC, the coordinator, and all participating faculty advisors

EVALUATION

• An evaluation of the Program is conducted annually.
• All participants are requested to participate.
• Different questions are prepared for each separate category of participants.
• The evaluation is conducted electronically using Survey Monkey.
• Each year the Program has been modified based on the feedback. No major modifications have been made, but the changes made have definitely defined and enhanced the operation of the Program.
  o Average response rate during the first six years: mentors (70.5%); mentees (52.5%); faculty advisors (91.5%); CEC staff (100%).
  o Average response to the question, “Has the Mentoring Program demonstrated that a Mentoring Program for student members of CEC been beneficial?“, mentors (94%); mentees (86%); faculty advisors (98%); and CEC staff (100%).

ANNUAL PROGRAM EVENT

Each year, there has been a social event held at the CEC convention for all of the Program’s participants who are attending the convention. Generally, it has been an early morning breakfast; however, this year it is a Social.

This event affords the majority of the mentors and mentees with an opportunity to meet personally for the first time and for mentors to meet other mentors and their respective faculty advisors. A general discussion of the year’s Program is conducted with suggestions for improvements requested.

RECRUITMENT/AWARENESS EFFORTS

Each issue of the Pioneers newsletter contains information about the Program with an invitation to become a mentor.

CEC TODAY has run a brief on the Program; the most recent being last summer.

With the assistance of the CEC Marketing team, several “briefs” about the Program were placed in “SmartBriefs” with contact information on how to become a mentor. This generated about 9 new mentors for the 2013-2014 Program.

The Pioneer representatives to the IDC have distributed mentor application forms. Two divisions (DVI and TED) have also included information on the Mentoring Program.

A program session at the 2010 convention (one of the Pioneers’ designated sessions) was devoted to the Mentoring Program. In 2011, there was another session offered at the convention regarding the Mentoring Program and the IDEA Partnership. In 2013 the Mentoring Program presented the results of a study of the program to the CEC Board of Directors. The CEC Board of Directors agreed to support/consider the results of the mentoring program study. At the 2014 convention in Philadelphia the Mentoring Program will present a poster session at the Student Forum, share recruitment information at the Faculty Advisors Round Table, and have information available on the “Take One” table located near CEC Central.