

Peer Education and Equity Programs Report – Academic Year 2022-2023

About PEEP

Peer Education and Equity Programs (PEEP) is a collective of peer mentor programs within the Division of Academic Affairs at CSU Channel Islands, a partnership between the Learning Community Program in High-impact Practices and Experiential Education (HIPEE) and Student Academic Success and Equity Initiatives (SASEI). Our common purpose is peers helping peers to navigate college transition, foster a sense of belonging, promote engagement in campus culture, empower peers to make use of campus resources that support student success, and build peer networks.

Our common goal is to close equity gaps by increasing academic student success and retention so that students can persist to timely graduation. All mentors participate in PEEP Training to develop a collective understanding of equity and inclusion, prepare them for designing and leading culturally responsive high impact learning experiences, and to realize their leadership potential to facilitate change in their communities at CSUCI and beyond.

Peer Education and Equity Programs currently hires, trains, and provides professional development across 3 HSI grants and 1 institutionalized program. A selection of (12) peer educators across teams were also awarded a scholarship because of their commitment to peer mentorship and peer education.

A total of 50 students held PEEP positions during the 2022-2023 academic year, some of whom held dual appointments within different programs. At the end of their employment or at the completion of the academic year, all PEEPs were asked to complete a PEEP impact survey. Thirty-one student responses were recorded (62% response rate). Questions focused on their confidence in the 13 PEEP leadership competencies and their overall experience in each of their positions. Any PEEP who worked one semester or more were invited to complete this survey. Student responses were only known by the PEEP Coordinator to ensure anonymity from staff providing lead work direction to students.

PEEP Demographics

At the end of the 2022-2023 academic year, the average GPA of a PEEP was 3. Ten PEEPs across all programming graduated at the end of Spring of 2023 and 6 more are anticipated to graduate at the end of Fall 2023. While many of the PEEP initiatives are not major specific, 60% of PEEPs are pursuing Bachelor of Science degrees, and 11 students are currently majoring in two disciplines.

PEEP Interventions

PEEPs were involved in a variety of work that was largely based on campus, but two groups of peer educators concentrated on conducting outreach in the Ventura County community. During

the academic year, PEEPs facilitated over 20 social events for mentees across programs and held weekly DIGs (Dolphin Interest Groups) and cohort workshops. Outreach teams presented CSUCI STEM resources at Ventura and Oxnard College to transfer students and participated in 3 community conferences at CSUCI. The University Culture Outreach team also introduced a Parent *Platicas* (Talks) series to parents at Oxnard high schools to promote college access and readiness for the whole family. PEEPs also helped support institutional efforts, like tabling and ushering for Admitted Dolphin Day and phone banking for enrollment campaigns to increase student retention or registration. Over the course of the academic year 873 students at CI were enrolled in one of three programs that had a PEEP peer educator.

PEEP Training

In collaboration with the Embedded Peer Mentor team from HIPEE (High Impact Practices and Experiential Education), SASEI (Student Academic Success and Equity Initiatives) provided professional development workshops to student employees in some of the following areas:

- High Impact Engagement Techniques
- CI Equity & Inclusive Excellence
- Facilitation Skills
- Community Building

Over 30 hours was spent training PEEPs in core training and individual programs areas to ensure adequate preparation for the academic semester. Throughout the academic year, PEEPs were trained in their individual roles and program specific requirements, which included tabling, peer mentoring, and outreach skills.

In their reflections about PEEP Training, the majority of students had positive experiences and shared they had gained increased knowledge in how to provide feedback, facilitate groups, and understanding their “why,” or the driving purpose of their mentorship role.

- *“I am more comfortable using facilitation tools and HIPETs, I know how to support the incoming PEEPs as they navigate their first year in the position, and I realize how much I have grown as a student and mentor in the past year.”*
- *“1) We are not just someone in between the professor and the students, we are a leader and a source of help and resources. 2) I really appreciate the program as a whole, I feel if I was enrolled sooner I would have done better as a student. 3) the tools and techniques I learned will undoubtedly help me in my future teaching career.”*
- *“It is important to know how to be a good facilitator, what resources are available to you as a mentor, and it is important to know your story and your “why”.”*

In addition to the training conducted in August 2022, PEEPs participated in 15 hours of professional development workshops throughout the Fall in Spring semesters. Workshops included resume building, LinkedIn profile review, and career exploration. PEEPs also participated in Career Launch, a program focused on demystifying networking and building

confidence for first-generation students in the professional world. To support the university's effort to help spread awareness about on campus resources, 15 PEEPs participated in a trip to the Santa Rosa Island Research Station to learn more about the work CI conducts to help restore and preserve the land.

PEEP Impact Survey

In the initial creation of PEEP, the following leadership competencies were developed that aimed to shape programming, training, and guide students in their work as peer educators.

1	Communicate effectively and appropriately with faculty, peers, professional staff, students, and the community.
2	Build relationships and collaborate with each other and with faculty, peers, professional staff, students, and the community as a team.
3	Understand and meet the diverse needs of ALL students through culturally relevant practices, reflecting our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion to serving historically and currently underserved students.
4	Assess why, how, when and where to utilize activities to engage students holistically (academically, socially, personally, professionally).
5	Model self-efficacy by maintaining self-care, academic performance, and personal and professional development.
6	Form effective work habits and take initiative.
7	Promote a culture of self-advocacy through connecting and referring students to university resources.
8	Learn and utilize technology to facilitate student engagement and learning.
9	Understand the boundaries of my role as a peer mentor.
10	Effectively share information and personal experiences.
11	Effectively facilitate discussions and reflections in groups of all sizes.
12	Understand barriers to higher education in the region and contribute to a collaborative movement to reduce barriers to student success.
13	Cultivate expectations for academic readiness and success for PEEPs target audience.

Of the 13 competencies, 70% of respondents felt most confident in the following statements:

- Understand barriers to higher education in the region and contribute to a collaborative movement to reduce barriers to student success.
- Understand the boundaries of my role as a peer mentor.

Twenty-eight PEEP respondents (90%) felt Confident or Very Confident for every competency. The following chart displays students' responses regarding involvement in their work

experiences during their time in PEEP, which was largely positive in impacting their own experiences at Channel Islands.

#	Question	Strongly Agree		Somewhat Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Strongly Disagree
1	I felt supported as a peer mentor within my role at PEEP.	80.65%	25	19.35%	6	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
2	I believe my mentees felt supported by my mentorship and PEEP programming.	61.29%	19	25.81%	8	12.90%	4	0.00%	0	0.00%
3	The PEEP Program made me feel a sense of belonging on campus.	90.32%	28	9.68%	3	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
4	I felt supported by my supervisor/person providing me lead work direction.	96.77%	30	3.23%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
5	I learned professional development skills during my time with PEEP that I will use after I graduate from CSUCI.	93.33%	28	6.67%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

In addition to rating their experiences, PEEPs were also asked to provide examples or reflections about their work with faculty, fellow student staff, and their mentee experiences. They were asked if they had highlights or challenges with faculty, peers, community members and their mentees. Throughout the narratives, students often expressed similar sentiments in both their positive experiences and challenges they faced in their respective roles.

Working with Faculty	
Highlights	Challenge
"One of the highlights I had with a faculty member was that even though I was working and assisting them during our session. They would also include me as a student, not only as a peer mentor. They would give me advice and improved my overall image of professors."	"One challenge I had with a faculty was not having great communication with them."

Working with Community Members	
Highlights	Challenge
"When doing tabling for a local middle school in Oxnard we engaged with a parent that reminded me of my parent and how engaged they were with the information we provided and them saying they were grateful for us coming out made it feel really rewarding."	"Keeping them engaged was a little challenging..."

Working with Peers	
Highlights	Challenge

“One highlight I had with a fellow peer mentor during my time working as a PEEP was that they were incredibly supportive, informative, and had an overall positive attitude when I was confused or just working together.”	“During my time there, the only issue I had was with a co-worker on my team... towards the end of the semester I felt tired and burned out.”
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Working with Mentees	
Highlights	Challenge
“Last fall during our last CIMAS session, we all sat down and shared our ‘why.’ Given the time we had already spent together, everyone shared a heartfelt and honest answer. To me, it was a moment where we all got to truly connect.”	“I think mentees can sometimes get too personal...so, I do my best to point them to the right resources.”

The final question asked to students was to provide a narrative about their overall experience working as a PEEP. Many used common phrasings like “it was great,” “it was positive,” and felt that they had learned skills in their positions that they could use in their professional roles after graduating from CSUCI. A few also highlighted their increased sense of belonging on campus or within the PEEP group after not having many opportunities to connect with students post COVID. Students also highlighted support from their supervisors or other members of their teams as support systems as they navigated new areas of their academic or professional careers. They felt an increased awareness of opportunities and exposure to experiences through their involvement on campus that they may not have had otherwise. One PEEP reflection stands out as a representative of many of the responses received:

“I enjoyed working as a PEEP. After taking classes away from campus for more than a year, because of the pandemic, coming back and finding a place where I felt like I belonged felt pretty difficult. However, working as a PEEP introduced me to many nice and fun people who enjoy their job. Through this position, I also learned a lot of valuable skills such as how to facilitate workshops and discussions, how to use Microsoft, take part in event planning logistics and more.”