

# Student Life Peer Mentorship Programme



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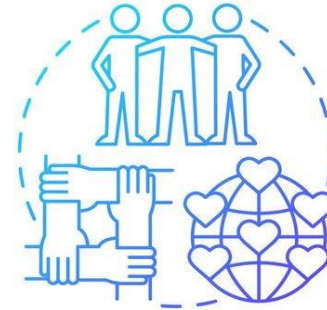
*Inspiring excellence, transforming lives  
through quality, impact, and care.*

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# Sense of Belonging

- In a university space, a sense of belonging refers to the feeling of being accepted, valued, and connected to the university community.
- It encompasses a student's perception of social support, connectedness, and the experience of mattering to the institution and its members.
- This sense of belonging is crucial for student well-being, academic success, and overall university experience



SENSE OF  
BELONGING

# Introduction

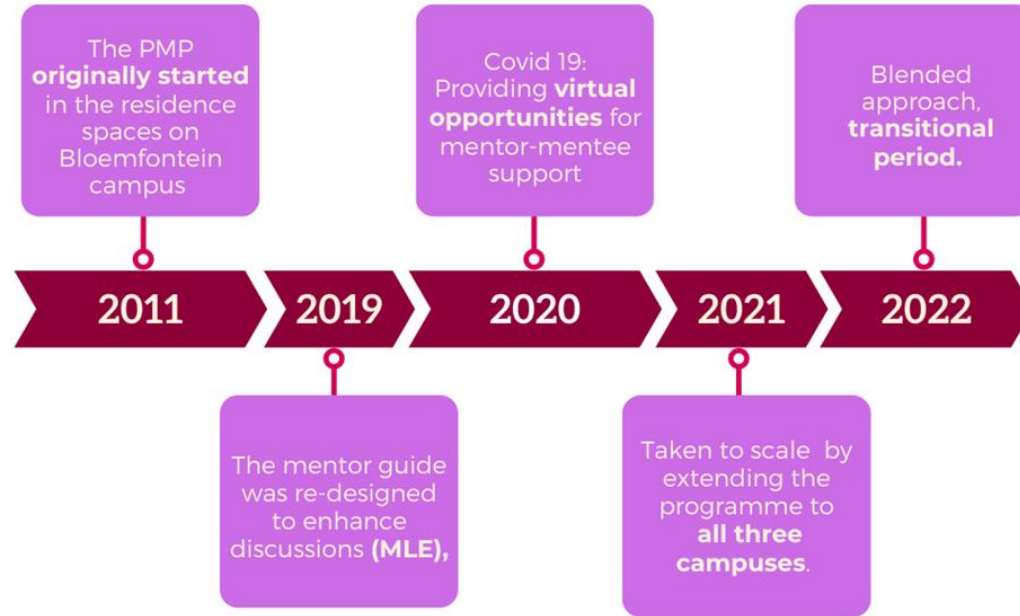
- The goal of the Peer Mentor programme is to assist **first-time entry students** with their **transition to higher education**. Peer Mentors are trained senior undergraduate students who assist to create an **enabling environment** oriented toward the support and encouragement of individual **student growth** and **development**.
- The aim of this presentation is to shed light on how the peer mentorship program influences student success.

# A Brief Overview of the Programme

- Aims to increase **student wellbeing** through **mentorship**
- The goal is to create an **enabling environment** that supports and encourages **growth and development**.
- An enabling environment **facilitates** supportive and informative relationships and serves as a **safety net** for our **Mentors and Mentees**.
- The Programme aims to inspire students to become individuals of **good character** who are **mentally and emotionally** equipped for their university careers and the world of work.
- Moreover, it focuses on fostering a **sense of belonging** by assisting with **social integration**.

# A Brief Overview of the Programme

## The Past and Present of the Peer Mentor Programme



# Overview of the programme Progress and Growth

Campus	Number of Mentors
Bloemfontein campus	527
South campus	25
Qwaqwa	127
Total	679

# A Brief Overview of the Programme

## Mediated Learning Experience

- The theory of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) was developed by **Professor Reuven Feuerstein** and forms the **foundation** of creating an **enabling environment**.
- MLE positions the Peer Mentor as a **mediated agent** who **selects ideal stimuli** to guide their Mentee to growth.
- Peer Mentorship is facilitated by way of **10 themed discussions** aligned with the **12 MLE parameters**.
- Mentors facilitate **interactions** mentees have with the environment to **aid** in the development of **independence** and **social integration**

# The 12 MLE Parameters



**Intentionality and Reciprocity**



**Meaning**



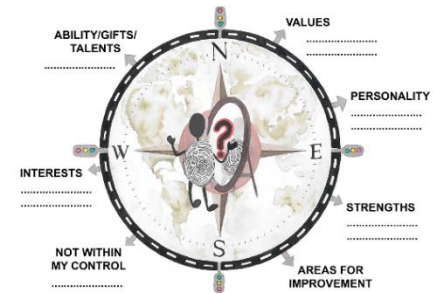
**Transcendence**



**Goal setting**



**Entity of change**

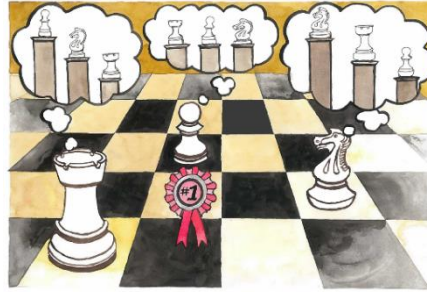


**Individuation**





**Optimistic Alternative**



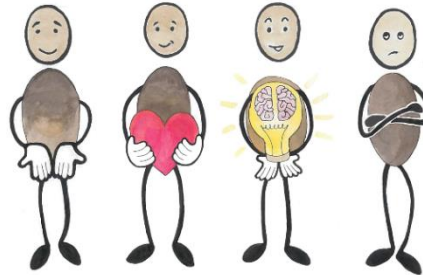
**Feeling of competence**



**Challenge**



**Self-Regulation**



**Sharing behaviour**



**Sense of belonging**

# Student Feedback and Data

**Data are frequently collected from both the Mentors and the Mentees:**

- ✓ **Theme Evaluations:** After each themed discussion, the mentees and the mentors complete a survey to provide feedback on that specific theme.
- ✓ **Theme Attendance Report:** Provide us with an overview of how many students are actively participating in the programme.
- ✓ **Focus groups:** Focus groups are held at the end of the year in order to obtain rich, in-depth descriptions of the student's experiences within the programme.
- ✓ **MLE Training:** Semester reflections

# Theme Evaluations: What worked well in the Themed Discussions?

"I adopted the different approach that I took for the previous theme where I began the discussion with a video and instead of having a question-and-answer type of discussion engaged in conversation. This made my mentees more expressive". (Theme 7, mentor)

"This theme is most relatable to our daily lives, so it was much easier and fun to do" (Theme 9)

"Everything! My mentees feel positive and believe they matter. They can wear their confidence and are positive about taking bold steps in their lives (Theme 2)"

Everyone provided their own perspectives on the theme itself and I think this forced people to truly reflect on themselves in terms of what success means to them together with the importance of perseverance. (Theme 5, mentee)

"Us as mentees engaging in a discussion board with each other with our mentor. Who also engages with us helps to broaden our views which made this session work well. (Theme 5, mentee)"

"Where I have applied to embrace the challenge in my past life. Personally, I often cower when it comes to conquering challenges I've never faced before. (Theme 7, mentee) "

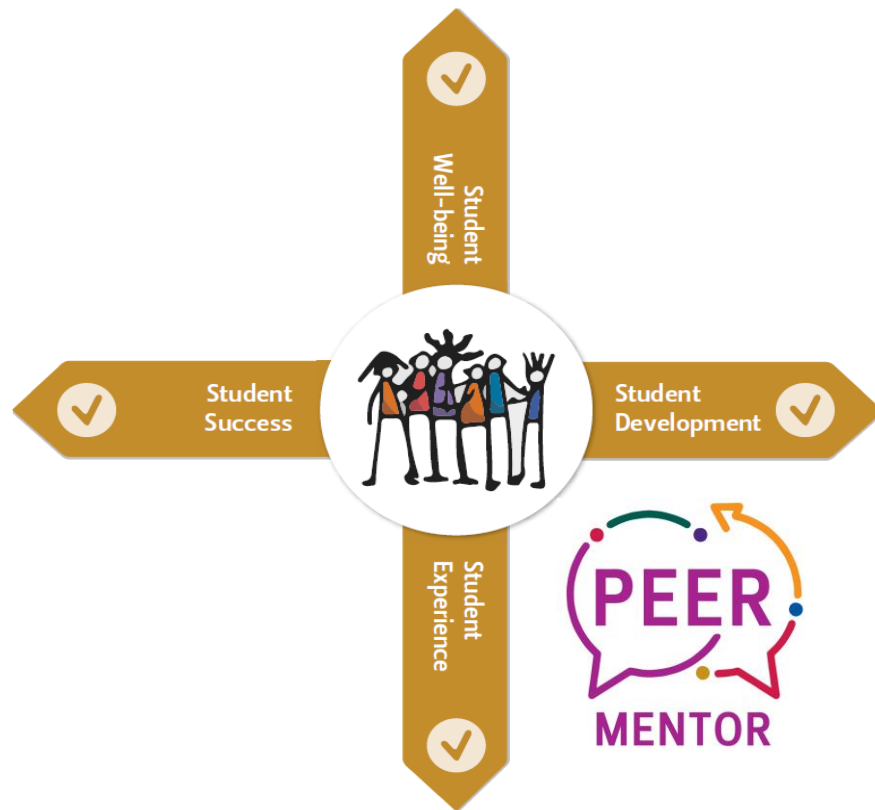
# Key Focus Areas

- **Student Development**

Focuses on creating experiences through various co-curricular programmes that will help develop **graduate attributes, employability** and **entrepreneurship**.

- **Student Experience**

Seeks to promote a **culture of care** and a **sense of belonging** through **strengthening** the **social systems** embedded in the college communities and broader student communities.



# How is a sense of belonging fostered:

- At the core of the programme is the intentional formation of meaningful, supportive relationships between senior student mentors and their assigned mentees.
- These relationships create an immediate point of connection within the university, reducing feelings of isolation and disorientation.
- Mentors serve not merely as guides but as trusted peers who model success, share knowledge, and offer emotional support.



# How is a sense of belonging fostered:

- The programme's ten themed discussions offer a structured platform for shared learning and dialogue.
- These discussions provide opportunities for students to explore common experiences, navigate challenges collectively, and celebrate growth in a peer-supported space.
- This collective engagement fosters a sense of community, solidarity, and shared identity among mentees, reinforcing their belonging within the group and the institution at large.



# Questions?



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# Thank you

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