

Department of Environmental Science and Studies to Launch Peer-Peer Mentoring Programs

The DePaul Department of Environmental Science and Studies was awarded funding this past spring through the Vincentian Endowment Fund and a Diversity and Inclusion Initiative Grant to pilot a peer-peer mentoring program at both the undergraduate and graduate level. For undergraduates, the program will offer every incoming freshman in the ENV department the opportunity to be paired with an upperclassman who will provide one-on-one guidance in navigating their academic career. Throughout the year, the program will also provide networking opportunities, guest speakers from various fields, and environmental education days centered on topics of social and environmental justice. The pilot cohort of mentors will be comprised of students who are underrepresented in STEM according to identity categories such as their race, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Underscoring a commitment to DePaul's diversity, equity, and inclusivity principles, a primary goal of this initiative is to ensure economic barriers to participation are addressed. Given that the undergraduate mentors will be providing their time and experience, they will be awarded quarterly stipends in recognition of their efforts.

At the graduate level, first year master's candidates will be paired up with second year students to increase resource sharing, cross-pollination of research practices, and support during the transition into graduate school. Graduate students in the program will also be asked to be available to undergraduates in the peer-peer mentoring program for both quarterly small group meetings and some community-focused programming to act as a resource for undergraduate students looking into potential directions to take after graduation. Both programs will launch in Autumn Quarter of 2021.