

ACCESS MENTOR

Application Packet

2004-2005

If you have knowledge, let others light
their candles of it. – Margaret Fuller

Howdy!

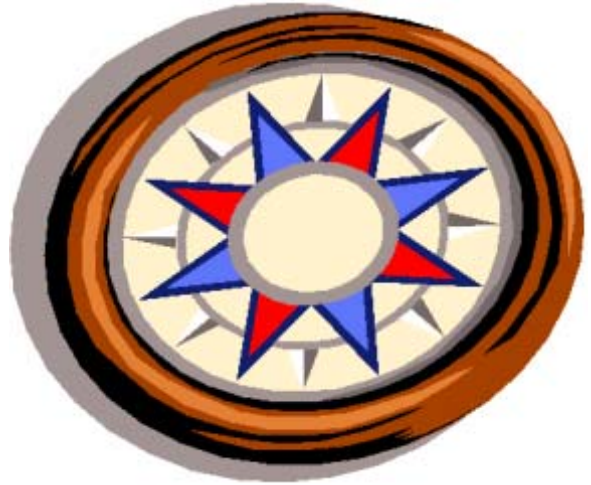
On behalf of the freshmen and mentors in the Aggie Access learning communities, thank you for your interest in becoming an Access Mentor. The Aggie Access staff is looking forward to a year filled with memorable and enriching experiences, and we need your assistance to create the best learning community experience possible for our freshmen, mentors, faculty, namesake mentors, and parents in the coming year.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the Access Mentor application, a copy of the Recommendation Form, and information about what it means to be a part of Aggie Access learning communities as an Access Mentor.

Who are the Access Mentors?

An Access Mentor, a.k.a. one of the FAM or Fabulous Access Mentors, is a student leader who volunteers his or her time, energy, emotions, and enthusiasm to create a welcoming and enriching learning community for the freshmen and their families in the Texas Aggie Access Program. An Access Mentor willingly serves many roles for the learning community: role model, friend, host, older sibling, representative, tutor, study group leader, team leader, team builder, communicator – a mentor in a variety of ways and over time. Primarily, Access Mentors show freshmen, parents, faculty and staff that they care about what happens to each student and the learning community as a whole.

This commitment is a serious and important one. Please thoughtfully consider the time and effort that will be demanded by this activity. If you have any questions about the time required or commitment level needed to be a successful Access Mentor after reading through this packet, please contact the Access staff to discuss your concerns.



Come to the edge,
He said.
They said: We are afraid.
Come to the edge
He said.
They came.
He pushed them, and
they flew...

– Guillaume Apollinaire

**APPLICATIONS
ARE DUE BY
FEBRUARY 3
AT 214 FP&C**

Fabulous Access Mentors
Texas Aggie Access Program
<http://aggieaccess.tamu.edu>
979-845-5916
General Academic Programs
214 FP&C
Texas A&M University
4247 TAMU
College Station TX
77843-4247

Access Mentors highlight what they love about Access:



...being in an organization that cares about you and being surrounded by people that share.
– Michelle Weichert '05

Both the great people who are in this program and those who are leading it. This program can be as great as you make it. Take advantage of it.
– Ryan McMillan '06

We cannot hold a torch to
light another's path
without brightening our
own.

– Ben Sweetland

Mentor Selection Dates

Mentor Information Sessions:

Thursday, Jan 22 nd	5:00-6:00 PM
Friday, Jan 23 rd	12:30-1:30 PM
Tuesday, Jan 27 th	5:00-6:00 PM

Applications Due: Feb. 3rd

Interviews: Feb. 6th

Group Process: Feb. 7th

Notifications: Feb. 12th

Training classes
begin the week of Feb. 16th

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Selection Process

- Applications and Recommendation Forms are due February 3, 2004 at 5:00 PM in the Access Office, 214 Facilities Planning and Construction Building (General Academic Programs, on the corner of Asbury and University).
- When you turn in your completed application, you will schedule a 15-20 minute individual interview. Every applicant will be granted an individual interview.
- If you are selected to proceed to the second round, you will be scheduled at the time of your interview to participate in a one-hour group interview.
- Your photograph will be taken at your individual interview so that interviewers will be able to recognize you during the group process the following day.
- The criteria for selection as an Access Mentor includes your application, your interviews, your personal qualifications, and a sincere interest and commitment to being a part of the lives of Access freshmen and their families.
- At the conclusion of the interview phase, result letters will be available.
- Students who receive an acceptance letter must complete the Access Mentor training successfully to become an Access Mentor. Training will be scheduled as a weekly non-credit class over a period of 12 weeks (several sections will be available, be sure to indicate your preferred times on your application). Only after successful completion of training will students be eligible to take the title of Access Mentor.
- Returning Access Mentors will complete the standard application AND proceed through the selection process as outlined above.



It gives students extra help and extra guidance from people who have experienced the freshman year.

– Patrick Hebert '06



How are Access Mentors involved in Aggie Access?

Access Mentors commit to serve as mentors for a full year because Aggie Access provides a full year program for the freshmen. This is a rigorous year-round commitment. It is a commitment that will challenge each person to reach beyond what she or he has previously done, previously known, and previously experienced to create the best possible learning community experience for the year. This commitment can bring a mentor rewarding friendships, practical experiences, and immeasurable satisfaction.

Access Mentors commit to fill the following roles during the mentoring year.

- Be a Mentor – initiate a mentor relationship with each of your freshmen, get to know each freshman, help freshmen adjust to Texas A&M and to make their own decisions
- Be a Host or Hostess for New Student Conference lunches and all Access events – prepare materials for events, set up and clean up event sites, greet guests, initiate conversations, befriend the shy
- Be a Discussion Leader – keep conversations on topic and lead discussions at Community Retreats or other Access events
- Be an Older Sibling – each mentor will be assigned to five freshmen and should pay particular attention to them to provide guidance or reassure them as they grow throughout the freshman year (summer to summer), comfort them when they cry, celebrate their successes
- Be a Partner – work with another Access Mentor in planning and leading house events for ten freshmen, communicate regularly and work together
- Be a Learning Community Member – lead to shape community experiences and participate fully when others are leading, contribute your skills, insights, and enthusiasm
- Be a Role Model – uphold the values of academic integrity, community service, respect for diversity, life-long learning, and civility in the Access classrooms and beyond
- Be an Academic Leader – be a study partner, tutor, study group leader, or Supplemental Instruction leader for Access and non-Access courses
- Be a Committee Member or Chair – plan and execute a special project, program, or event for the learning community, get freshmen involved on committees or in projects
- Be a Team Builder, team member and team leader – break the ice, build bonds, participate fully, lead
- Be a Leader – serve the community, lead by example, challenge yourself and others, hold each other accountable

Access Mentors highlight what they love about Access:

UNLOCK THE
FUTURE
with AGGIE
ACCESS



Access Dinner: held monthly, usually between 5:30-7:30 during the week, these dinners are hosted by each community. Hosting mentors are expected to help with set up and tear down for the event. All mentors are expected to attend these dinners in order to connect with freshman and namesakes.

Community Meeting: held bi-monthly, the community meeting is an opportunity for mentors in each community to gather in order to plan community-wide events, touch base on how the freshman are doing in the community, and share ideas with each other.

Community Retreat: held during Gig 'Em Week: Aggieland's Week of Welcome, an event to welcome and introduce all freshmen, mentors, namesakes, and faculty to one of the three communities. Attendance is mandatory – failure to attend may result in cancellation of membership.

Freshman Correspondence: Staying in touch with your freshmen is a very important aspect of being a mentor. Correspondence includes calling, email, IM, and in-person contact. Ideally, you should connect with all of your freshmen in some way every week.

House Welcome: an event scheduled during the first two weeks of the Fall semester to discuss the Summer reading with the group and namesake; may be a lunch, dinner, etc.

A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go but ought to be.

– Rosalynn Carter

Access Mentor Responsibilities

Access Mentors must

- Represent the Texas Aggie Access Program well and serve the mission of the learning community program
- Fulfill all program requirements as set forth by Access Mentor guidelines
- Attend required meetings and programs in their entirety
- Attend community, house, and additional training meetings as needed
- Attend at least four New Student Conference lunches
- Pay \$20 dues per year (payable by DATE). Dues help defray the cost of providing programs to individual houses or communities as well as underwrite any awards, organizational fees, and operating costs for the mentor group.
- Purchase an Access T-shirt (usually \$10) to wear at Community Retreats
- Authorize the Aggie Access advisors to check a mentor's grades each semester that the student is active as a mentor.
- Maintain a 2.0 GPR (current and cumulative) and remain in good standing at Texas A&M.
- Accept possible dismissal from the Access Mentors for having more than three unexcused absences or failing to comply with any of the previous responsibilities.

Required Meetings and Programs

Access Mentors must fulfill all training and program requirements to be recognized and listed as an Access Mentor.

Access Mentors participate in programs for freshman transition, academic development, mentor leadership development, and optional undergraduate experience activities. *Do not be overwhelmed by the list of programs* [in the sidebars on these pages]; the programs when woven together create a complete learning community experience for all participants.

A typical month includes one house event, one community event, two mentor meetings, and one all-Access program event in addition to any weekly study or optional activity commitments.

...the many wonderful friends that I have made. Everyone is GREAT!! The Access staff are wonderful people. The small classes are helpful and last, but not least, Access has the best dinners.

– John Jambers '06



You meet all sorts of different people.

– Kristen Atnipp'06

Remember, we all stumble, every one of us. That's why it's a comfort to go hand in hand. -- Emily Kimbrough

In an average week, mentors will need to set aside 4 hours per week to accommodate their commitments – 2 hours for freshman contact (a dedicated forum online meeting, e-mail, IM, phone calls, one-on-ones, or a house event), 1 hour for study or an academic event, and 1 hour for projects, committees, or preparation time for an upcoming week's program. Mentors may choose to spend more time on Access-related commitments, but four hours should be considered the minimum necessary each week to meet mentoring responsibilities.

Some months are more intense. Every mentor should expect to spend a concentrated amount of time on Access preparation and programming in the months of April and May (New Student Conference preparation, freshman contacts, T-shirt and planner preparations, etc.) and August and September (Community Retreats, Convocation Brunch, Gig 'Em Week, Freshman Move-in, and Community and House events during the first week of classes). *Mentors must be available to dedicate their time to Access-related activities during the entire week prior to fall semester (Gig 'Em Week); if you are interested in being a mentor, but are participating in other activities that may conflict during that week in particular, please discuss this with the staff during your interview.*

What is the Texas Aggie Access Program?

As Texas A&M's only multidisciplinary learning community with a strong living/learning component, the Texas Aggie Access Program provides a premier learning community experience to a limited number of students. The Texas Aggie Access Program began in 1999 as a clustered registration program but has blossomed in the last three years into a multidisciplinary learning community system for freshmen.

Freshmen are invited to apply for Aggie Access during the Spring prior to enrolling at Texas A&M if they meet any of a number of criteria: a small public high school class (less than 100 graduating), a high SAT/ACT score with a lower high school class rank, a lower SAT/ACT score with a higher high school class rank, participation in Upward Bound or Outreach programs during high school, graduation from a Century Scholar high school, or

Mentor Retreats: Usually taking place before the Community Retreats, the Mentor retreats are typically a one-day excursion to reconnect with fellow mentors, rejuvenate for the upcoming year, and to prepare for the Community Retreats or summer conferences.

Mentor Training: Training is an on-going process for Access mentors. There will be a 12-week training class for new mentors in the Spring semester, as well as training sessions in the Summer and following the Winter break. Additionally, mentors will be required to attend in-services during the semester. All training is mandatory.

Namesake Greeting: an individual visit by the partners to the Namesake to welcome the Namesake Mentor and to begin planning for the house. Monthly visits are advised.

NSC Welcome Lunch: Mentors are expected to help with set up and tear down for these lunches, as well as to talk with the new freshmen and their parents during lunch. This is often the first time that mentors will have the opportunity to meet their freshmen.

Regularly Scheduled Mentor Meetings: After conclusion of training, mentors will meet biweekly during Fall and Spring semesters. One meeting is a combined community teams and all mentors meeting; the other will be either a training inservice or a one-on-one with the mentor advisor. Officers for mentors will meet weekly.



The people here are awesome. Every single one wants to help and would bend over backwards for the Access freshmen any day.
– Melanie Towery '06

You have to count on living every single day in a way you believe will make you feel good about your life.

– Jane Seymour

participation in Aggie varsity sports as a student-athlete. All students in Aggie Access are fully admitted to Texas A&M. Students in the Colleges of Engineering and Architecture are not eligible to participate in Access because of the cohort-based curricula of their majors. Each freshman receives the benefit of enrolling in two small sections of core curriculum courses each semester plus CAEN 101 during the fall; mentors may take one Access class each semester if they are in good standing with Access. These courses are just as rigorous as courses taught in the larger sections (if not more so, because students and faculty alike know each other and must contribute fully).

As a learning community system, Aggie Access promotes more one-on-one interaction with faculty, collaboration among faculty students and advisors for academic success, development of academic communication skills, and easing the first-year transition both academically and socially. Aggie Access seeks to create a bond between the student and the campus, foster a sense of belonging and adaptation to the campus, retain the student at Texas A&M, and reinforce the commitment to graduate from Texas A&M. Additionally, Access provides opportunities to be lifelong learners through participation in academic inquiry, leadership and citizenship development, diversity awareness, and community service. Access Mentors assist Access Staff and faculty in creating the full learning community experience while enjoying it themselves.

In simplest terms,
a leader is one
who knows
where he
wants to go,
and gets up,
and goes.

– John Erksine

ACCESS
MENTORS
unlock the
future

APPLICATIONS
DUE FEBRUARY 3rd

Texas Aggie Access Program Lexicon

Access a.k.a. Aggie Access: A learning community program including students from all colleges, except engineering and architecture, at Texas A&M University. Over 750 students have participated in Access since 1999. In 2003-2004, the learning communities include 167 freshmen, 40 mentors, 18 namesakes, and 25 faculty members.

Access Creativity: Opportunities to engage the creative side such as designing Web pages, painting overalls, creating scrapbooks, stamping, or learning how to do other hands-on creative work.

Access Excursion: An opportunity to visit a museum, park, exhibit, concert hall, or other special educational event with Aggie Access, usually involving a full-day trip to a major Texas city.

Access Forum: Electronic home base for Access that provides discussion, private messaging, scrapbooks and an event calendar for program participants from the freshman year forward. Any Access student from 1999C to the present may register to use the forum at <http://aggieaccess.tamu.edu/forum/>.

Access Mentor: Sophomore, junior, and senior students, many of whom were previously freshmen in Access, who volunteer their time to lead and organize activities for Access students.

Access Open Study Hours: An opportunity to meet with others for quiet study. This is required for Access students on scholastic probation, but open to all.

Access Planet: Newsletter for the learning community program that contains student or mentor reports on events and provides timely information on upcoming opportunities.

Access Service: Opportunities to give back to the community as part of Aggie Access; past service projects included assisting the Aggie Moms' Boutique, a Habitat for Humanity homebuilding efforts, canned food drives, a clothes for kids drive, or corresponding with patients or military personnel.

Committees: Opportunities to participate in planning and executing a service project, event, or publication.

Community Retreat: Taking place during Gig 'Em Week, an event to welcome and introduce all freshmen, mentors, namesakes, and faculty to one of the communities. Attendance is mandatory – failure to attend may result in cancellation of membership in Access.

Community: A collection of five houses including 50 freshmen, 10 FAM, and their associated namesake mentors. A community may gather for community-only events, host an event, or act as a team at competitive events. Each Access Community bears the name of a historical figure who contributed to the shaping of Texas A&M University.

House: Small group of 10 freshmen, led by two or more FAM, that gathers for social or academic activities; each House goes by the name of a namesake mentor.

Namesake Mentor: House namesakes are campus faculty or staff (nominated by students) who agree to participate in the learning community as mentors for the year. Namesakes are invited to participate in Access and House activities and develop relationships with freshmen.

Study Group: An informal gathering of students who are enrolled in the same Access or non-Access course. Students provide mutual support in their academic endeavors for that course.