Peer Mentorship Provides Experienced Guidance for First-Year Students

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Peer Mentorship Provides Experienced Guidance for First-Year Students

As a Peer Mentor, Emily Parratt helps freshmen navigate their first year at RWU

Emily Parratt shows her first-year student mentees the features of the RWU library while on a campus tour before the start of the fall semester. Image Credit: Justin Wilder

November 29, 2017 | Jill Rodrigues ’05 & Justin Wilder

BRISTOL, R.I. – Although it’s her senior year, Emily Parratt spent the beginning of the fall semester reliving her first freshman days on campus. But this time she was on the flip side of the coin – as a Peer Mentor dedicated to welcoming and helping this year’s new crop of Hawks navigate college life.

To assist with the transition to life at RWU, every freshman and new transfer student is paired with a Peer Mentor. As one of 60 Peer Mentors on campus, Parratt, a psychology and American studies double major, serves as a resource for her mentees throughout their freshman year on a range of topics. They are able to contact her as much as they need for help with registering for classes, roommate challenges and homesickness, or how to approach a professor to request more assistance, among other things.
Knowing that the first year on campus can be a difficult transition, the Center for Student Academic Success (CSAS) proactively prepares new students to face any challenges with resources, support and the guidance of an experienced and trained Peer Mentor.

“Because that first year is the most dynamic for new students, we want to make sure we provide all of the resources and opportunities to navigate that first year with success, and that includes having the mentorship of a peer who has been through all of this,” says Elizabeth Niemeyer, senior retention advisor for CSAS, a campus hub of various academic support services.

On the day before classes start, Parratt greeted her cohort of 25 peer mentees and toured them around campus to familiarize the newcomers to where they will find their classes, the best study spots, and how to print copies in the library (apparently, the bane of many freshmen until they learn the process).

“I remember feeling a little lost during my first days, walking around campus and being responsible for myself,” said Parratt, a native of Derby, Conn. “It was really comforting to know I had someone I could reach out to, that if I had a question I didn’t have an answer to, there was someone I could ask.”

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