Huskie Service Scholars
Handbook

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Huskie Service Scholars Overview

What is the Huskie Service Scholars Program?

Huskie Service Scholars (HSS) is a program in which eligible freshmen and first-year transfer students connect through a supportive peer network and engage in weekly service activities on-campus and in the community. The program aims to provide support to first generation college students or Pell Grant eligible students. Students work in teams at different campus partner sites and meet monthly during cohort meetings geared toward professional development and academic resources. Each team is led by a Peer Mentor who facilitates additional team meetings and group reflections on their service experience.

Program Objectives

1. You will expand and deepen your knowledge of global and local issues as well as the strengths, assets, and needs of the local community you serve.
2. You will develop a deeper understanding of civic engagement and indicate a sense of the importance of personal responsibility to the common good.
3. You will develop reasoned solutions to social issues and community problems.
4. You will engage in reflective practice for the purpose of continuous learning and improvement, identifying lessons learned, strengths, and ways to improve.

Program Vocabulary

Fellow - 1st year HSS participant
Peer Mentor – an upperclassman student of the team (1 per team)
Site Supervisor – a NIU staff member of a campus unit (1 per team)

Students with Disabilities

If you need an accommodation for this program, please contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible.
The DRC coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities. It is located on the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 (V) or drc@niu.edu.
Also, please contact the OSEEL supervisor and HSS Cohort Coordinator, privately as soon as possible so we can discuss your accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs, the sooner we can assist you in achieving your goals in this program.
Expectations and Responsibilities

Student Eligibility - You must meet the following qualifications

1. Be a first semester freshmen or first year transfer student at NIU.
2. Qualify as a first generation college student OR be eligible for the federal Pell Grant.
3. Enrolled as a full time NIU student
4. Have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher.
5. Earn a passing grade in a minimum of 12 credit hours each semester of the program.
6. Remain in good academic standing and judicial university standing at all times.

*Failure to maintain these eligibility requirements will result in immediate termination from the program, tuition waiver will be revoked and you will not be reinstated into the HSS program.

Responsibilities

1. Actively participate in the HSS program and its entirety throughout the Fall and Spring semesters
2. Participate in mandatory monthly HSS Cohort meetings
3. Participate in weekly team meetings with Peer Mentor
4. Participate in bi-weekly meetings with Site Supervisor
5. Engage in weekly service hours at campus partner site
6. Volunteer and complete a minimum of 150 hours (75 in the fall and 75 in the spring) of on-site service through the academic year
7. Participate in all mandatory events (given at the first meeting)
8. Complete all mandatory personal reflection journal entries, group reflection presentations, and actively participate in reflective activities during cohort meetings
9. Properly record service hours and submit service logs to Site Supervisor every two weeks
10. Participate in required Professional Development workshops (Jobs PLUS, Diversity Dialogue, Leadership Academy)
11. Complete program evaluation survey at the end of the year
12. Submit HSS experience for Engage PLUS credit
13. *Peer mentors ONLY- In addition to those listed above peer mentors have additional responsibilities, which can be counted towards the requirement of 150 hours.
Attendance and Participation

Attendance is taken at every Huskie Service Scholars cohort meeting, due to the importance of the information discussed. If you cannot attend one of the meetings due to a conflict or illness, contact the HSS Cohort Coordinator at least a day in advance. If you do not contact the HSS Cohort Coordinator prior to your absence, your absence will be unexcused. Each unexcused absence will result in a 5% tuition waiver deduction (student is responsible for any late fees associated with this process). If you have more than three (3) unexcused absences from meetings or events, you will be released from the program.

Active participation in the program is equally important and therefore it is critical that you regularly update your service hours and complete reflections. All HSS are required to complete at least 150 hours (75 in the fall and 75 in the spring) of on-site service through the academic year.

Failure to reach 75 hours by the end of January will result in a 5% deduction of tuition waiver and consideration for removal from the program. Failure to submit proof of 150 hours of service by June 1st will result in the termination from the program and the last installment of the tuition waiver ($600) will be debited to their bursars account.

Time Commitment

Being a Huskie Service Scholar is an investment into your future as a college graduate and active citizen. You are expected to set aside at least 5-10 hours per week for your HSS program responsibilities. You should also be prepared to set aside time to attend the monthly cohort meetings, meetings with your peer mentor and site supervisor, and mandatory events.

What Students Can Do to Complete Their Hours Requirement

All activities related to the Huskie Service Scholars Program will fall under one of three categories: service, mentoring, or training. Hours within these areas will count towards the total requirement of hours.

Ex. Peer Mentor attends a 1-hour peer mentor training = 1 training hour
Ex. Fellow works at STEM Outreach for 4 hours on Monday afternoon = 4 service hours
Ex. Peer Mentor meets with a Fellow for 2 hours = 2 mentoring hours

Expectations for Peer Mentors:
- 50% Service
- 40% Mentoring
- 10% Training

Expectations for Fellows:
- 100% Service on campus or community site

These percentages are simply guidelines, not strict requirements.
Community Engagement Showcase Project

All Huskie Service Scholars will participate in the annual Community Engagement Showcase (CES). This event provides you with an opportunity to present the results of your team’s community-engagement project completed during the academic year. Our monthly cohort meetings are designed to provide you with all of the necessary skills to successfully propose, complete, and present your team’s CES project. Eligible projects must be completed during the current academic year and clearly state: (1) description of the social topic and community partner, (2) project objectives and implementation, and (3) critical reflection and conclusion. CES participants will be judged based on presentation skills, clarity, and design of their chosen presentation format.

Compensation

Students involved in the HSS program will receive a partial tuition waiver in the amount of $1,200. This tuition waiver is only available for one year and is not renewable. The tuition waiver will be distributed in two equal amounts ($600 in the Fall and $600 in the Spring) each semester.

*Please note that in the event of deductions to the tuition waiver, you are responsible for any outstanding balance in your bursar’s account.

Professionalism

You are expected to remain unbiased, unprejudiced and open in an environment that will strengthen the social and professional support system and knowledge base of the HSS cohort and team.

You are expected to maintain a professional manner whenever representing the HSS program. Professionalism should extend into sending emails to faculty, students, staff, etc. No inappropriate behavior will be tolerated.

Engage PLUS

Engage PLUS allows you to earn a notation on your transcript, which your future employers will appreciate. Working with a faculty or staff mentor, you’ll create an experience unique to your interests and goals that blends your classroom concepts with “real-world” scenarios and opportunities. Learn more at go.niu.edu/plus

Recording Your Hours

You will be responsible for submitting a bi-monthly service log (see below) to your Site Supervisor. All hours of on-site service dedicated to HSS will be recorded on the day indicated. In the description portion, give a detailed description of what kind of the service you did. In the verification column, you need to list the name and phone number or email of a contact person at the site of service. Email your Service Log to your Site Supervisor for approval/ verification. The Cohort Coordinator will keep track of your progress on the required hours of service.

*Peer Mentors ONLY- Peer mentors can count responsibilities towards the 150 hours program requirement in the time sheets.
Huskie Service Scholars
Service Hours Log

Student’s Name: ___________________  Z id: _______________________
Site Supervisor: ____________________  Time period recorded: ______________

Please record your hours on this sheet and turn them in every 2 weeks.

<table>
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<th>Day</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Verification Contact email/phone</th>
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Total Hours: _______________________

SITE SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE: ____________________  DATE: ______________