Why was this Program Created?
The University of Alberta is one of the U15 group of universities; an organization of Canada’s largest research-intensive universities. The University of Alberta has over 200 undergraduate programs, over 30,000 undergraduate students with approximately 300 of these undertaking a major or minor in sociology.

The average class size for many introductory sociology courses is often quite large. In large class sizes sometimes problems can arise where students feel they are not able to ask questions because they are too shy. Also, with so many students in a classroom it is hard for the professor to focus attention on everyone. Furthermore, many students find it hard to make new friends when they only have the first 10 minutes of class to make a connection. Beyond class size, the University, future careers, and graduate school, can be opaque to undergraduate students who might benefit from the advice of a more experienced individual with knowledge of how to navigate these decisions.

Given that these issues exist, the Sociology Undergraduate Students Association (SUSA) and the Sociology Graduate Student Association (SGSA) wanted to provide undergraduate and graduate sociology students a chance to network with one another and become more involved in the Department of Sociology.

The Sociology Undergraduate – Graduate Mentoring Program was created to provide students with an opportunity to meet graduate students and learn from their experience, as well as provide graduate students with opportunities to practice mentorship.

Goals of the Program:

• To help undergraduates learn more about sociology and network with graduate students who can help them enhance their understanding of material they are learning in their courses
• To assist undergraduates in getting their questions answered in a more casual environment than the classroom
• To help undergraduates network with their peers and form new friendships.
• To provide graduate students with an opportunity to mentor small groups of undergraduate students or individual undergraduates
• To provide graduate students with an opportunity to share their experiences and knowledge
• To provide a forum where undergraduate and graduate sociologists can connect and discuss sociology in a relaxed environment

Who Can Apply?

Any undergraduate who is currently enrolled in the University of Alberta, Department of Sociology taking their major or minor can apply to become a protégé.

Any graduate student who is currently enrolled in the Sociology Department’s Masters or Ph.D. Program
can apply to be a mentor.

Students who are not registered with the Sociology Department but who wish to participate in this program will be considered; however, preference will be given to those who are currently registered.

Early applications are recommended because mentors and protégés will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

**How Do I Apply?**

1) Applications are available on the Sociology website at:  
www.sociology.ualberta.ca/en/UndergraduatePrograms/SUSA

   Hard copies are available from the Sociology Students Association (5-9 HM Tory Building).

2) Complete the application and be sure to submit it in the drop-box located outside the Sociology Undergraduate Students Association office (Tory 5-9) no later than the stated deadline for each semester. The application deadline applies to both graduate and undergraduate students.

*It is assumed that all student applicants have read, understood and agreed with the roles and responsibilities associated with participation in this program as laid out in this guideline.*

For further information on applying or other questions regarding this program please contact either of the representatives listed below:

**FAQs**

1. **How do I know if I’ve been accepted?**

Both graduate and undergraduate students will receive an email within a week or so of the application deadline to inform them of their application status.

2. **When will I know who I am paired up with?**

You will find out who you are paired up with at an introductory meeting held shortly after applications have been processed. At this meeting all protégés will meet their mentors and you will also have a chance to ask any pressing questions that you have.

3. **My mentor/ee and I aren’t really getting along, what should I do?**

Pairing people is always challenging and unfortunately, sometimes situations like this might arise. The best thing to do is to contact one of the representatives as listed in the Rules and Guidelines and tell them the problem and they will work with you and other members of the Mentorship Program Steering Committee to improve the situation.

4. **Is this a mandatory program that sociology undergraduates must participate in?** NO. This program was created by the SUA and Sociology Graduate Student Association to bridge a gap that we saw in the current program, given that there are such big class sizes and some students may find it intimidating to approach professors. This program is simply an opportunity that may help you improve your undergraduate experience by facilitating a relaxed environment where you can meet and discuss topics of interest with fellow sociologists.
**SOCIOLOGY UNDERGRADUATE/GRADUATE MENTORING PROGRAM**

**Undergraduate - What to Expect:**

The program will provide an opportunity for students to:

1) Talk about graduate school (e.g., application process, different programs, what the grad school experience is like)

2) Talk about the sociology program at U of A (e.g., What courses are offered? should I considered honours? What courses should I take?)

3) Discuss general issues about sociology and issues related to sociologists working outside of the university (e.g., What is sociological thinking all about? What does it mean to be a sociologist? What jobs are available for sociology graduates?)

4) Discuss issues about specific sociological topics (e.g., if a student would like to learn more about crime/deviance, gender, race/ethnicity, health)

5) Brainstorm topic ideas (e.g., how do you come up with an idea for a research paper in the area of the sociology of health and illness? What jobs are there?)

The program will **NOT** involve:

1) Asking mentors to edit papers or help individuals study specific course material

2) Discussing specific professors, instructors, or TAs

3) A venue for concerns or complaints about the department

**Responsibilities:**

Contacting to set up mentorship meetings:

1) If it is a one-to-one mentorship, the **undergraduate** student will be responsible for contacting their mentor to set up times to meet

2) If it is a group mentorship, the **graduate** student volunteer is expected to help organize the sessions

For contact purposes, undergraduate and graduate students will be required to provide an email address that they are willing to share with other individuals in the program. Addresses will be exchanged at an introductory meeting between mentors and their protégé(s).

The introductory meeting will be arranged by SUSA and the Sociology Graduate Student Caucus. Accepted applicants will be informed of the date, location and time of the meeting by email.
Graduate – What to Expect

The program will provide an opportunity for graduate students to:

1) Share their experiences as a graduate student and provide advice and direction for undergraduates

2) Develop mentorship skills that can be used later in your career (i.e., when teaching and supervising students or employees)

3) Learn more about the undergraduate experience, helping to improve your ability to teach and relate to undergraduate students

4) Provide a service that can be added as an academic service and/or volunteer work on your CV/resume

5) Provide a different kind of opportunity for graduate students to get involved with the department (currently most opportunities involve sitting on committees)

6) Create a greater sense of community within the Department of Sociology

The program will NOT involve:

1) Asking mentors to edit papers or help individuals study specific course material

2) Discussing specific professors, instructors, or TAs or concerns or complaints about the department

Responsibilities:

Contacting to set up mentorship meetings:

1) If it is a one-to-one mentorship, the undergraduate student will be responsible for contacting their mentor to set up times to meet

2) If it is a group mentorship, the graduate student is expected to help organize the sessions

Professional Obligations:

1) Mentors should hold in confidence all personal information gained about protégés unless the mentor believes, on reasonable grounds, that sharing such information will be beneficial to the protégé or minimize harm to others.

2) The relationship between mentor and protégé should be professional. Romantic, dating or sexual relationships between mentor and protégé are inappropriate.

For contact purposes, undergraduate and graduate students will be required to provide an email address that they are willing to share with other individuals in the program. Addresses will be exchanged at an introductory meeting between mentors and their protégé(s).

The introductory meeting will be arranged by SUSA and the Sociology Graduate Student Caucus. Accepted applicants will be informed of the date, location and time of the meeting by email.