

## Towson University Mentoring & Classroom Connections Program

Are you a **secondary science classroom teacher** looking for innovative ways to support student interest in STEM fields and careers?

Are you a **Towson undergraduate or graduate student** looking for an opportunity to gain valuable teaching and mentoring skills to put on your resume?

Then check out the **TU MC<sup>2</sup>** virtual STEM mentoring program from the Towson University Center for STEM Excellence! This 'near-peer' mentoring program will take advantage of the ubiquitous use of virtual meeting environments to foster connections between Towson University STEM students and secondary students in classrooms across Maryland, increasing student interest in, and access to, STEM fields of study. The program will focus on students traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields and will benefit mentees (middle and high school students), mentors (TU students) as well as hosts (classroom teachers). The TU MC<sup>2</sup> program will run from January – May 2021.

### Host classroom teachers will:

- Develop a plan, in partnership with their assigned classroom mentor (TU student), for how the classroom mentor will (virtually) interact and work with their students
- Attend two evening virtual workshops
- Submit brief bi-weekly progress reports
- Submit a final reflection
- Receive a \$200 stipend upon successful completion of program

### TU Student Mentors will:

- Develop a plan, in partnership with their assigned host (classroom teachers) for how they will (virtually) interact and work with middle and high school students
- Dedicate ~2 hours/week on average to mentoring duties during the spring semester
- Attend two evening virtual workshops
- Submit brief bi-weekly progress reports
- Submit a final reflection
- Gain valuable teaching and mentoring experience (looks great on resumes!)
- Earn \$12/hour (up to \$500 for the semester)

### To apply:

We are no longer accepting applications for the Spring 2021 semester. [Join](#) our mailing list to hear about future opportunities.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**I'm a TU student who is choosing to attend classes completely remotely during the Spring 2021 semester. Can I still apply?** Yes! All aspects of the TU MC2 mentoring program will be done virtually. As long as you have access to a computer with a camera and microphone, you will be able to participate in the program.

**I'm a TU student and I'm not yet sure what my schedule will be for next semester. Can I still apply?** Yes! If you're accepted into the program, you will work out a schedule with your host teacher in January about when and how you'll (virtually) interact with their classroom students.

**I haven't officially declared a STEM major, but I intend to and have taken a significant number of STEM courses. Can I still apply?** Yes. As long as you can demonstrate that you have experience in STEM courses at the college level, you are eligible to apply.

**I'm a freshman. Can I still apply?** Yes! This opportunity is open to any student who will be registered for the Spring 2021 semester.

**I'm a classroom teacher and not sure how I would utilize a TU student mentor in my classroom. Will we be given support to help develop the mentoring plan?** Yes! Staff from the Center for STEM Excellence will be available to assist host teachers and TU mentors in developing their mentoring plan. These plans are meant to be flexible and meet the needs of the host classroom while matching skills and experiences of TU student mentors.

**What is the mentoring plan?** We know that the needs of each host classroom and the skills and experiences of each TU student mentor will be unique, which is why each host teacher and TU student mentor will jointly develop a mentoring plan at the beginning of the program. The expectation is that the TU student will be meaningfully connected engaged with the students in the host classroom (all in virtual setting). Host teachers may decide to utilize the TU mentor with all of their classes, or just one or two.

**What are the two evening virtual workshops about? And am I required to attend?** The two evening virtual workshops will bring together all the host teachers and TU student mentors. One will take place in January and one will take place in March (dates TBD). Each will last 60 minutes and are designed to allow all participants to learn more about the program, get to know each other and plan and reflect on the mentoring process, and share ideas. The workshops will be facilitated by staff from the Center for STEM Excellence and all program participants (host teachers and TU students) are required to attend.

**How much time am I expected to devote to the TU MC<sup>2</sup> program?** We anticipate TU student mentors will be devoting ~40 hours over the course of the semester. This includes planning, email communications with host teacher as well as time in front (virtually) of students. We anticipate host classroom teachers will spend ~10-20 hours in planning meetings, email communications, etc. with students over the course of the semester.

**Why is the program focused on students traditionally underrepresented in STEM?** The majority of STEM fields and careers have traditionally excluded minority and marginalized populations. This is due to many reasons, including (but not limited to) discriminatory systemic policies, unconscious bias affecting hiring and promotion decisions and a lack of inclusive working environments. This harms not only the excluded individuals but also results in decreased creativity and productivity in the field itself. A goal of the TU MC<sup>2</sup> program is to show all students, but particularly students traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields, that there is a path and a welcoming place for them in STEM fields. TU student mentors and host classroom teachers will be expected to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in STEM fields in their mentorship plans.

**Question not answered?** Contact Dr. Mary Stapleton at [mkstapleton@towson.edu](mailto:mkstapleton@towson.edu).