

Missouri State University Bear POWER Ambassador Handbook

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Unit 1: For Your Knowledge/Getting Started

Section 1: Goal and Objective of Bear POWER

From <https://www.missouristate.edu/BearPOWER/overview.htm>

The Bear POWER program:

Bear POWER is a five-semester inclusive college program for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. POWER stands for **P**romoting **O**pportunities for **W**ork, **E**ducation, and **R**esilience. A four-year program will be implemented Fall 2022.

Bear POWER Goal:

To provide students with intellectual and developmental disabilities seek a transition period of occupational-specific training to find meaningful, competitive, and inclusive careers. Bear POWER does this through post-secondary educational classes, internships, college experiences, and life skills.

Bear POWER Objective:

The number one objective of Bear POWER is for students to secure a job after graduation from the program. Secondary objectives of the program include life skills, independence, social skills, and authentic college experience through inclusion on Missouri State's campus.

Bear POWER Ambassadors:

Bear POWER ambassadors are peers and role models for the Bear POWER students. They are high achieving students at Missouri State and are genuine friends and mentors to the students. Ambassadors spend 3-4 hours a week with their specific student in order to provide support. Ambassadors are vital to student progress and success.

Ambassador Role in Achieving Bear POWER Goals:

Ambassadors assist and encourage students in academic goals, social skills and interactions, and independent living.

Q: When did the first cohort of Bear POWER start on Missouri State's Campus?

R: The first cohort started on campus in the semester of Spring 2019.

Section 2: Qualities that make a great ambassador

Ambassadors are held to high standards as role models for students. These are some helpful qualities that current ambassadors have said are important to have to best support Bear POWER students:

“I think flexibility and patience are super important. Much like we all have bad days, recognizing your student isn’t perfect and being flexible to their needs always goes a long way!! :)” - Avery Brooks

“Some qualities of a good ambassador are just being understanding, empathetic, encouraging, supportive, and show up and always be there for your student whenever they need it. I also think it is important to put their mental health first and if there’s a time where they need a break, let them have it. Make sure their needs and opinions are heard and matter.” - Nicole Nelson

“I think patience and the willingness to go out of your way are the two most important qualities.” - Michael Claunch

“I would say someone who is patient, kind, caring, someone with time to put in, and really just someone who wants to make a friend! Also, someone who is approachable, someone who’s problem solving, and someone who is passionate about helping students in bear power.” - Alyssa Freeman

“Dedicated, good time management skills, intentional, compassionate, and inclusive.” - Rachel Miller

“I think that one important quality of an ambassador is selflessness! Being willing to put someone else above your self is very important when setting time aside to spend with your student.” - Avery Lingenfelter

These qualities are things that we look for in Missouri State students to recruit as Ambassadors. However, it is not required that each ambassador have every single one of these qualities. Ambassadors grow alongside their students.

Section 3: Benefits of committing to being a Bear POWER Ambassador

- ❖ University service hours
- ❖ A genuine friend
- ❖ Contribute to inclusivity on Missouri State’s campus
- ❖ Mentors in lead ambassadors, graduate assistants, and Bear POWER staff

- ❖ Can lead to positions such as Lead Ambassador or Graduate Assistant
- ❖ Gain a sense of accomplishment through helping others
- ❖ Experience mentoring students with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- ❖ Volunteer experience to add to resume

Q: How do I log my hours in order to receive credit for them for my scholarship/fraternity/sorority/graduate school program?

R: This is logged on Campus Link or via excel spreadsheet and then approved by Bear POWER staff.

Section 4: Expectations of Ambassadors, Appropriate/Inappropriate Interactions

Expectations of Ambassadors:

According to the Constitution of Bear POWER Ambassadors under Article 2 Section 2: Member Qualifications:

- ❖ “Ambassadors must be students at Missouri State University and be in good academic standing (2.5 GPA or higher)
- ❖ Attend an ambassador training
- ❖ Meet with assigned Bear POWER student at least 2 hours a week or more
- ❖ Attend 70% of all Bear POWER Ambassador meetings and 50% of Bear POWER Ambassador events” (Greer, 2017)

Q: Why are Bear POWER Ambassador meetings important?

R: Communication with all ambassadors and staff is extremely important in order to best support your student. Things are constantly changing and being adapted, so staying updated is very important. This is also a time for you to have a meeting with your circle-of-support for your specific student to talk about the positives and challenges that your student has experienced in the previous month.

Expectations of Ambassadors Continued:

According to the Bear POWER Ambassador Information and Agreement Form

- ❖ Be truthful to your student and staff

- ❖ Be kind to your student regardless of their behavior
- ❖ Follow the “golden rule” treat your students as you would like to be treated
- ❖ Communicate promptly to your Bear POWER student, other ambassadors, and staff
- ❖ Arrive on time to scheduled meetings with your Bear POWER student
- ❖ If you need to cancel a meeting with your Bear POWER student, communicate promptly
- ❖ “Lead by example; for many Bear POWER students, you will be one of the first people they know at MSU and one of the first major aspects of their college experience. Make sure you are conducting yourself in a way that you would be proud to see your mentee conducting themselves ***this includes on-campus and social media.*” (Cayton & Roam, 2019)
- ❖ Positively encourage your student to grow and try new experiences
- ❖ “Presume competence; you are there to help your Bear POWER student along their journey but as a friend. You are not their boss, their teacher, or their parent.” (Cayton & Roam, 2019)
- ❖ Do not violate the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct. Violating these would be reported to the MSU Office of Student Conduct.
- ❖ No drugs or alcohol at Bear POWER events or when you are with any Bear POWER student
- ❖ “Mentors and mentees are not to pursue romantic relationships with one another. Not only is this inappropriate of a mentor, but it also violates Title IX, and would be reported to the MSU Title IX Office.” (Cayton & Roam, 2019)
- ❖ Check-in bi-weekly with the lead ambassador

Section 5: Student Diagnosis

Intellectual and Developmental Disability Diagnosis and Bear POWER:

- ❖ Bear POWER does not require Bear POWER students to tell ambassadors, lead ambassadors, graduate assistants, or staff their diagnosis. The reason for this is to preserve the dignity and respect of the students’ decision to disclose or not to disclose their private information.
- ❖ Students may want to disclose their diagnosis to their ambassadors, if this is the case, ambassadors must keep this information confidential.

- ❖ Bear POWER focuses on abilities rather than disabilities.

General Descriptions of Various Intellectual and Developmental Diagnosis:

These descriptions are general and meant to give ambassadors with less experience a general idea of what to expect before meeting students. It is important to keep in mind that not all disabilities are experienced in the same way, all students are different and that should be appreciated. **A broad diagnosis does not mean that they will experience every symptom.** *From the Mayo Clinic* <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/adult-adhd/symptoms-causes/syc-20350878>

- ❖ Autism Spectrum Disorder:

“Impacts how a person perceives and socializes with others.” (Mayo Clinic 2021)

Possible Symptoms: repetitive actions, reduced eye contact, underdeveloped language skills, difficulty learning, difficulty adjusting to new or familiar social situations, needing less or more sensory input, misinterpretation of people’s feelings and actions.

Possible Positive Attributes: Passionate about specific interests, enjoy daily routines, and empathetic.

- ❖ Down’s Syndrome:

“Genetic disorder caused when abnormal cell division results in an extra full or partial copy of chromosome 21.” (Mayo Clinic 2021)

Possible Symptoms: Cognitive impairment, delayed language, and memory issues.

Possible Positive Attributes: Physical flexibility, strong attachments with friends and family, and empathy for others.

- ❖ Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder:

“Mental health disorder that includes a combination of persistent problems, such as difficulty paying attention, hyperactivity and impulsive behavior.” (Mayo Clinic 2021)

Possible Symptoms: Disorganization, restlessness, and difficulty regulating emotions.

Possible Positive Attributes: Outside-of-the-box thinkers, reacting quickly, and energetic.

Section 6: Increasing Inclusion

A goal of Bear POWER is for students to be immersed into Missouri State's community in order to achieve inclusion on campus. Part of the ambassador role is advocating for inclusion on campus and encouraging Bear POWER students to pursue memberships in clubs, organizations, and attend events on campus.

Ways that ambassadors can advocate for inclusion on campus:

- ❖ Sharing the objective and goals of Bear POWER with Missouri State clubs and organizations.
- ❖ Attend Missouri State clubs and organizations with Bear POWER students.
- ❖ If problems arise, communicate, and help Missouri State clubs and organizations problem solve on matters concerning inclusion

Ways ambassadors can encourage Bear POWER students to pursue memberships in clubs and organizations:

- ❖ Learn about the hobbies and interests of the students
- ❖ Help them find clubs and organizations that fit their hobbies and interests through Campus Link and encourage them to attend a meeting or two to see if they enjoy any of the clubs

Campus Link Website: <https://missouristate.campuslabs.com/engage/organizations>

- ❖ Keep in mind that not all clubs or organizations are going to fit your student, it might take several tries with different groups in order to help your student find one that they want to commit to

Q: Why is inclusion important for the students?

R: Inclusion on campus helps students grow and be a part of the Missouri State campus community. It is important for them to get the full college experience similar to any other college student.

Unit 2: Ambassador and Student Interactions

Section 7: Positive Interactions with Students

While interacting with Bear POWER students, it is important to maintain positive interactions in order to be genuine friends and trusted mentors. Ways to have positive interactions include:

- ❖ Be excited to see your student and meet with them.
- ❖ Compliment students and notice accomplishments.
- ❖ Believe in your student's abilities.
- ❖ Reassure and look for positives in difficult situations.
- ❖ Offer assistance without making them feel like they are a burden.
- ❖ Be present and attentive while meeting with them.
- ❖ When discussing problems, focus on the future and what can be done in order to fix the problem or prevent it from happening again rather than focusing on mistakes.
- ❖ Be interested in the hobbies and interests of the students.
- ❖ Presume competence of your student.
- ❖ While meeting with your student, be mindful of your **body language** and non-verbal communication. Examples of negative non-verbal communication include:

-Folded arms

-Sighing

-Leaning back

-Yawning frequently

-Lack of facial expression

-Not maintaining eye contact

-Furrowed eyebrows

-Checking phone frequently

-Harsh tone of voice

Section 8: How to Balance your Time with Student Time

Students and Ambassadors form a trusting friendship; however, ambassadors must keep in mind balancing their personal time with student time.

Healthy Boundaries:

- ❖ Students and Ambassadors should agree to not text each other after an agreed upon time unless there is an emergency. For example: After 9 pm, they will wait until the next morning to contact each other.
- ❖ Students and Ambassadors should agree on the frequency of contacting each other. This will be different for each student circle of support.
- ❖ Help students to learn to manage their time. It is ok to not help a student.
- ❖ **If students have assignments that they need help with, they need to ask for help well before the due date, not the night of. If this occurs, ambassadors need to remind students to be respectful of their time and they may not be able to help on short notice.**
- ❖ Ambassadors agree to communicate in a respectful way when boundaries concerning time management are crossed, and everyone needs to be held accountable.

Q: Why is balancing personal time with student time important? What if ambassadors don't mind?

R: Ambassadors are students as well, and continued misuse of their time can lead to inevitable burnout. It is also important for the students to learn the life skill of healthy boundaries.

Section 9: How to help Students Problem Solve using a Positive Attitude

While transitioning to college, dealing with change, learning to be independent, making mistakes, and acclimating to the stresses of classes, students may become overwhelmed. Ambassadors can help by doing these things:

- ❖ Stay Calm
- ❖ Be empathetic in their experiences
- ❖ Encourage students to use healthy coping strategies (page 21)
- ❖ Attentively listening
- ❖ Offer to help

- ❖ Encourage students of their abilities and strengths
- ❖ Talk about what can be done the next time the situation comes up. Focus on what can be fixed, not what can't
- ❖ Contact Bear POWER Lead Ambassador or Bear POWER staff if an issue cannot be resolved and/or it is a large issue

Unit 3: Encouraging Student Independency

Section 10: Different Levels of Independency

All students have different levels of abilities. Some students require very little support, while others require more. **As ambassadors, it is essential to support them without stifling their independence.** By doing this, we provide them with a *Least Restrictive Environment*.

“Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is the requirement in federal law that students with disabilities receive their education, to the maximum extent appropriate, with nondisabled peers and that special education students are not removed from regular classes unless, even with supplemental aids and services, education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily.” (Special Education Rights and Responsibilities Manual 2021)

In order to provide *appropriate* support, as described in the Special Education Rights and Responsibilities Manual, ambassadors must respond to student needs with support rather than taking over and doing tasks for them. Ambassadors are tools that the students utilize, they are not caretakers. Expectations for students are dependent on the student's abilities, needs, situation, and goals.

In addition to the level of support, the type of support also varies. Some students might need solely academic support and be independent socially, others might be the opposite or need help with both. Encourage students to be independent in the areas that they are able.

Section 11: Student Interdependent Life/Utilizing Campus Resources

Ambassadors are not the only resources for students. Encourage students to utilize MSU campus resources such as:

- ❖ Disability Resource Center:
“Through innovative consultation and collaboration, the Disability Resource Center leads the campus community in its commitments to recognize disability as a valued aspect of diversity, embrace access as a matter of social justice, and design more welcoming and inclusive environments.” (State, M., Center, D., & Resources, C. 2021)

Contact Information:

Meyer Library, Suite 111

[417-836-4192](tel:417-836-4192)DRC@MissouriState.edu

About this resource: This resource is very commonly used by students. When students are taking their courses for credit, they can go to this clinic to receive accommodations such as extra time, a quiet place, or other necessary accommodations during quizzes and tests. Students make a meeting with an advisor from the clinic at the start of each semester where they discuss their needed accommodations, then they receive a letter that they give to their instructor to receive the accommodations that the clinic advisor and student have agreed-upon. This does not require students to tell instructors their diagnosis as that is kept confidential. **Once instructors are given this letter, they legally must provide these accommodations.**

❖ “Bear CLAW (Center for Learning and Writing):

“The Bear CLAW is a new interactive space on the first floor of Meyer Library that unites the resources and expertise of the faculty, library personnel, computer and information technology, the Writing Center, subject-area tutoring, and supplemental instruction in an environment that fosters informal, collaborative work, and social interaction.” (State, M., Center, D., & Resources, C. 2021)

Contact Information:

Dr. Diana Garland

113 Meyer Library

Telephone: 417-836-4229

<https://bearclaw.missouristate.edu/>

About this resource: This resource is commonly used by students. It is a free resource, and it is very valuable. Ambassadors can support students academically, however, if a student needs specific support that the ambassador does not have the knowledge for, they can direct students to this resource. The student tutors are helpful and familiar with almost all course content for general education courses.

❖ The Career Center:

“The mission of the Career Center is to provide professional assistance and intervention to Missouri State students and alumni through the use of career counseling, internship and full-time job searches, and vocational and educational information, so they may make insightful career decisions.” (State, M., Center, D., & Resources, C. 2021)

Contact Information:

Carrington Hall 309 / Glass Hall 276

[417-836-5636](tel:417-836-5636)CareerCenter@MissouriState.edu

About this resource: This resource can be helpful for students to learn about different careers and find one that they enjoy and have a passion for. The goal of Bear POWER is to help the students find meaningful careers, and this resource is very helpful for that.

❖ Counseling Center:

“The primary goal of the Counseling Center is to promote students' development and psychological well-being. Services are provided for individuals with personal-social concerns and life-planning issues. Experienced professional counselors, psychologists, social workers, and graduate students assist clients in resolving conflicts which may interfere with their progress at the University.” (State, M., Center, D., & Resources, C. 2021)

Contact Information:

Magers Health and Wellness Center, Suite 304

[417-836-5116](tel:417-836-5116)

counselingcenter.MissouriState.edu

About this resource: This resource is very important for student wellbeing. Going to see a counselor might be scary at first, however, it can make a world of difference. Ambassadors can listen and help students, however, they are not trained to be professional counselors, nor should they attempt to do this. Ambassadors can encourage going to this resource by helping students make an appointment, maintaining confidentiality of the situation except and even going with their student to the appointment and sitting in the waiting room to show support.

❖ “Transportation - Missouri State provides shuttle services on campus. All shuttles are equipped with wheelchair lifts. Detailed information regarding the shuttle service is available from the Department of Transportation Services.” (State, M., Center, D., & Resources, C. 2021)

Routes and maps can be found at:

<https://www.missouristate.edu/Transportation/BearLine/weekday-routes.htm>

About this resource: Not all students drive, and with the Bear Line, students can be independent without needing to drive. All Bear Line drivers are kind and care about student safety. Ambassadors can support this independent task by helping students plan their routes ahead of time. To urge students to travel campus safely, remind them of this resource often. If students get confused about their route while on the Bear Line, the drivers are happy to offer assistance and get them to where they need to go.

❖ Safe Walk

“24/7 on-campus walking service. If students feel unsafe at any time, they can call and be escorted to their destination by a campus safety specialist. This does not replace other transportation, it is for emergencies and unsafe situations.” (State, M., Center, D., & Resources, C. 2021)

Contact Information:

417-836-5509

About this resource: This resource number should be in each student's phone contacts. Students should utilize this resource to increase security and safety. Make sure that students do not abuse this resource and only use it when needed.

Campus resources Link: <https://www.missouristate.edu/disability/campus-resources.htm>

Section 12: Student Choices, Free Will, and Natural Consequences

Students have the right to make their own choices and make mistakes. Ambassadors provide tools, support, resources, and direction, but students must take ownership of their decisions.

Q: Why do we have to allow students to make mistakes? Isn't that hard on them?

R: Bear POWER prepares students for real life. When they are held accountable for their mistakes in a controlled environment, they learn how to deal with mistakes independently later.

Example 1:

Ambassador encourages student to start a large project early so that they have time to finish it. Student does not want to start the project and later struggles to finish it before the due date. Because the work is rushed the student receives a lower grade.

In this scenario, the student **choice** was to not start the large project early, the **free will** was that the ambassador allowed them to make this decision against their advice, and the **natural consequence** was that the student received a lower grade.

Example 2:

Ambassador advises student to eat a balanced meal in the dining hall. The student goes to the dessert counter and makes a plate of sweets only. The ambassador does not stop them but encourages them to go back once they are done to get food that will make them feel full and healthy. The student chooses to only eat sweets, and later that night has a stomachache.

In this scenario, the student's **choice** was to only eat sweets, the **free will** was that the ambassador allows them to make this decision, and the **natural consequence** was that the student had a stomachache later that evening.

Example 3:

Ambassador promotes the student to find a student organization that they enjoy. Student agrees and picks a group that shares an interest with them. Ambassador attends the first meeting with the student, and then the student starts to attend this organization on their own. They meet friends and grow even more passionate about their interests through their new group.

In this scenario, the student **choice** was to pick a student organization to join. The **free will** was that the ambassador presented this as an option. The **natural consequence** was positive in that the student gained new friends and had fun.

Unit 4: Student Support

Section 13: Student Advocacy

Part of being independent requires the students to advocate (stand up) for themselves. Ambassadors and Bear POWER staff advocate for them as well, however, the goal is that they are able to do it for themselves as well. Lamar University wrote an article titled “Empower Special Education Students Through Self-Advocacy” that succinctly states this.

“Self-advocacy is a person’s ability to effectively communicate and assert his or her needs. It is an effective tool, and people who self-advocate are more likely to experience success at work, at school, and throughout their lives. Teaching self-advocacy to special education students is especially important as they transition to post-secondary education and a competitive job market. Teaching special education students how to take charge of their education and their lives can help them be more successful as they exercise their independence.” (Empowering Special Education Students Through Self-Advocacy 2016)

Link: <https://degree.lamar.edu/articles/education/empowering-special-education-students-through-self-advocacy/>

How can ambassadors promote student advocacy?

- ❖ Brainstorm problem-solving strategies together
- ❖ Assure them of their rights
- ❖ Affirm their needs (especially accommodations for their disability) and wants are valid
- ❖ Guide them when needed in identifying social cues, encourage them to notice them on their own as well
- ❖ Let them ask for help, don’t just jump in all the time
- ❖ Prepare them for situations in which they may need to advocate for themselves through role-play

“Teaching special education students how to handle different situations is a good way to prepare them for situations that may arise as they strive to become more independent.” (Empowering Special Education Students Through Self-Advocacy 2016)

Example of Role Play to Increase Self-Advocacy:

Student plays the role of themselves and ambassador plays the role of an instructor with whom the student has a dispute about their disability accommodations.

Instructor (ambassador): I see that you submitted your accommodation letter, but I don't think it is fair that you get to take your test in the testing center instead of the lecture hall like the rest of the students. What is your disability anyways?

Student: The Disability Resource Center advisor and I have agreed that due to my disability, I require a quiet place to take my test. I appreciate your concern for my disability; however, my diagnosis is personal, and I do not wish to tell you.

Instructor (ambassador): It is quiet enough in the lecture hall; I make sure no one is talking, and phones are off.

Student: Yes, but there is still noise that is distracting to me such as people moving around, walking around, clicking pens, or tapping their feet. I will be taking tests in the testing center where it will be quiet, and I can focus.

Instructor (ambassador): I must let you?

Student: Yes. Thank you.

The student in this role-play example knows their rights and stands up for themselves and their needs, this is perfect self-advocacy.

Section 14: Academic Support

Credit vs. Audit

Students can take their courses for audit or credit. This can be changed by the Registrar's office through the assistance of Bear POWER Staff.

Courses for Credit:

Students will receive university credit hours for their coursework. They must complete all of the assignments, quizzes, tests, and projects that everyone else in the class completes. Their assignments are also graded the same as any other student. If a student needs accommodation, they must go through the disability resource center.

Courses for Audit:

Students will not receive university credit hours for their coursework. Bear POWER staff adapts the class syllabus into a learning agreement for the students. The adaptations are different for each students' abilities and goals.

Q: If my student is taking their course for audit, do their grades not matter?

R: Their grades in their courses still matter, even if they are taking them for audit. They must still pass their classes on the assignments that they are responsible for in the learning agreement. When students take classes for audit, Bear POWER still keeps track of their GPA. It is recorded only through Bear POWER and not through the college.

Assisting students in organizing schedules:

At the beginning of the semester, assist your student form a schedule that includes their class schedule, extra-curricular activities, student organizations, weekly meetings, work (if applicable), internships, and self-care time. This can be as simple as creating on an Excel document, or a fun and creative craft on their wall. This helps them with visualizing what they are doing and when during the week.

Example of a Bear POWER Student Schedule:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Meeting with Brenda 9am-10am Library 		KIN 210 Lecture 9am-10am Glass 208 	
Academic Support 10:10am-11am Hill Hall 300 	Meet with Graduate Assistant Kirk 10:30pm-12pm 	Academic Support 10:10am-11am Hill Hall 300 	Independent Study and Homework Time 10:00-12:00pm 	Academic Support 10:10am-11am Hill Hall 300 
Internship 12pm-4pm 	Public Speaking 12:30-2pm Craig 230 	Internship 12pm-4pm 	Public Speaking 12:30-2pm Craig 230 	Meeting with Taylor 1pm-3pm Hill Hall Computer Lab 
Workout with Doug 6pm-7:30pm Rec Center 	KIN 210 (Lab) 2:30pm-4pm McDonald Arena 	Art Club 6pm-8pm Off Campus 	KIN 210 (Lab) 2:30pm-4pm McDonald Arena 	Workout with Doug 6pm-7:30pm Rec Center 

How ambassadors assist students in classes that they are not familiar with the content:

When students ask for help on homework, ambassadors' main job is to:

- ❖ Help read and clarify instructions, prompts, or course content
- ❖ Help with spelling and grammar
- ❖ Quiz students on material for tests using notes

When ambassadors cannot help because the student needs specific help, students should be referred to the Bear Claw. Contact information and details on this helpful program are on page 13.

Section 15: Social Support/Community Engagement

Social Support for students will look vastly different for each student. Examples of social support are:

- ❖ Be a genuine friend to your student
 - Not all meetings need to be task-oriented, friend time is important
- ❖ Explain social cues or norms if applicable
- ❖ Go with your student if asked to new events or social gatherings to help them feel more comfortable
- ❖ Encourage students not to spend all their free time in their residence halls
- ❖ Look through campus organizations together on Campus Link and help them choose a few to try

Campus Link: <https://missouristate.campuslabs.com/engage/organizations>

Fun activities to do on campus with student:

- ❖ Attend Welcome Week events
- ❖ Attend Student Activities Council Events
- ❖ Attend Missouri State sports games
- ❖ Attend a play or musical at Cogger Theatre
- ❖ Have lunch together at the Plaster Student Union

- ❖ Play recreation games at the Foster Recreation Center or at Betty and Bobby Allison Fields

Section 16: Health/Wellness Support

Encouraging students to care for themselves is very important to their success. Ways to encourage their success are:

- ❖ Work out at the Foster Recreation Center together
- ❖ Go on walks around campus together
- ❖ Encourage walking to classes rather than the Bear Line when it is not dark or bad weather
- ❖ Model eating balanced meals when you eat meals together
- ❖ Drive student to the store for them to buy healthy snacks to keep in their residence hall in between meals
- ❖ Model positive self-image
- ❖ Model healthy coping strategies
- ❖ Direct student to Magers Health and Wellness Center when they have a minor injury or illness

Magers Health and Wellness Center Contact Information: 417-836-4000

Magers Health and Wellness Center Website: <https://health.missouristate.edu/>

Mental Health Management:

Magers Health and Wellness Center has a Counseling Center that is a great resource for students. Reasons to refer your student to the Counseling Center are:

- ❖ “Abrupt or radical changes in behavior
- ❖ Isolation from others
- ❖ Poor attendance in class due to alcohol/drug abuse
- ❖ Sudden outbursts of anger/irritability
- ❖ Attention/memory difficulties; restlessness
- ❖ Inappropriate crying; low self-esteem

- ❖ Chronic fatigue/low energy
- ❖ Talks of intent/ideation of suicide or homicide” (State, M., & Center, C. 2021)

Express your care for your student and your concerns. Talk about the ways that the counseling center can help, how to make an appointment, and what to expect at their appointment. Offer to accompany them to their appointment and then wait for them in the waiting room.

Missouri State Counseling Center Contact Information:

counselingcenter.MissouriState.edu

[417-836-5116](tel:417-836-5116)

Coping Strategies:

Ambassador Natalie Olson wrote “Resources to Manage Stress and Anxiety” as a helpful resource for Bear POWER students:

“Resources to Manage Stress and Anxiety

Breathing Techniques:

- ❖ Belly Breathing
 - Sit or lie flat in a comfortable position.
 - Put one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.
 - Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move.
 - Breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in and use it to push all the air out.
 - Do this breathing 3 to 10 times. Take your time with each breath.
 - Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.
- ❖ Box Breathing
 - Breathe in for 4 counts
 - Hold for 4 counts
 - Breathe out for 4 counts
 - Hold for 4 counts
 - Repeat until a sense of calm occurs
- ❖ Take a Walk
- ❖ Take a walk outside by yourself or with a friend you trust. Focus on what you can see and feel.
 - Notice how you can feel your feet hit the ground beneath you with each step you take and the clothes that you are wearing.
 - What is the weather like? Can you feel a soft breeze? Is it windy?
 - What do you hear? Are other people outside? Can you hear cars as they drive by? What about animals – can you hear birds chirp? Squirrels in the trees?
- ❖ Positive Self-Talk
- ❖ Use “milder wording”

- Instead of using words like ‘hate’ and ‘angry’ (as in, “I *hate* traffic! It makes me so *angry!*”), you can use words like ‘don’t like’ and ‘annoyed’ (“I don’t like traffic; it makes me annoyed,” sounds much milder, doesn’t it?)
- ❖ Use questions instead of statements that may limit yourself.
 - Self-limiting statements like “I can’t handle this!” or “This is impossible!” are particularly damaging because they increase your stress in a given situation *and* they stop you from searching for solutions. Doesn’t “How can I handle this?” or “How is this possible?” sound more hopeful and open your imagination to new possibilities?

Watch a video or listen to music

- ❖ Brain Calming Music - <https://youtu.be/mXw2aAforhg>
- ❖ Beautiful Relaxing Music for Stress Relief - <https://youtu.be/IFcSrYw-ARY>
 - These videos are especially helpful if you listen with headphones, close your eyes, and focus on taking slow, deep breaths. You do not have to listen to the entire video, just until you feel better.
- ❖ 10-Minute Meditation for Stress - <https://youtu.be/z6X5oElg6Ak>
- ❖ Take 5 Breathing Strategy - <https://youtu.be/5zhnLG3GW-8>
- ❖ Fight Flight Freeze, learn about anxiety - https://youtu.be/FfSbWc3O_5M
- ❖ Progressive Muscle Relaxation - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nZEdqcGVzo>

Practice Daily Positive Affirmations

- ❖ Each day try saying a few positive phrases out loud. Try saying phrases like:
 - I am smart.
 - I am successful.
 - I am funny.
 - I am confident.
 - I am capable.
 - I am doing my best, and that is what matters most.
 - I am a good friend and peer.
 - I am growing and learning how to be my best self every day.
- ❖ When faced with a situation that makes you feel scared or frustrated, try repeating positive affirmations that acknowledge your negative thoughts or emotions and let them go. For example:
 - Anxiety is not dangerous. I am just uncomfortable. I will make it through this.
 - The picture in my head is not healthy. That is just me being negative.
 - I feel anxious, but so what? I know what that feels like and I will get through it.
 - I am going to focus on things I love to get me through this.
 - I will be OK.
 - This homework is challenging, but I can do it. Challenging myself helps me learn and grow. It makes me stronger and smarter.
 - I can do this.
 - I am a successful college student. I am doing well in my classes.” (Olson N. 2021)

Section 17: Navigating hard/Hot Topics with Students

With students, hot topics will arise. In order to be prepared for these occasions, it is important to understand that they have a right to their own opinion, regardless of if you feel passionately about a topic in an opposite way. Strive to be objective and encourage respect and cultural competence in their views rather than interjecting your own views. Encourage them to think for themselves and care about their education on various issues. For these conversations to go smoothly, you can educate yourself through professional development opportunities that the Missouri State Multicultural Resource Center offers, and you can encourage your students to attend events and trainings as well.

Missouri State Campus Professional Development Opportunities for Bear POWER Students and Ambassadors:

LGBTQ+ Training “Safe Zone”: “Safe Zone is a Missouri State program designed to help identify students, staff, faculty, and community members who are supportive of the LGBTQ+ community. This 2-hour long training takes participants through self-reflection activities, some basic vocabulary, and general issues facing the LGBTQ+ community in order to foster a more compassionate and empathetic campus community.” (State M. 2021)

Contact Information to sign up: Michelle Scott Huffman
michelleschotthuffman@missouristate.edu

Transgender and Intersex Identity Training “Gender Zone”- “An expansion of Safe Zone, Gender Zone specifically focuses on Transgender and Intersex identity. This training delves more deeply into the social construction of gender and sex assigned at birth to help participants understand their own gender and the greater transgender umbrella. This training combines theory with personal reflection and action planning to assist participants in better supporting transgender and intersex students. Gender Zone will be piloted Fall 2021.” (State M. 2021)

Contact Information: MulticulturalPrograms@missouristate.edu

General Hot Topic Political Conversations “Tough Talks”: Sponsored by the Missouri State Division for Diversity and Inclusion, these talks on various topics are meant to inform and discuss various topics concerning political events and marginalized groups. Respectful participation through personal viewpoints is encouraged.

(<https://calendar.missouristate.edu/viewevent.aspx?eventid=111625&occurrenceid=212978>
 State M. 2021)

Contact Information to sign up: Ashley Raines, araines@missouristate.edu

Black History Month: An annual month full of events to educate on Black History organized by the Multicultural Resource Center.

Sexual Violence Training “Bear Aware”: Annual psychoeducation course about interpersonal violence, healthy relationships, sexuality, and sex-positive outlooks.

Contact kuntibentley@missouristate.edu or rachelheinz@missouristate.edu to sign up or ask questions.

Note: In addition to these resources, a part of the student’s Academic Support class is trainings on marginalized groups from guest speakers.

Q: What do I do if my student wants to debate political topics?

R: Remind them that you are willing to discuss topics with them, but because of respect for each other’s opinions, a debate might not be appropriate.

Unit 5: Chain of Command/Ambassador and Student Support

Section 18: Communication when Problem Solving

Communication is essential in Bear POWER. Keeping the communication open and consistent is key for the success of the students. Try to plan and be proactive so that things can be worked out before they become an emergency or a serious issue.

Communication Modes:

- ❖ Text Message
 - Lead Ambassadors are the first point of contact for most issues unless it is an emergency, in which case graduate assistants would also be contacted
 - Fast, for issues that need to be resolved quickly
- ❖ GroupMe App
 - Group communication
 - Fast
 - Multiple people see messages so information only has to be provided once
- ❖ Phone Call
 - Urgent or time sensitive issues
 - Issues that need brainstorming
- ❖ Email
 - For non-emergent or time sensitive issues
- ❖ Ambassador Meetings
 - This meeting is scheduled monthly to improve communication. During the meetings, issues that involve multiple students should be addressed, and after meeting in the breakout sessions issues specific to each student are addressed

Q: What if I ask for assistance from the wrong person?

R: All members of Bear POWER are helpful and gracious. If you contact the wrong person, they will listen to you issue, offer assistance if they are able, and direct you to the person in the program that will be able to help!

When evaluating issues, it is important to know the roles of everyone in the program and who is the best resource for each specific problem.

Section 19: Staff Contact Information and Roles

Rachel Heinz M.S.:



Bear POWER Director

RachelHeinz@MissouriState.edu

[417-836-5282](tel:417-836-5282)

Hill Hall 216A

Bear POWER Director Duties:

- ❖ Responsible for implementation and operation of the Bear POWER program at Missouri State University
- ❖ Recruitment and admissions of Bear POWER students to the program. 3. Fundraising for Bear POWER program start-up and private scholarship funds through grants, SB40 local and surrounding boards, crowdfunding campaigns and/or private donors
- ❖ Develop and approve the Bear POWER department budget
- ❖ Strategic planning and marketing of Bear POWER program to raise awareness throughout campus and nationwide
- ❖ Train and manage Bear POWER Graduate Assistants and/or staff
- ❖ In partnership with Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning on campus, create training workshops for faculty on accessibility, Universal Design for Learning and inclusion for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- ❖ Collaborate with other departments on campus (Residence Life, Financial Aid, Dining Services, Disability Resource Center, Learning Diagnostic Clinic, Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, Career Center, Bear Claw Tutoring Center, CASL (Citizenship and Service Learning) etc. to provide support for students in the Bear POWER program

- ❖ Oversee volunteer recruitment, training, and implementation of volunteer support to Bear POWER students
- ❖ Serve on the MIPSAs (Midwest Inclusive Post Secondary Alliance) Board to represent Missouri State University and continue to build relationship with national organization Think College
- ❖ Build partnerships with local businesses to provide internship possibilities for students in the program
- ❖ Provide career support to students graduating and six months post-graduation from the Bear POWER program
- ❖ Manage and update Bear POWER website, marketing materials and social media accounts
- ❖ Report SAP (Satisfactory Academic Progress) to Financial Aid office to maintain academic standards for all students in the program
- ❖ Submit updates to CTP (Comprehensive Transition Program) Application to U.S. Department of Education in collaboration with Financial Aid office, as needed
- ❖ Provide updates to Dean Hough, Dr. Craig, Provost Office, President and/or Board of Governors as requested

Caleb J. Hatz M.S.:



Bear POWER Program Coordinator

CalebHatz@MissouriState.edu

Hill Hall 216

Bear POWER Program Coordinator Duties:

- ❖ Provides direct student support during business hours and Bear POWER events
- ❖ Assists with public relations, Bear POWER website, social media, marketing, and planning for future Bear POWER decisions
- ❖ Coordinates events such as Bear POWER Fall Open House, SOAR, move-in weekend, Bear POWER Leadership Retreat, Orientation, workshops, trainings, and recruitment
- ❖ Collaborates with existing campus resources and local internships on student support and opportunities

- ❖ Advises and guides ambassadors and graduate assistants on specific strategies to support their student successfully
- ❖ Assists in the development of ambassador skills

Kim J. Roam M.S.:



Bear Power Faculty Advisor

KimRoam@MissouriState.edu

417-836-4151

Hill Hall 424

Bear POWER Faculty Advisor Duties:

- ❖ Provides direct student and ambassador support
- ❖ Cultivates development of ambassadors through advisement and communication
- ❖ Assists current ambassadors in recruiting new ambassadors
- ❖ Advocates for student success on campus
- ❖ Acts as a resource person that is knowledgeable and up to date on each Bear POWER student's struggles and successes
- ❖ Assists Bear POWER Director and Coordinator fulfill their responsibilities
- ❖ Provides comfort and direction for Bear POWER students and ambassadors
- ❖ Sets a positive and motivational tone and attitude for all those involved in Bear POWER
- ❖ Acts as a liaison between Bear POWER and other organizations

Angela (Angie) Sachse:



Bear POWER Internship Supervisor

angelasachse@missouristate.edu

Hill Hall 216

Bear POWER Internship Supervisor Duties:

- ❖ Work with students to place them in internship experiences on campus and in the community, in their area of interest
- ❖ Supports students and sites with resources and ongoing conversations to ensure everyone feels supported and that it is a successful experience
- ❖ Instructs an Internship Seminar class, a component of Academic Support. Content includes expectations in the workplace, job readiness skills, resume development and job searching
- ❖ Meets once a week for one hour with students as an added touch point and ongoing learning and sharing of experiences so that students have all the tools needed for employment beyond graduation
- ❖ Introduces the students to Vocational Rehabilitation (employment support) by beginning the intake process and setting up appointments with their assigned VR counselor.

Sophia P. McDonald:



Bear POWER Graduate Assistant

Sophia98@live.missouristate.edu

Kasey Hoelscher:

Bear POWER Graduate Assistant

hoelscher147@live.missouristate.edu

Bear POWER Graduate Assistant Duties:

- ❖ Office and administrative duties (responding to emails, social media, managing files, planning various events etc.)
- ❖ Administrative duties
- ❖ Support Students through weekly one-on-one advisement
- ❖ Attend student interviews, Leadership Retreat, community engagement events, academic support classes, and meetings concerning student support

- ❖ Listed as student emergency contact and are available at any time

Section 20: Role of Lead Ambassadors

Lead ambassadors are experienced and devoted ambassadors who lead their student's circle-of-support. Their duties, in addition to regular ambassador commitments, include:

- ❖ Setting a positive and collaborative tone for their student's circle-of-support group
- ❖ Acting as a liaison between ambassadors and Bear POWER staff
- ❖ Assisting new ambassadors assigned to their group become familiar with their student
- ❖ Fine tuning student logistical issues
- ❖ Ensuring that all issues are addressed in a timely manner
- ❖ Making sure that all areas of support are covered: academic, social, health/wellness, and independent living

Section 21: Emergency Situations

As an ambassador, it is important to keep an eye out for warning signs that could lead to emergency situations. Here are some examples from the ambassador agreement to look for:

Source Ambassador Agreement

Get support from Bear POWER Personnel if a Bear POWER student:

- ❖ Looks depressed or anxious or describes feeling this way.
- ❖ Becomes upset and unable to participate in planned activity.
- ❖ Talks too much about topics such as drugs, alcohol, etc.
- ❖ Talks too much about someone in a sexual way, sexual desires sexual activities or obsessive interest in others.
- ❖ Has other inappropriate behaviors you have no success redirecting.
- ❖ If you speak with parents directly, in any communication form (text, email, phone call, etc.).”

This is not an all-inclusive list. If something seems off to you and seems like a safety issue, please start the communication early.

Q: What if my student is displaying one of these symptoms or expressing something on this list and then asks me to keep it confidential? What do I do?

R: "There is a difference between privacy and confidentiality. For example, if a student tells you something that could violate student conduct or be harmful to themselves or others you must report it." (Cayton & Roam 2017)

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