



**Introduction to Leadership Studies Virtual
Mentor Program: *A Guide for Students***

Students leading conversations about leadership

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Goals of the Virtual Mentor Program

- ❖ Connect students to alums, parents, and friends of the university.
- ❖ Explore leadership topics.
- ❖ Help students learn to write professionally.

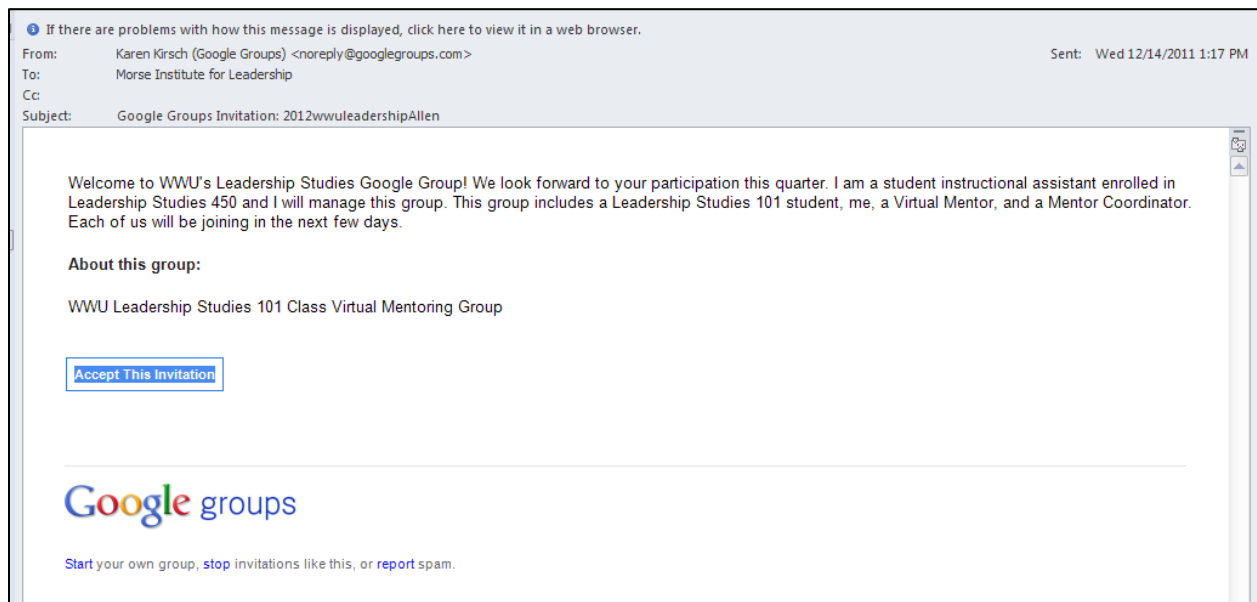
Role of the LDST 101 Student

Your job is to lead a conversation about leadership. Your instructor, Dr. Joseph Garcia, will provide topics that you will need to cover with your mentor. Your job is to write your mentor periodically and pose questions, soliciting a response from your mentor. At the end of the term, students will write a comprehensive paper about their virtual mentoring experience (see your syllabus).

How to use Google Groups

Accepting the Google Groups Invitation

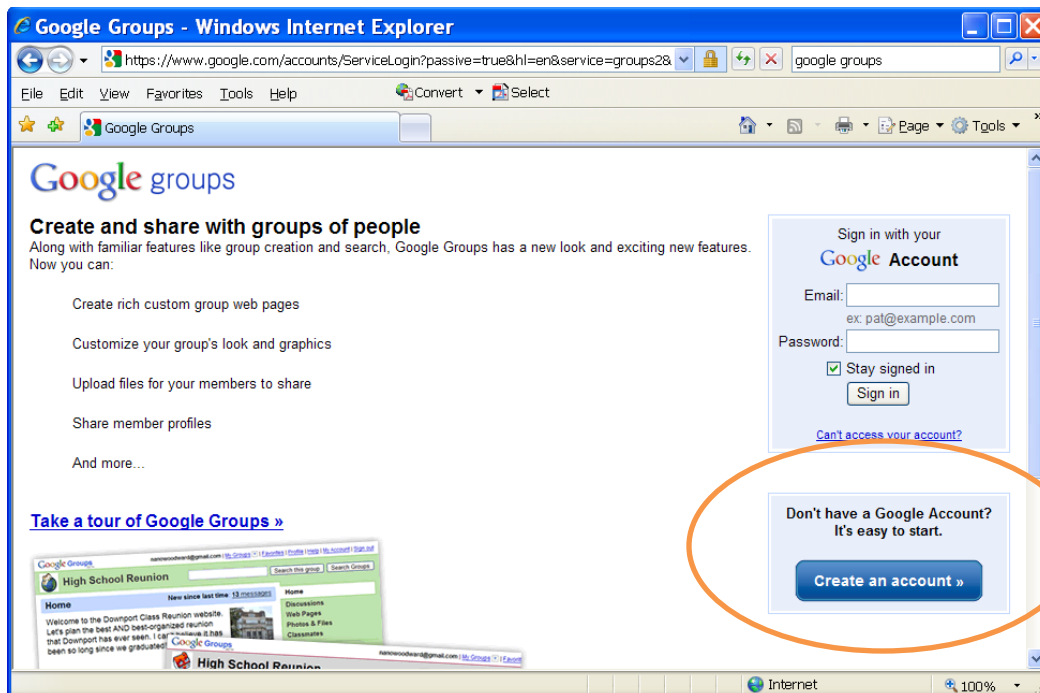
Your LDST 450 student will send you an email that will ask you to join a Google Group. The initial email will look something like this:



Click on the "Accept this invitation". This will take you to a Google Groups page that verifies you have accepted the invitation. ***If Google asks you to, please create a Google Groups account.***

Creating an account

If you have never used Google Groups before, you may need to create an account. A link may be provided to you on the web page that the invitation confirmation takes you to. If not, navigate your internet browser to <http://groups.google.com/> and follow the steps to "Create an Account".



Use your *WWU* student email.

On the next screen, select another email service (you do NOT need a gmail account). Use your **Western Student Email** address.

You may need to verify your newly created account by responding to a message in your Western email. Once your account is created, you may exit Google Groups.

Please WAIT for further instruction from your discussion section leader before writing your introductory email to your mentor.

Writing Emails to your Virtual Mentor

During your discussion session you will be provided with the email address to use to communicate with your mentor. It will look something like this example: www-leadership-knight@googlegroups.com.

Responding to emails

If you receive an email, all you have to do is hit “reply” like any other email address and you will be able to write a message to your mentor. All messages to your mentor must use the Google Groups email address.

Writing Professionally

One of the goals of the mentor program is to help our students learn to write professionally and appropriately. Your mentor may give you hints on proper communication styles/writing methods. This is for your benefit.

Writing tips

Subject headers

Use a good description for your email subjects. For example do not title the email subject “Hello.” Title the email something like “Introduction,” or “Question 1,” etc. Or, use the theme of the question, such as “Decision Making Process.”

Salutations and closings

Use a salutation for each email. There are many people in your group, so a salutation is essential to identify the intended recipient. Sample salutations include:

- Dear Mr. Zuhlman:
- Dear Ms. Gabor:
- Hi Sara,
- Ms. Smith,

Sample closings include:

- Sincerely; Thank you; Yours; Cheers; Regards; Thanks
- Looking forward to your response.
- Just your name.

Highlighting the question

It is helpful to emphasize the question to which you seek an answer. If you have a lengthy email, it can be helpful to include the question at the beginning or end of your email, or making it clear in another way.

Response times and acknowledgment

Acknowledge your virtual mentors' email, especially if they will not be writing again for a few days. For example, "Dear Sam, Thank you for your email. It has given me a lot to think about. I will write again this weekend...." Sometimes professionals aren't sure if a student received his or her email when there isn't a fairly quick reply.

Providing requested response times is also helpful to our busy professionals! "If you could please respond to this question by next Monday, March 1, that would help me write my paper that is due March 15. Thank you."

FAQs

How am I paired with my mentor?

Each pair is randomly assigned.

When to check in with your mentor

Our mentors are busy professionals with a lot on their plates. As such, some may need a gentle reminder to respond to your email. As such, if your mentor is not writing or responding to you within about 7 days, you are welcome and encouraged to send him/her a reminder email. If that doesn't work, please ask your discussion session leader for assistance.

Virtual Mentors who withdraw from the program

Mentors may unexpectedly need to withdraw from volunteering. If that occurs, you will be assigned to a new mentor.

Attachments

You may send attachments to the email address.

Google Group Membership

Each Google Group will have a few members, but you will usually only receive messages from your mentor. Each group will include you, your mentor, your discussion group leader, a Virtual Mentor Coordinator (VMC), and the Morse Institute (WWU) staff. Why are there so many members? The VMC is there to help our mentors; the discussion group leader is there to help you, and the Morse Institute staff have access to keep an archive of the conversations.

Appendix:

Sample E-mails

Below are some introductory sample emails from LDST students. Each one has their own style, length, and perspective. We don't expect students or mentors to follow a script!

Hello Ms. ABCD,

My name is ABC and I am a freshman at Western Washington University. I want to major in psychology or get into the education program for secondary education. One of the classes I am taking this quarter is Leadership Studies. We are going to be learning about leaders in different environments and situations, and learning to become a better leader ourselves.

As an objective for this class, we are supposed to stay in contact with a leader that has already been through college and has experienced different roles in leadership. I am excited to begin a relationship with you, and hopefully learn about what to expect after college. What did you major in? What is your career now?

Thank you so much for taking the time to be my volunteer, I am looking forward to getting to know you! I appreciate your help very much.

Sincerely,
XVY

Dear Mr. ABCD,

My name is ABC and I am a current freshman participating in a leadership studies course with Professor Garcia here at Western Washington University. I have had several leadership positions prior to coming to Western. I was involved in ASB and leadership class while at XYZ High School. I was also president of the Sports Club and YY Club. I participated in several sports while in high school and gained leadership experience through that as well, having been a captain of the tennis and baseball teams. I look forward to and plan on pursuing more leadership positions in the future which prompted me to choose to take this leadership course. I hope to further my leadership skills through the class and my ongoing conversation with you.

Thank you greatly for your interest in working with Western Washington University students this quarter, it's the support of community members like you that makes Western so great. I am looking forward to hearing from you about your leadership experiences and interest in WWU.

As you know we have a variety of assignments and we are interested in learning more about leadership in its many forms. I understand you have a lot of experience in leadership and I look forward to soaking up all the information that you will bestow upon me. I know that your experiences in leadership can help me as a leader here at Western Washington University. I am hopeful that we can have a good discussion on leadership as it relates to Western and the greater community.

I look forward to hearing back from you in the near future, thanks again.

Sincerely,
XBY