The Peer Leader Program is organized through a collaboration of the departments of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, specifically by:

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**Timeline:** At the beginning of each spring semester we begin recruiting for new peer leaders to assist with the summer STEP (Summer Transition Experience Program) days and the opening of the fall semester. Students eligible to apply must meet the following criteria:

- successful semester of the First-Year Inquiry course,
- minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5, and
- recommendation from a faculty member

Applicants then participate in a half hour individual interview and a 1 hour group interview, after which selections are made. Peer leaders volunteer their time through training, orientation, and the fall semester.

**Requirements for Peer Leaders:**

- participate in Leadership Training Week
- contact peer group prior to opening
- welcome and assist families on opening day
- lead peer group through all orientation presentations & activities
- check-in with FYI class 1x/week/15 minute maximum
- provide an opportunity for gathering with peer group outside of class 1x/month
- maintain communication with appropriate faculty/staff with peer group issues

**Training:** Peer leaders agree to come back to campus the week prior to opening weekend to participate in the Student Affairs Leadership Training Week. This week is devoted to building community among the staff/faculty and the various student leaders on campus, specifically the peer leaders, community assistants, emergency medical technicians, and leader athletes. Teambuilding exercises, role-playing, information sessions and discussion activities are carefully planned & conducted to prepare students for their respective roles in welcoming new students to Franklin Pierce.

**History:** The Peer Leader Program has been through a number of transitions and in its current form focuses on a philosophy of “serve, act, and lead”.
Building Community through Leadership: The following passage is from the book Everyone Leads: Building Leadership from the Community Up by Paul Schmitz. The Peer Leader Program is committed to building community by recognizing the talents and strengths of all members within a peer group.

“We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For” - Lisa Sullivan

We are the ones we have been waiting for is both an invitation and a challenge. We don’t have to wait for some in a position of leadership to solve a problem. When we see an opportunity to make a difference, in our communities or on larger public issues that concern us, we can take responsibility for doing it. That responsibility implies a level of accountability to ourselves and to others that we will do our best to achieve the goal we establish. It means also taking responsibility for the means we use in working with others to achieve a goal. Such responsibility is the basis of our democracy.

We believe that everyone can lead. This doesn’t mean that we think that everyone should lead in every circumstance, or that there shouldn’t be followers. Leadership is not an entitlement; it is the result of a making a courageous choice. Leadership is possible for all of us, but only when we choose to take responsibility to mobilize people and resources toward a common goal and own the consequences of that choice.

One of our biggest problems as a society is the romanticizing of positional leaders, whereby we see leaders as “cause” and everyone as “effect.” When we see accountability only at the top, we limit our ability to create an alternative future. We place ourselves in the position of being passive, entitled clients and customers.

Leadership is not about our credentials or charisma but about our commitment and credibility. We want leaders who are credible...We must believe that their word can be trusted, that they’ll do what they say, that they’re personally excited and enthusiastic about the directions in which we’re headed, and that they have the knowledge and skill to lead. If we don’t believe in the messenger, we won’t believe the message.

Leadership is an inherently collaborative process, and our ability to collaborate effectively with others is essential to accomplishing our goals. If we believe that leadership is in service to those that follow us, then we have to be intentional about how we engage the people or constituencies we mobilize. We believe that responsibility for solving problems is something that resides with all of us in communities.