

Hood College



Blazer Buddy Program Manual



Table of Contents

What is a Blazer Buddy?	3
Why have a Buddy Program?	4
Advantages to the New Employee, Blazer Buddy and Hood College	4
Blazer Buddy Selection Criteria	4
Blazer Buddy Responsibilities	5
Blazer Buddy Application	7
Blazer Buddy Checklist	8
Blazer Buddy Program Evaluation	10

What is a Blazer Buddy?

A Blazer Buddy is someone who welcomes and encourages a new employee within his/her first year of employment at Hood. While primarily responsible for offering advice and guidance regarding the day-to-day aspects of working at Hood College, the buddy may also help the new employee develop a more personal connection to Hood as they help introduce the new employee to Hood's Mission, Vision and Core Values:

Mission

Through an integration of the liberal arts and the professions, Hood College provides an education that empowers students to use their hearts, minds and hands to meet personal, professional and global challenges and to lead purposeful lives of responsibility, leadership, service and civic engagement.

Vision

Hood College is a premier, comprehensive liberal arts college, offering both undergraduate and graduate students an excellent and holistic educational experience that prepares them for personal and professional achievement and productive participation in society. Education at Hood reaches beyond boundaries, whether those boundaries be academic disciplines, the classroom or the campus. We thereby offer a holistic education that encompasses the curriculum, co-curricular experiences and a rich array of experiential learning opportunities facilitating student exploration and fostering intellectual, spiritual and physical growth. We recognize that this vision can only be realized in a diverse, collaborative, student-centered community in which all are empowered to be educators and mentors to our students, facilitating their preparation to "meet personal, professional and societal challenges and to lead purposeful lives of responsibility, leadership, service and civic engagement" (Hood College mission).

Core Values

- **Hope:** To believe that everyone can have a positive impact in the world and that education is instrumental in creating and sustaining hope.
- **Opportunity:** To fully use one's talents and skills to realize professional and personal achievement and to help create and realize opportunities for others.
- **Obligation:** To fulfill personal and professional responsibilities with integrity and to be a responsible steward and servant to the betterment of others and this world.
- **Democracy:** To embrace diversity, foster freedom of thought and expression, and to promote engaged citizenship both in self and others.

Why have a Buddy Program?

The Blazer Buddy program provides new employees with a reliable, motivated, single point-of-contact for their basic questions regarding their work experience at Hood College. The Blazer Buddy program is an integral part of the total onboarding process which is more than any single-day departmental or organizational orientation event.

Other advantages of having a buddy include:

- Building on the knowledge obtained in the Benefits Orientation and department onboarding activities
- Enabling new employees to become knowledgeable about organizational culture in a shorter period
- Ensuring that routine queries regarding basic operational issues are dealt with expeditiously
- Reducing the initial confusion and uncertainty faced by all new employees
- Maximizing the productivity of manager/new employee meetings by allowing them to focus on job-specific issues
- Increasing the new employee's self-confidence thereby allowing him/her to focus on adding value to the organization
- Reinforcing a sense of community for which Hood is known.

Advantages to the New Employee, Blazer Buddy and Hood College

New Employee	Blazer Buddy	Hood College
One-on-one assistance	Opportunity to encourage and engage others	Increased employee satisfaction and retention
Smooth transition into the department and onboarding period.	Enhanced leadership and communication skills	Enhanced quality work processes
Jump-start on networking	A fresh prospective	Enhanced employee development
An insider's perspective on Hood's cultural and community	Recognition as a strong performer / team player	Increased employee communication and productivity

Blazer Buddy Selection Criteria

Hood expects all of our employees to value diversity, equity and inclusion in all that they do. Those individuals selected to be Blazer Buddies must exemplify these qualities.

The Staff Council Professional Development Committee, in cooperation with Human Resources Department, is responsible for evaluating and appointing Blazer Buddy candidates.

Selections should be based on the following characteristics:

- **Communication Skills:** A buddy should encourage open communication. The buddy should provide relevant information to the new employee and encourage a process of continued, self-directed learning.
- **Role Model:** The buddy should be a model employee, exemplify Hood values and be positive and enthusiastic about Hood.
- **Motivated:** The buddy should have a positive outlook on his/her work and use that perspective to help build self-confidence and loyalty in the new employee. The buddy should lead by example.
- **Strong Performer:** The buddy can help guide the new employee in many situations based on his/her experience and knowledge obtained in the work environment.
- **Engaged:** The buddy should be an active participant in Hood campus activities, such as
 - serving on a collaborative committee (Staff Council, Planning, Budgeting & Assessment, Data Governance, Risk Management, Wellness, etc.)
 - regularly attending campus events such as athletics, cultural or educational programs, and team building events

At a minimum, a candidate for the Blazer Buddy program must:

- have been employed for at least one year
- not be on a performance improvement plan
- have the time to be accessible to the new employee
- attend the Blazer Buddy training sessions and complete the program evaluation

Blazer Buddy Responsibilities

The relationship between the buddy and the employee should be open, positive and supportive. Discussion should be confidential* and should discourage gossip and speculation.

- Be a contact for general information on policies, procedures, work rules, norms, day-to-day operational issues, etc.
- Help the new employee integrate with the department and organization regarding Hood culture, norms, and expectations
- Make introductions and help establish networks throughout the campus
- Assist in training by accompanying the employee to Hood events

*Confidentially is not guaranteed in instances where there is a violation or perceived violation of Policy 55 or other professional ethics policies. Refer to the [Staff Manual](#) for policy details.

Tips for Being a Successful Buddy:

- Don't worry about being perceived as the expert. Focus your attention on the new employee
- Be patient: It takes time to develop a relationship. Don't try to cover everything right away
- Be positive: New employees will grow into their roles if given proper reinforcement
- Don't try to force a relationship
- Try to identify the new employee's personality and communication style and adapt accordingly
- Don't be judgmental. Simply offer feedback
- Maintain a good attitude and a teaching spirit

It is important to note that a buddy is not a:

- **Mentor:** Someone, typically more experienced, who is involved with the all-round development of an individual (personal and professional).
- **Manager:** Someone responsible for the new employee's job performance. If queries arise regarding performance, disciplinary or policy matters, the buddy is free to give his/her opinion and advice on how to approach the situation. However, he/she is not in a position to resolve the matter. The new employee must be directed to their manager for resolution of the relevant issue(s).

Termination of the Relationship:

Participation in the Blazer Buddy program is voluntary. At the request of either party, the buddy relationship can be terminated at any time. If necessary, the new employee will be assigned a new buddy, and the buddy can be assigned a different new employee.

Blazer Buddy Application

This application is available as a Microsoft Form: [Blazer Buddy Application](#)

Hood College Blazer Buddy Program Application

Employee Name:

Employee Job Title:

Employee Department:

Employee Division:

Supervisor Name:

Employee Email:

Employee Extension:

How long have you been employed by Hood College? **Less than 1 y**

Are you a Hood College Alum? **No**

Are you a current or former member of any Hood College committees? **No**

If yes, please identify:

Currently serving

Currently serving

Currently serving

Currently serving

Why do you want to be a Blazer Buddy?

I agree to the following terms:

I agree to represent Hood College in a positive manner in my role as a Blazer Buddy

I agree to maintain confidentiality of my conversations with the new employee, unless a Hood College policy requires disclosure (i.e. Policy 55).

I agree to commit up to an hour per week to my role as a Blazer Buddy during the first three months of the new employee's employment

Employee Signature:

Date:

Supervisor Signature:

Date:

Blazer Buddy Checklist

Prior to the start date

- Obtain new employee's name, title, department and start date from HR

First Week

- Welcome the employee on their first day. Coordinate with the employee's supervisor to
 - Escort him/her to HR for Benefits Orientation
 - Escort him/her to Campus Safety to pick up Hood ID/parking tag
 - Order a Hood name tag and business cards, if needed
 - Have lunch at Coblentz within the first three days on campus
- Arrange for or provide a tour of campus
 - Introduce employee to Staff members in each functional department you visit (Duplicating/Mail Room, Campus Safety, Marketing, Institutional Advancement, Admissions, Accounting & Finance, Faculty Services, etc.)
- Within the first two weeks, schedule a time (at least an hour) to review Hood.edu and show the new employee
 - How to access Information for Faculty and Staff (HR/Benefits, Accounts Payable, Payroll, IT Help Desk, Policies and Procedures, HealthyU)
 - How to access Self-Service, Blackboard, Office 365, etc.
 - How to reset a Hood network password
 - How to submit a work request to Duplicating, Marketing, Facilities, IT, etc.
 - How to sign up for Hood Alerts
- Schedule recurring conversations; perhaps weekly for the first month and then monthly for the three to six months, then at least bimonthly for the remainder of the first year.

First Month

- Review a simplified version of the [Hood Organizational Chart](#)
- Familiarize the new employee with Hood's [Traditions](#) and [History](#)
- For someone new to higher education, help familiarize them with the [lingo](#) and [publications](#) or other resources that might be helpful
- Share community resources of interest
 - [City of Frederick](#)
 - [Frederick County](#)
 - [Frederick County Tourism](#)
 - [Frederick News Post](#)
 - [Frederick Magazine](#)
 - [Frederick County Parks and Rec](#)

- [Weinberg Center](#)
 - [Maryland 211](#)
 - [Frederick County Public Schools](#)
-
- Invite and accompany the employee to campus athletic, cultural or social events
 - Invite and accompany the employee to the next [Staff Council](#) meeting and make the introduction to the group
 - Invite and accompany the employee to Blazer Bytes sessions

Ongoing for six to 12 months

- Check in with the employee to see if he/she has any questions or concerns
- Schedule to meet for lunch at least monthly in Coblentz
- Continue to engage with the employee and encourage participation in campus events, such as Convocation and Commencement, the Fall Forum, Employee Recognition/Appreciation programs, the Holiday Party and the Benefits Focus
- Send a congratulatory message when the employee reaches their one-year anniversary as a Hood employee!

Blazer Buddy Program Evaluation

This evaluation is available as a Microsoft Forms: [Blazer Buddy Program Evaluation \(Employee\)](#)

For the new employee:

My Blazer Buddy made me feel welcome as a new Hood employee:



My Blazer Buddy was available when I had a question or concern:



My Blazer Buddy did the following with me:

During my first week:

- Campus Tour
- Lunch at Coblenz
- Introduction of campus department staff
 - Duplicating/Mail Room
 - Campus Safety
 - Library
 - Institutional Advancement
 - Accounting/Payroll

During my first 30 days:

- Reviewed the Hood.edu website
- Invited and accompanied me to a campus activity (athletic, social or educational)
- Accompanied and introduced me at a Staff Council meeting
- Checked in with me at least weekly to see if I had questions

Ongoing:

- Checked in with me regularly to see if I had questions
- Responded within one day when I reached out with questions or concerns
- Continue to invite/accompany me to campus activities
- Encouraged me to learn more and become more engaged with the Hood Mission, Vision and Core Values

Overall, my experience with my Blazer Buddy was:

Positive

Neutral

Negative

Please share your comments about your experience with the Blazer Buddy program. What did you like most? Where do you think we could improve? Did the experience reinforce your decision to consider Hood a good place to work?


For the Blazer Buddy:

This evaluation is available as a Microsoft Forms: [Blazer Buddy Program Evaluation \(Buddy\)](#)


The Professional Development Committee, in coordination with Human Resources, thanks you for acting as a Blazer Buddy for a new employee. We hope that this experience was rewarding for you and helped you feel more connected to Hood’s Mission, Vision and Core Values.

Please take a few moments to share your thoughts about your experience so we can continue to evaluate and improve the process:


On a scale of one to five stars (with five being the most positive), please rate the following:


I received appropriate training for my role as a Blazer Buddy 

I am confident in my knowledge of the following:

Hood’s Mission, Vision and Core Values 


Hood Staff Policies and how to find information I need 


Hood.edu content and how to find information I need 

Hood administrative departments and who I need to contact 

- HR and Benefits
- Accounting and Payroll
- Marketing (including duplicating/mailroom)
- Campus Safety
- Institutional Advancement
- Admissions (UG and Grad)

I feel I was a good match for my buddy 

Being a Blazer Buddy had a positive effective on my experience as a member of the Hood community 

I think my role had a positive effective on my assigned buddy 

Overall, my experience as a Blazer Buddy was:

Positive

Neutral

Negative

Please share your comments about your experience with the Blazer Buddy program. What did you like most? Where do you think we could improve? Did the experience reinforce your decision to consider Hood a good place to work?

