



CASE STUDY

Overview

The College Programming and Orientation (CPO) office at the University of Chicago was tasked with designing and launching a mentorship program that would connect newly admitted students and their families to the College. In 2018, UChicago partnered with Wisr to create the University of Chicago Mentorship Program (UCMP), which provides incoming new students with upper-class mentors via a custom Wisr site.

Less than one year after coupling mentorship programming with technology, about 2/3 (~1,100) of the incoming class has joined the UCMP Wisr site and were sorted into their mentorship communities. Students have the ability to connect with peers and their mentor using the recommended members tool from Wisr, and over 300 direct connections between students and mentors have been made.

The Strategy

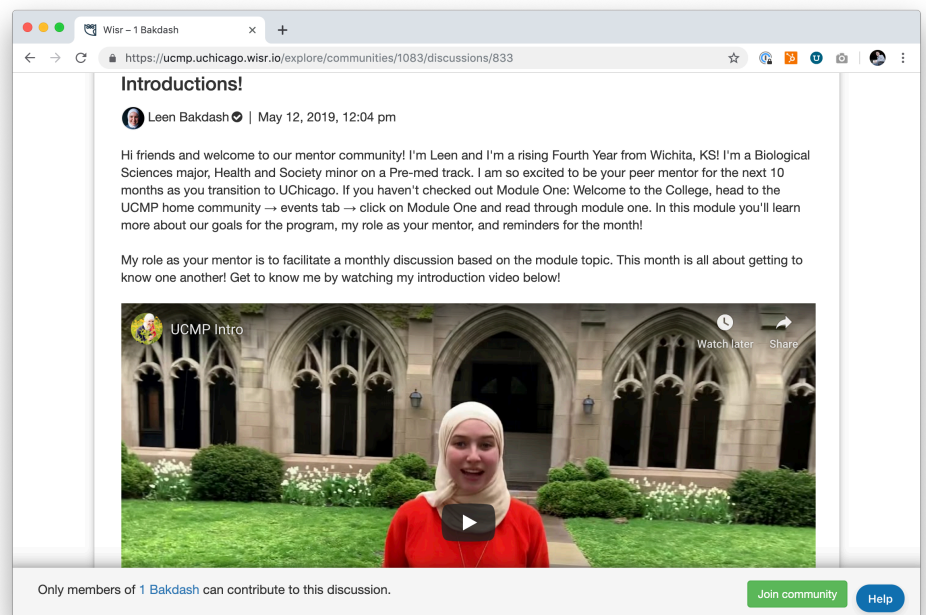
The College Programming and Orientation team outlined four primary goals that UCMP needed to meet:

1. Provide new students with a relatable connection to campus and the UChicago community
2. Deliver relevant information and resources through *one* accessible and easy-to-use tool (no more Facebook groups!)
3. Provide support and direction to new students related to their transition
4. Assist new students in building relationships with upper-class students

UCMP Design

ONE: MATCH STUDENTS WITH MENTORS

The program was designed to match all incoming new students (first-years and transfers) into a UCMP pod with one upper-class mentor. Each upper-class mentor was assigned about 30 new students, and the mentor was responsible for leading their digital community (private group on the Wisr site). Each mentor was made a community admin for their mentor pod.

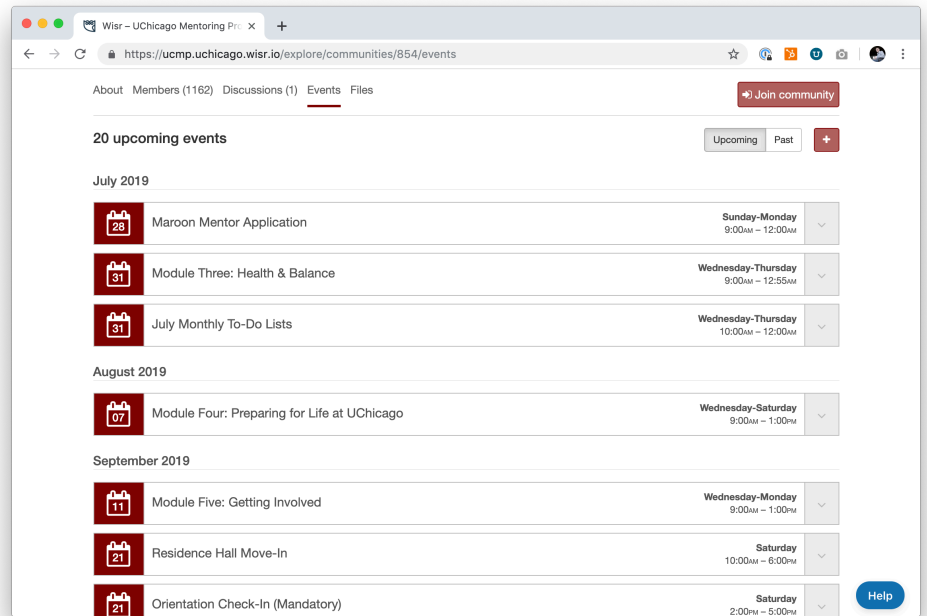


TWO: INTRODUCE LEARNING MODULES

UCMP Modules are monthly topics and content created to help students with their transition to the University. Modules have three components:

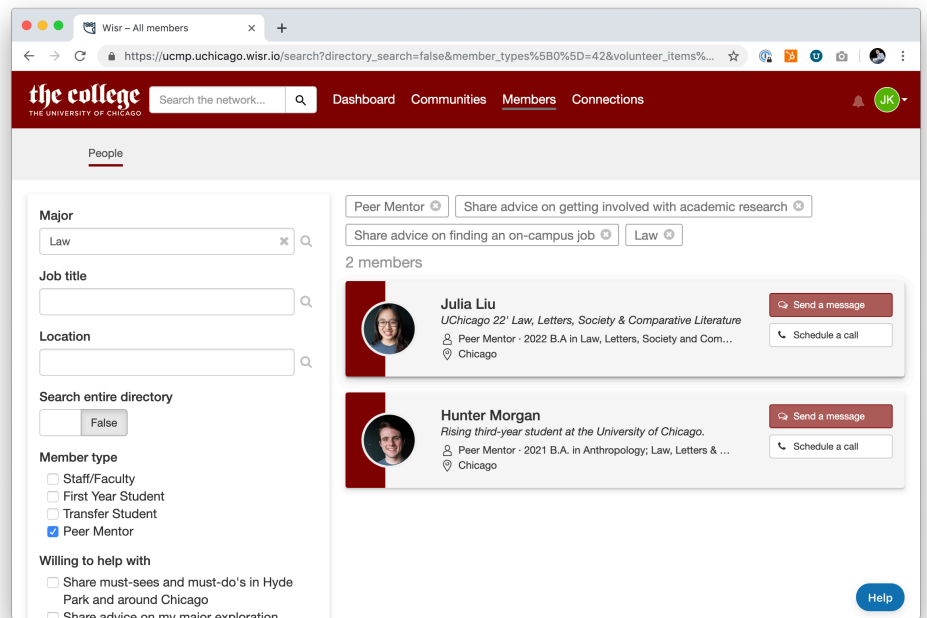
1. *Content*: The top five things to know about the specific topic, presented in a variety of methods such as videos, slides, handouts, and websites.
2. *Discussion*: A discussion thread and/or engagement activity related to the topic, facilitated by the peer mentor in the small group communities.
3. *Monthly To-Do Lists / Events*: Assigned activities

By using Wisr, the CPO team had a digital home for this content and took advantage of features such as communities, discussion threads, file uploads, and event postings.

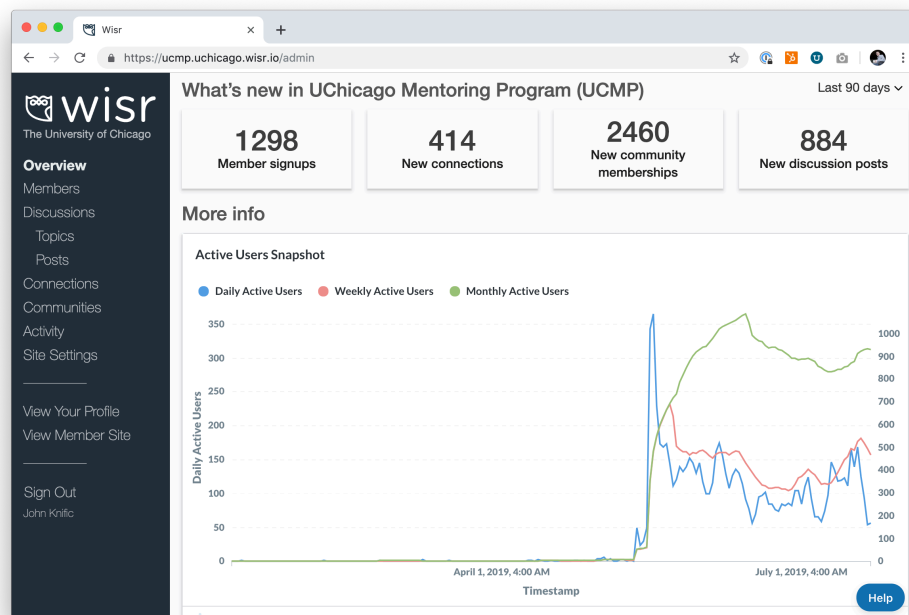


THREE: EMPOWER STUDENTS TO CONNECT

Incoming students were asking for opportunities to connect with other students prior to their arrival on campus. Through UCMP's Wisr site, which is mobile device-friendly, students were able to use the search feature to find peers with similar interests. This allowed UCMP to ensure students were supported with formal peer mentors, but also had the freedom to begin building relationships across both academic and personal interests with other incoming students.



The Impact



One year after its launch, about **two thirds of the incoming class** (~1,100 students) have created an account on Wisr and were sorted into mentorship pods. Students have the ability to connect with peers and their mentor using the recommended members tool from Wisr, and the **built-in analytics allow the CPO team to track the 300+ direct connections.**

Three main takeaways have emerged from the implementation:

1. Consistency in the platform you deliver messaging to incoming students is key. Students should start their involvement on Wisr as opposed to other social platforms to maintain one source of connection and information.
2. Be intentional about how you transition students into the next series of programs. Take advantage of strong existing programming, but ensure there's a strategy for moving students to the next dedicated program.
3. Identify partnership opportunities to support different student population needs. CPO partnered with the Office of International Affairs and created a Wisr community for international students to provide additional support for their unique needs.

UCMP is still a new program, so the CPO team is eager to partner with Wisr to act on these lessons learned for future incoming classes.

Learn more at getwisr.com or [talk to our team](#) today.