

FEMALE COACHING MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

This program is designed to increase the representation, depth of knowledge, and advancement of female coaches in cross country and track and field coaching positions at every level (including volunteer/ GA) as well as create industry accessibility

NEED

It is well documented that females in academic and athletic professional settings face many challenges both personally and professionally. Mentoring involves career guidance and support, but also personal, psychological, and social aspects. The need for formal mentor training and effective mentoring is increasingly recognized as a critical component in the success of new coach, and even mid-career coach. With women and minorities still underrepresented in collegiate athletics, conscientious mentoring and role modeling is especially crucial. By joining professional female coaching groups that aren't



directly connected to a workplace, women can glean more about the best practices of others. The atmosphere allows for greater ability to discuss challenges without receiving judgment from those directly within one's own workplace. Mentoring becomes easier among women at different levels, across industries, rather than the one-sided perspective you may get within one university.

GOAL

This program aims to support climate change as well as depth of female coaching experience through pairing individuals up with 1:1 year-round mentorship with a coach and adhering to set guidelines for successful consultations with esteemed leaders of the sport from a variety of backgrounds

WHO QUALIFIES AS A FEMALE COACHING MENTOR?

- Mentors are not expected to know everything, act as an expert on all subject areas, or meet every mentee need
- Mentors are expected to provide new perspective, orient to the coaching system the mentee is in, and provide unique

insight to the mentee's situation-specific questions, be willing to share some of their best practices, and open to telling their lessons-learned-the-hard-way stories

- Mentors should treat all dealings and discussions with the mentee in confidence, providing supportive guidance and constructive criticism
 - The strongest candidates selected will typically be represented by, those who have proved dependable/reliable on consistency of communication, those who express both interest, action, or passion towards the cause of leadership and mentorship, those with varied position perspectives, and coaches who were heavily recommended for this program
- Each year, a new coaching mentor/mentee partnership will be assigned to encourage the flow of knowledge, networking, and partnerships as well as drive diversity of learning across the years

BENEFITS PROVIDED BY PROGRAM

<i>For the mentee:</i>	<i>For the mentor:</i>
Individual recognition and encouragement	Potential recommendation letter highlighting specific strengths as a mentor following a successful year of connection/ learning
Third party feedback to the mentee from the perspective of all of their roles they step into, such as: leader, mentor, coach, recruiting coordinator, director of operations, communicator, etc.	Satisfaction in assisting in the development of a colleague and contributing to overall organizational climate change of athletics
Advice on balancing various responsibilities	Practice articulating your “why” and clarification of your own values and coaching philosophies
Best practices for hard and soft skills and alternative methods to accomplish same goals and perspective	Ideas for feedback and collaboration and a network of colleagues who have passed through the program
Knowledge of formal/informal rules for advancement	Knowing you've helped improve retention as well as prevention of attrition of new and mid-career coaches
Reduction of stress through psychosocial support	Knowledge you've increased commitment, productivity, and satisfaction of new and mid-career coaches
Zero professional repercussions in response to discussing potential choices or mistakes	Networking
Advice on the communication side of coaching as well as the physiological	
Constructive criticism and situation-specific feedback	

Responsibilities of mentor: *Year- Round communication in the form of phone calls/Skype/Facetime/email/in person/ Zoom*

- Listen and ask powerful questions; in-depth listening includes suspending judgment and listening for understanding
- Allow mentee to ultimately determine what decisions and actions are most appropriate for their situation
- Maintain and respect privacy, honesty, and integrity; violating these values negatively impacts relationships
- Willingness to field occasional “panic situation/confused moment” additional communications from mentee

Responsibilities of mentee: *Year- Round communication in the form of phone calls/Skype/Facetime/email/in person/ Zoom*

- Respect your mentor's time, experience, and alternative perspective to yours; maintain attitude of gratitude



SUGGESTED TALKING PROMPTS

These are suggestions and offered as a jumping off point. Feel free to go beyond these ideas (or not even use them), especially if mentee has specific areas of need they are vocalizing or requesting. Also, feel free to communicate more often than this plan suggests. This is merely a suggestion of talking prompts.

Additionally, across the year, the FCMP committee will provide a number of interviews, panels, and workshops with coaches to supplement professional development, camaraderie, and shared learning amongst all female coaches along with provide quarterly networking workshop zooms for the mentees to share best practices as well as lessons they are learning and space and time to connect with each other.

Communication #1: August before student-athlete academic year/camp etc. starts

- Mentor/Mentees: Compare backgrounds, work environments, athlete demographic working with, and roles during first communication.
- Discuss key players in professional & personal life that helped or hindered mentor as a female coach. Provide insight into your Recruiting process—how do you assess who you're going after or what factors into the culture you attempt to cultivate and what does planting seeds for that look like early on?

Communication #2: September

- How annual reviews are presented and how (if mentor is a head coach) mentor assesses the coaches underneath them based on the goals/overall program vision given to them to meet, and how the execution of this role make them feel. Also, something you wish a younger version of yourself had been mentored on earlier in your career.

Communication #3: October

- Mentor provides mentee one new option for professional growth or development to pursue across the year. Informally review mentee's hard skill strengths/weaknesses and soft skill strengths/weaknesses and look into opportunities to practice/grow/shadow/improve both.

Communication #4: November

- Speak to types of discrimination experienced as a coach/athlete attributed to gender/race/ethnicity/age/sexual orientation/religion. Mentor may advise how to report issues of behavioral misconduct (for themselves or for an athlete) and what protocol may look like at varying institutions. Speak to how to deal with tough situations from disciplining methods to reporting to mental health to what to do when strong support structures aren't in place at a university (athletic training, nutritionist, sport psychologist, academic advising, etc.).

Communication #5: December

- Mentor provides mentee one new option for professional growth or development to pursue across the year and advice on patterns you see athletes struggle with as freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors that mentees can learn to reflect on and have an eye out for.

Communication #6: January

- How you select your travel schedule and where to compete? What factors into your decisions regarding competition schedule?

Communication #7: February

- Speak to policies that would improve work/life balance & retention of mothers/female coaches in general; Speak to policies to improve or manage office politics

Communication #8: March

- Speak to cultural methods you had to adapt based on the program you were at, recruiting changes, coaching methods altered because of level of athlete, etc.

Communication #9: April

- Speak to navigating tough conversations with support staff ranging from administration to sports medicine to strength coaches on meeting your event-area and competition preparation needs, etc.

Communication #10: May

- Speak to how you decide on and deliver race plans/execution for championship meets and what you might alter in writing training in training design, team culture development, and recruitment strategies for a following year based upon what you observed this year within your team and regarding positives/negatives