

FEMALE COACHING MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

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

NEED

It is well documented that females in academic and athletic professional settings may 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. The atmosphere allows for greater ability to discuss challenges without receiving judgment from those directly within one's own workplace and learning best practices from varied institution structures. Mentoring becomes easier among women at different levels, across industries, rather than the one-sided perspective you may get within one program.

GOAL

This program aims to support climate change as well as depth of female coaching experience through pairing individuals 1:1 with a **year-round** versus singular-event mentorship, learning, and reflection opportunity with another coach. Exceptions will be made where a mentor approves or accepts taking on 2+ mentees or chooses to mentor them together as a cohort group, or keeping a mentee from a past year and adding on a new mentee to their cohort of learning/growing together.

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 mentee to the coaching system they're in (Division, NCAA, NAIA, JUCO, Club, High School, etc.) 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
- Treat all discussions with mentee in confidence, providing supportive guidance and constructive criticism
- The final candidates selected are proven at dependability/reliability to communicate with mentees, express interest, action, or passion towards our cause, offer varied perspectives, and coaches heavily recommended for this program

BENEFITS PROVIDED BY PROGRAM

<i>For the Mentee:</i>	<i>For the Mentor:</i>
Individual recognition and encouragement; Specific Situation feedback and individualized constructive criticism specific to you independent of program resources but rather how you interact within your circumstances	Practice articulating your "why", your decision-making rationale, and your coaching/training philosophies
Third party feedback from the perspective of all of their roles they step into (leader, mentor, coach, recruiting coordinator, director of operations, communicator, disciplinarian, liaison with AT/compliance, etc.) and balancing various responsibilities held	Satisfaction assisting development of a colleague Contributing to athletics organizational climate change
Best practices for hard (science, technique, execution) and soft skills Communication, group management, etc.) and alternative methods to accomplish same goals	Ideas for feedback from outside perspective and a network of colleagues who matriculated from FCMP program
Zero professional repercussions in response to discussing potential choices or mistakes and Insight around the formal/informal rules for advancement	Improving the retention and preventing the attrition of new and/or mid-career coaches
Reduction of stress through psychosocial support	Internal satisfaction from increasing self-esteem, success and satisfaction of new and mid-career coaches

RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Mentees:** Respect mentor's time, experience, alternative perspective and maintain an attitude of gratitude. Understand it is not a mentor's job to procure you your dream job—while they may provide guidance and/or networking, you must take action towards the roles and positions that you want longterm.
- **Mentors:** 1) Listen and ask powerful questions 2) In-depth listening includes suspending judgment and listening for understanding 3) Allow mentee to ultimately determine what decisions and actions are most appropriate for their situation 4) Maintain and respect privacy and integrity 5) violating these values negatively impacts relationships 6) Willingness to field occasional "panic situation/confused moment" additional communications from mentee

SUGGESTED TALKING PROMPTS/ TIMELINES

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 that they are vocalizing or requesting.*** Also, ***feel free to communicate more often than this plan suggests.***

You may utilize whatever technology platform best assists communication consistency for you and your mentee: Zoom, Phone calls, Whatsapp, Skype, In-person Meet-Ups, Text, Google Chat, etc.

Communication #1: September

- MENTEE is asked to initiate the first outreach and offer their availability to their mentee to connect with them
- 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
- Recruiting process/ Culture Process—Assessment/evaluate who and what factors into the culture you attempt to cultivate?

Communication #2: October

- Balancing Time and responsibilities
- Balancing how often you implement new learned information versus balance fine tuning what you already know/ reflected on from past years into what you do now with a particular group of athletes and staff

Communication #3: 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 #4: 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
- Potential Connection Opportunities in-person with yourself or with other coaches to learn from

Communication #5: January

- Travel schedule and competition schedule selection process—how you think and make decisions through this
- Recruiting method and model given resources, budget, constraints, and athlete-specific group needs

Communication #6: February

- Speak to your personal boundaries or your implemented policies to avoid burnout and/or improve retention of mother-coaches, young coaches having financial hardship staying in the profession
- Speak to policies to improve or manage office politics

Communication #7: March

- Speak to cultural coaching methods you adapted based on program you were at, specific athletes, staff, recruits, etc.
- Speak to guiding athletes through a longer than expected post-season based on how they competed indoors: U20's, etc.

Communication #8 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 #9: 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

Communication #10: June

- Guidance applying to positions, resume reviews, interviewing feedback, and sharing your own experiences navigating mobility
- Support on the language we use in championship settings and how we prepare the athlete's mind and body for post-season versus pre-season