Dear Future Mentor,

We wish to send you a heartfelt thank you for taking the time to develop meaningful relationships through our student development initiative, NetWerx. We hope the connections that you are about to build with students will spark memorable moments from your time as a student at UConn and offers invaluable guidance to current Huskies. As we build this connective experience, we value your input and welcome feedback in shaping the program. Included in this document are some general guidelines to help make the most out of the NetWerx virtual sessions with the students.

Please feel free to reach out to:

Julie Gehring, Director of Mentorship & Student Development at julie.gehring@uconn.edu or Katie Britt, Leadership Program Coordinator at katie.britt@uconn.edu with any questions you might have.

We look forward to supporting you along this journey and look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,
Julie and Katie

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**Goal Statement**

The Werth Institute Leadership Coaching Program seeks to support current UConn students on their pathway to leadership and career exploration.

- **The first objective of this goal is to increase the number of meaningful connections between University of Connecticut students and alum/mentors.**

- **The second objective is to foster conversations between the students and alumni with a focus on the entrepreneurial mindset and career exploration within entrepreneurship, technology and innovation fields.**

- **The third objective is to recognize barriers students may face accessing resources and social capital.**

In the context of these objectives, the relationship is intended to promote self-efficacy skills for students including relationship building, networking, and self-advocacy. This in turn will foster feelings of competence and independence as they grow their entrepreneurial mindset, personal identity and create their own personal pathways to leadership.
Match Initiation

In recognition of these goals, students will be asked to identify three topics they would like to discuss with their mentor over a minimum of 4 thirty minute sessions over a period of 8 weeks. Please review the chart below that identifies some of the discussion topics.

To help facilitate the match initiation process, an introductory e-mail will be sent by program staff to both the mentor and student. The email will contain a brief background about the match as well as a link to a personalized Google Drive Folder. Included in the folder is an Agreement Form to be completed by the mentor and student. We ask the matches to complete the form during their first session, as it will help drive and plan out the subsequent conversations.

From a programmatic standpoint, we ask that the mentor and mentee "reply all" to the match e-mail, until the first conversation and match agreement is completed. This helps program staff to know if the connection has been made. If for some reason the mentee does not reach out within the first few days of the e-introduction, please contact program staff and they will check in with the student.

Communication

NetWerx Mentors are expected to connect with their mentee bi-weekly over video chat. It is recommended coaches and students discuss their respective schedules and establish a regular time for the bi-weekly video calls to take place. In addition, it will be important to identify the video conferencing platform you both wish to use (Zoom, Facetime, Google Hangouts, etc). If at any time the coach or student feels they are uncomfortable with the flow of communication within the relationship, they are asked to contact the program director who will seek to facilitate resolution of this issue.

POSSIBLE DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Working to set and define goals
- Helping to develop strategies to meet goals
- Addressing academic questions
- Motivation
- Building self confidence
- Increasing networking and communication skills
Supporting the Relationship

Coaches and students are expected to be accountable to each other and the program. In the event that schedules need to change the pair must contact one another in a timely fashion. Other than in the case of an emergency, a minimum of 24 hours notice is recommended. Please confirm with one another that the message has been received and that the meeting is cancelled. Accountability is a critical element in building strong relationships.

One way to help guide the students and make the most out of the time spent together, is to give the student “homework” surrounding their discussion topics to help guide conversations. At the end of each session it is recommended that the coach ask the student to summarize some of the main points or highlights discussed during the video conversation. Coaches should then point students in a direction of exploration for the following week and ask them to return with some tangible results. In the past, coaches have asked students to research ventures or identify leaders that peak their interest, seek out relevant news articles related to their field of interest or build out their Linked-In profile.

Closure

At the end of the eight weeks, we ask the match to review the Agreement sheet and comment on progress made. Coaches may also wish to write the student a short e-mail recognizing their commitment to the session. We have noticed that some coaches and students wish to continue a second round of coaching and we are more than happy to help facilitate the continued journey. If you wish to continue with your mentee or sign-up to work with additional students, please contact the program director. The Werth Institute welcomes feedback to help shape the program and to help the students grow. Short follow-up surveys may be sent out about your experience.

We anticipate this program will involve a minimum of two hours over eight weeks in 30 minute increments. We realize extenuating circumstances arise in everyone’s life or that the relationship may not be a good fit. Research shows that a mentoring relationship that is viewed as “failed” can cause more harm than never having a mentoring relationship to begin with. Therefore, it is imperative that the mentor and mentee follow specific closure guidelines which will be provided at the conclusion of the coaching sessions to begin with.

I joined the NetWerx program as a mentor because I can’t wait to be on a fellow husky’s team. Having this program housed under the Werth Institute sets the tone of how to build a career and a life around an entrepreneurial mindset, allowing us mentors to cultivate creative ideas and plans alongside our mentees.

- Bianca D’Agostino ’18