



Women's Leadership Institute

Student Cohort – Coaching and Mentoring

Fall 2023 – Spring 2024



Welcome to the Women's Leadership Institute Student Cohort Coaching and Mentoring! The purpose of this aspect of the WLI student cohort program is leadership development, goal setting for personal growth, and building a supportive community.

The following outlines the WLI student cohort coaching and mentoring process and provides information to help all parties be successful in this critical aspect of leadership development.

The Benefits

A known skill for transformative leaders is the ability to support, advocate, coach, and mentor. Coaching and mentoring, in particular, are powerful tools in both personal and professional contexts to produce growth and achieve goals. The benefits of a successful coaching/mentoring relationship are innumerable. Some of the immediate value of the WLI student cohort coaching and mentoring are:

- An opportunity to lead. Cohort coaching/mentoring allows student leaders to practice these critical skills of successful leadership.
- An opportunity to learn. Coaching/mentoring must be understood as not a one-way street but rather a bi-directional relationship. Regardless of one's role (mentor or mentee), there is much to learn from others!
- An opportunity to add value. This is an opportunity to add to one's practical experience, resume, and give back to others.

The Goals

The goals of the program can be simply stated as **building leadership characteristics** and **enhancing personal growth, cultivating self-awareness, and overall development**.

These goals can be further elaborated as follows:

- Starting a peer coaching/mentoring network and providing experience in the coaching/mentoring process.
- Training students to work on skills such as self-reflection, establishing a coaching/mentoring relationship framework, maintaining and nurturing bilateral learning, and moving themselves and their mentees ahead in their stated goals.
- Providing an opportunity for engagement between students, the WLI campus team, and the WLI executive board, and positioning the student leaders within a supportive professional environment.

The Mentors

Committed, ignited students returning after at least one year in the WLI cohort program and determined to be in good standing (i.e., 80% attendance record the previous year) will serve as the peer coaches/mentors. These students will help lead and mentor, coach, guide, and support new students in the cohort program. Each returning student will be assigned two-three new students to make a small peer mentoring group.

Engagement Opportunities

The mentors will be asked to help create a supportive and inclusive community with their mentees. Additional responsibilities will include:

- Checking in via the WLI D2L community group.
 - The expectation is there will be, at a minimum, two touch points across each semester (fall and spring) for a total of four in the academic year.
- Attend two in-person mentoring check-ins.
 - There will be one check-in in the fall and one in the spring.
 - This will provide a progress report on the outlined goals and support for the process. Concerns can be addressed, guidance and resources provided, and progress tracked.
- Attend two mentoring/coaching sessions connected to the fall kick-off and spring capstone.
 - There will be one in-person session in the fall and one in-person session in the spring.

The Mentees

Motivated, newly accepted students into the WLI cohort program will be placed with one to two colleagues and a returning student as their peer mentor.

Engagement Opportunities

The mentees are responsible for engaging in the coaching/mentoring process and taking ownership of their development. This will manifest by:

- Asking questions and starting discussions in the D2L group chat.
- Reaching out to your mentor/group via email/D2L group chat with progress reports.
- Attending the mentorship touch points in fall and spring.
- Attending the coaching /mentoring sessions in the fall and spring.

Orientation

There will be an initial session with a WLI executive board member and executive coach, Stacy Sollenberger. In this session, introductions and getting-to-know-you activities will take place, best practices/definitions/guidelines of coaching/mentoring will be covered (e.g., mentoring vs. coaching, active listening, goal setting, confidentiality, effective communication, and problem-solving), and goals for the year will be set.

Optional Resources

Montgomery, B. (2017). Mapping a mentoring roadmap and developing a supportive network for strategic career advancement. Sage Open, 1-13. DOI: 10.1177/2158244017710288