

RF for SUNY Mentoring Program

Select Wednesdays at 1:00pm

The RF for SUNY Mentoring Program connects knowledgeable Mentors with Protégés from across the system who are looking to further develop their talents and expertise. Mentors and Protégés participate side-by-side in a learning cohort experience. Guided by our commitment to creating generations of future leaders, the program is modeled on the faculty-student mentor-protégé relationship.

The 2024 cohort will be held on select Wednesdays at 1:00pm, September 4 – December 4. Depending on the topic, sessions will range from 1 ½ to 2 hours.

Mentors & Proteges are expected to meet once per month outside of class time.

All RF/SUNY employees working in Research Administration and Commercialization, directly or indirectly, are welcome to apply. The cohort is limited to 40 participants.

September 3, 3:30pm-4:30pm | Pre-Meet (Mentor's Only)

In this pre-meet, Mentors will define "their why" and co-create the vision for our shared Mentor Program experience.

September 4, 1:00pm-3:00pm | Program Kick-Off: Becoming Indispensable

In this first session, mentors and proteges will have a chance to meet each other and their small group, laying the groundwork for a successful learning environment. The cohort will also participate in a guided discussion about what new hire success looks like and what it takes to become indispensable.

September 18, 1:00pm-2:30pm | Making Clear Commitments

In this first formal module, participants will work through making clear commitments up, down, and sideways with work counterparties. Participants will practice articulating expectations, iterating towards understanding, and establishing accountability to ensure alignment.

October 2, 1:00pm-2:30pm | Having Hard Conversations

Participants will develop the necessary skills and confidence to navigate difficult conversations with grace and efficacy. Through guided discussions and role-playing exercises, participants will learn techniques for managing emotions, sharing observations, and working toward mutual understanding.



October 16, 1:00pm-2:30pm | [Owning Your Own Development](#)

This module empowers learners to take control of their own skill-building opportunities. By breaking down adult learning theory and explaining how self-development can work, learners can adopt an internal locus of control. This module lays the foundation for ongoing professional development.

October 30, 1:00pm-2:30pm | [Crafting a Culture of Belonging](#)

In this session the cohort will examine the transformative power of belonging and why it is essential for creating a supportive and engaging workplace. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the significance of inclusion and its role in cultivating a sense of belonging among team members. The session will provide valuable insights into kind and healthy communication practices that promote mutual respect and understanding.

November 13, 1:00pm-2:30pm | [Contributing to Team Culture](#)

This module guides participants through the essential elements of building a strong team culture. Through reflective exercises and interactive discussions, participants will assess their team's current culture and articulate the principles and practices that will support their team in achieving their goals going forward.

November 20, 1:00pm-2:30pm | [Communicating for Impact](#)

This module provides participants with foundational skills in business communication, with a specific emphasis on preparing and delivering large-scale presentations. Through practical exercises and expert guidance, participants will learn how to structure compelling presentations, engage diverse audiences, and convey complex information with clarity and confidence, equipping them to excel in high-stakes communication scenarios.

December 4, 1:00pm-3:00pm | [Graduation & Protégé Speeches](#)

The program culminates with each protege delivering a closing speech on a leadership topic of their choice. As a capstone for the program, the graduation serves as a testament to the proteges' leadership potential and their dedication to personal and professional development.

Pre-requisites:

All protégés must complete the *New Hire Success Learning Initiative* located in BizLibrary prior to September 4th.

Mentors are encouraged but not required to complete the course.



Design Team: Campus Training Contacts

Application Review Team: Jennifer Rudes-Upstate, Liz Brady, SBU, Michele Hass, SBU, Erinn McDowell, Upstate, Jenna Lehr-CO, Nadia Digges-CO, Kathleen Caggiano-Siino-CO



Meredith Whipple Callahan

Meredith Whipple Callahan brings two decades of experience as a strategy consultant and line executive to her work in leadership development. Deeply fluent in business, Meredith helps clients find clarity, meaning, and action. Meredith's business career began at Bain & Company where she worked on due diligence and strategy for technology, healthcare, and private equity companies. Thereafter, she worked at Bridgewater Associates, the world's largest hedge fund, as a manager. As a leadership executive, Meredith designed, built, and managed global leadership programs as well

as led succession planning and executive development functions. Meredith is a certified coach, experienced facilitator, published author, and international speaker. Her publications include *Indispensable: How to Succeed at Your First Job and Beyond* (2018) and *The Intentional Life: Reflections from Conscious Living* (2019). Meredith holds a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from Yale University and a Master of Business Administration from Stanford Graduate School of Business. She has been featured on CNN, in the Chicago Tribune, and on numerous podcasts and local media outlets.



Dr. Lakeya Cherry

Dr. Lakeya Cherry, DSW, MSSW, ACC is an executive leadership coach who has dedicated her career to the growth and development of individuals and the organizations they are a part of. As an ICF Certified Coach and Certified Dare to Lead™ Facilitator, she believes that when leaders are empowered to reach their fullest potential, they will be able to support those around them more effectively. It was her own experience with coaching that ignited her passion to support individuals, teams, and organizations to lead more authentically and courageously. Her former clients include

Headspace, Glassdoor, LA Cleantech Incubator (LACI), Snap, Cisco, The Salvation Army, The California Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, California Mental Health Advocates for Children, Black Administrators of Child Welfare, and the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute.



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Jenna Lehr

Jenna Lehr, is the Deputy Learning Officer at the RF. With over 15 years of expertise in training, employee communications, facilitation, leadership, recognition, and project management, she inspires, trains, and retains loyal employees who deliver outstanding results. Throughout her career, she has found success by having an unwaveringly positive attitude and tremendous tenacity. Leading employees, teams, and organizations to achieve their greatest potential is her passion. She holds several professional credentials, including CTT+, SHRM-SCP & SPHR. She is the mother of two small children, and

when she has the time, she likes to read, swim, listen to podcasts, and travel.



Nadia S. Digges

Nadia S. Digges is the Learning & Development Coordinator for The Research Foundation for SUNY. Nadia has over 13 years of experience in compliance and learning and development focusing on system administration, engagement, and process optimization. Nadia has and continues to serve on many design teams, is an active participant of the well-being team, and regularly provides cross-functional support throughout the Research Foundation.

Nadia is a Certified Compliance and Ethics Professional and a member of the Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics. She is also

a certified SHRM-CP. She lives in upstate NY with her husband and two daughters. They love to cook, read, and adventure together.



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