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UWF Executive Mentor Program continues to connect students with business leaders

Pensacola, Fla. – March 23, 2016 – The University of West Florida College of Business Executive Mentor Program welcomed its fourth class, matching 50 students with mentors from businesses throughout the Northwest Florida community.

The Executive Mentor Program accepts new participants each fall and spring and provides mentors and mentees a unique space to learn from one another. Mentees work with executives from throughout Northwest Florida to receive professional development, networking opportunities and one-on-one guidance for their career aspirations. Mentors counsel, influence and prepare the next generation of business leaders by sharing their stories, knowledge, skills and advice, while offering students support and friendship.

Dr. Sherry Hartnett, director of the Executive Mentor Program and clinical assistant professor of business, explains the impact the Executive Mentor Program has on participating students.

“One of the things I am most proud of is that research shows the program increases the students’ soft skills: professionalism, communication, self-confidence, and networking,” she said. “Equally important, more than 95 percent of our participants have gained jobs in their field after graduation. I truly believe the Executive Mentor Program helps prepare students for successful lives and careers,” Hartnett added.

The Executive Mentor Program has had an average of 50 students and 50 mentors participate each year since it launched in Fall 2012, with several community leaders contributing for more than one term. John Hosman, a partner with FS Advisors, Inc., has served as a mentor since the first class in 2012 and finds the experience rewarding.

“The Executive Mentor Program connects students with business leaders who can provide advice and the intangibles that are not typically taught in the classroom,” Hosman said. “It has been a great opportunity to pass along advice that I wish I would have received when graduating.”

Hosman said he discusses a number of topics with his mentees, including professional dress, email etiquette and how to create a transition plan from college to career.

“Two of my mentees have gotten jobs because of their involvement in the program,” he added.

Students are selected for the competitive program based on campus and community service, prior academic and leadership experience, their ability to meet the eligibility requirements and maintain academic goals, and their willingness to be active participants. Gabriel Glaysher, a senior business management student, is entering his second year in the program. His mentor is Brian Baumgardner, president and CEO of West Florida Hospital.

“Having a mentor has been a great networking opportunity for me,” Glaysher says. “When a CEO of a company can meet with me for an hour and focus entirely on helping me succeed in my future career after graduation, it demonstrates how much my mentor cares about impacting students at UWF.”

The Executive Mentor Program, open to full-time juniors, seniors and graduate students, matches College of Business scholars with influential community business leaders who share their personal and professional experience. For more information, visit uwf.edu/executivementor.

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