

VERSION 2.4

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PROJECT EMBER

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY – CSET MENTORING PROGRAM



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The EMBER Program, (Experienced Mentors Bettering Emerging Researchers), is being developed to add a stronger foundation to that of the college of science, engineering, and technology. The beauty of this program is that it focuses on a twofold moral purpose that all members will add to and benefit from. By using our talented and experienced CSET scholars, we will set up a program that teaches juniors and seniors how to become mentors. Mentors will first focus on working together to develop each other's capacity to mentor. Upon finishing training, they will be paired with CSET freshmen and sophomores and work with them as friends, not teachers. This unique experience will transform both the mentor and the mentee, and great triumphs are expected within the first year of this group's founding.

THE OBJECTIVE

Increase retention rate among CSET majors at JSU. Create networks for students to mature at a faster rate and younger age. Encourage students by empowering them to take active roles as leaders. Create more well rounded students by improving their success inside and outside the classroom. Develop a program that will become incorporated into the legacy of JSU.

THE OPPORTUNITY

We will ensure that all CSET scholars involved in the program have a working resume that they are proud of. We plan to help mentees gain access into on-campus CSET programs such as LSMAMP, RISE, NOBCCHE, ACS and others. These students would be able to perform better in these programs with the skills they learn from the ember program. We would like to help all CSET scholars involved apply for paid summer internships. Students who are apart of the mentoring program are expected to become great resources to pull from for future mentors and other necessary positions on campus.

THE RATIONALE

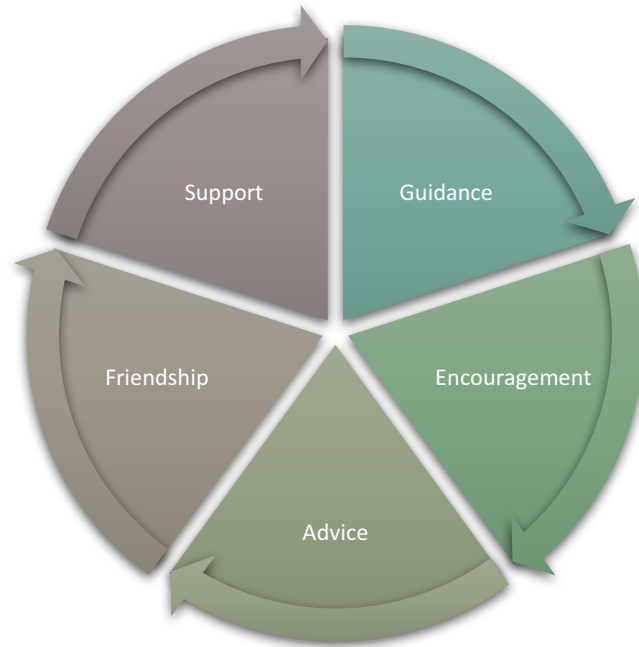
Undergraduates tend to be very unaware of all the opportunities that are offered to them on campus. Many students find out about activities and programs really late in their academic careers, and lose the ability to become fully integrated. Students who have excelled at Jackson State have a plethora of knowledge that they can share with undergraduates who feel lost. This lack of communication from more experienced students to those who are novices can be attributed to a lack of mentorship programs. Many CSET undergraduates who plan on going to graduate school are also inexperienced due to a lack of hands on real world experiences. This includes laboratory work, robotic designs, shadowing, and many other opportunities that build resumes. Making sure that students participate in many research projects before they graduate will ensure that they stand out when applying to graduate schools or work positions, and even give them more skills to feel prepared. Students feel as if there is no help for them, and sometimes switch majors in an attempt to find help. A lot of students struggle in STEM courses and lack enough encouragement and guidance to keep them interested in their major. Teachers at our university are already split between being a researcher and a teacher, and can't be expected to take on the role as a mentor for all their students.

EXECUTION STRATEGY

Mentor Qualifications

Every mentor who plans to help freshmen will be required to attend meetings that promote guidance on mentoring strategies as well as enrichment for successful mentor relationships. We expect all of our mentors to truly want to help others along the path of CSET, both inside and outside the lab and class. Mentors will be required to have attended JSU for at least 1 year. Mentors must also have a classification as a junior or a senior. Mentors must have at least a 3.5 G.P.A. Mentors will be selected from all stem fields, and upon acceptance and completion of training, will be introduced to groups of 5-8 mentees that they will work with at JSU for the entire semester. Mentors who can speak to their ability to nurture a student and provide constructive criticism are necessary in the program. Mentors are not tutors, but act more as academic coaches to help encourage work and success amongst their mentees.

Things a Mentor Can Provide



Mentor Selection

A total of 16 positions will be filled within the first 2 weeks of school (Fall, 2016). The college of science, engineering and technology has a total of 8 departments. For each department, there will be two mentors who will work together to inform and guide the students in their field. Mentors will be selected by talking to the chair of each department and asking them for recommendations for students that have excelled and have the capacity to serve as a mentor for their respective field. Upon making this list, students will be contacted over the summer and informed on the responsibilities and requirements for becoming a mentor. Should mentors decide to apply for positions, they must submit a statement of purpose by September 1, 2016. Prospective students will then be given informal interviews the first week of school and selected for the program.

Mentor Training and Working Schedules

Mentors will be required to attend every meeting. During the meetings, there will be a central training topic to help all students become more confident in mentoring. This space will also be where mentors can talk about successes they are having and help they need with their mentees. The mentees are allowed to come to the meetings if they would like to share their opinions on how to help the program, or what they really like about the program.

The duality of the meetings comes from the fact that mentors will talk about a common goal and be given handouts to help them guide their mentees. The second goal of the meeting is to go over mentoring strategies to increase the confidence of mentors and the comfort of students. The use of guidance and then encouragement should help keep mentors informed while allowing them to help their mentees every week.

Every Friday, there will be a meeting where mentors will be required to provide feedback on the progress and efficacy of each module. Mentees will also be encouraged to provide their thoughts, and are expected to put forward a good faith effort within two weeks of the announcement of each module. This progress should be relayed to the mentors either in person or in a ~5 sentence progress report. Any pertinent materials should also be sent. For example, within 2 weeks of having the meeting on resumes, mentees should either email it to mentors, or preferably meet with them with a printed copy to revise with mentors. These materials should also be forwarded to the Exec. Committee for further revision.

Training Schedule

Training	Time	Location	Duration
<i>Meet the EMBER Exec. Committee</i>	September 2, 2016	IA	1 Hour
<i>Welcome to the Program - Overview</i>	4:00-5:00pm		
<i>Mentor vs. Tutor</i>	September 9, 2016	IA	2 Hours
<i>Learning About Our Strengths and Weaknesses</i>	4:00-5:00pm		
<i>A Collection of Successes</i>	September 16, 2016	IA	2 Hour
<i>Resumes, Personal Statements, LinkedIn</i>	4:00-5:00pm		
<i>Elevated Conversations</i>	September 23, 2015	IA	2 Hour
<i>Different Ways for Us All to Communicate</i>	4:00-5:00pm		
<i>Pairing of Mentees</i>	September 30, 2015	IA	1 Hour
<i>Creating Our Groups for This Semester</i>	4:00-5:00pm		

The eight-hour training course must be completed to ensure that our mentors are ready to work with a group of students on their own effectively. During the weeks of the training course, mentees will be selected by the scholar's academy. A comprehensive list will be developed and students will be paired at the end of September

EXAMPLE TIMELINE FOR EXECUTION (FALL 2016)

Modules	Time	Location	Duration
<i>Study Skills Group Meeting and Match Mentors with Mentees</i>	October 9, 2016 4:00-5:00pm	JAP 221	1 Hour
<i>Part 2: Communication Strategies</i>			
<i>Study Skills Group Meeting and Match Mentors with Mentees</i>	October 16, 2016 4:00-5:00pm	JAP 221	1 Hour
<i>Part 3: Active Listening</i>			
<i>Making Yourself Known to Your Teachers</i>	October 23, 2016 4:00-5:00pm	JAP 221	1 Hour
<i>Part 4: Healthy Relationships</i>			
<i>Finding Research Groups on Campus</i>	October 30, 2016 4:00-5:00pm	JAP 221	1 Hour
<i>Part 5: “Peer” Mentoring</i>			
<i>Recommendation Letters</i>	November 6, 2016 4:00-5:00pm	JAP 221	1 Hour
<i>Part 6: Team Bonding</i>			
<i>Personal Statement</i>	November 13, 2016 4:00-5:00pm	JAP 221	1 Hour
<i>Part 7: Becoming Engaged with our Surroundings</i>			
<i>Resume Writing Group Meeting</i>	November 20, 2016 4:00-5:00pm	JAP 221	1 Hour
<i>Part 8: Comfort Zones</i>			
<i>Studying for Finals</i>	November 27, 2016 4:00-5:00pm	JAP 221	1 Hour
<i>Part 9: Problem Solving</i>			
<i>Summer Internships</i>	December 4, 2016 4:00-5:00pm	JAP 221	1 Hour
<i>Part 10: Reflections</i>			

The mentors attend each meeting so that they may receive materials to use to help them work with their students. At the meetings, different strategies will be talked about and questions will be proposed to ensure that everyone is fully prepared for next weeks’ topic. Each mentor will then work with their mentees at their desired time to disseminate information and track the growth of students.

Mentor Termination

The following reasons are grounds for termination from the mentoring program. Students who do not abide by the rules will be dismissed from the program with no chance for reacceptance into the program. The following include

1. Mentors who are unable to attend more than two meetings.
2. Mentors who do not relay information to their mentees in a timely manner.
3. Mentors who do not regularly meet up with their group once a week.
4. Mentors who no longer show a willingness to help students in their group.
5. Mentors showing inappropriate behavior that is not conducive to a work environment

COST OF RUNNING THE PROGRAM

To enhance the experience of the mentors and mentees, we want to create a sense of unity. This will be realized through many different approaches.

- Social events where mentors and mentees can speak to each other on a personal level once a month will help keep students interested in the program and more willing to build their network.
- T-shirts to give each student a feeling that they are part of a team, and not alone in their endeavors will build comradery while also marketing the program around campus to increase awareness.
- Head mentors who take initiative to bring the program to higher levels and constantly devote many hours outside of the program to enrich others experience will be compensated for their time. Only a few mentors will be given this title and those students will be chosen by Dr. Tchounwou upon reviewing their work behavior and productivity.
- With all these ideas in mind, money should be allocated for food, t-shirts, and stipends for some workers.

CONCLUSION

This program is in year one of development. Our focus will be on building up resources and also gathering support. We must create a strong foundation in order to ensure the success of the program for next year. The program will reach self sustainability by year four, Fall 2020, so the next three years must focus on recruitment and training. In order to gain support for further years, the progress of mentors and mentees will be collected and compiled at the end of each semester.