**Director of Student Government Mentorship Program**

As I reflect back on my journey with the Student Government Mentorship Program (SGMP), I am in complete humbleness as to what the program has become and accomplished this year. I have to keep reminding myself that this was not a position I sought, like many other of my SG positions, rather I was asked to fulfill it under the Sinna+Savani administration. My experience with SGMP will be something I hang on to and remember, as the individuals I interacted with and outcome is astonishing. When I was asked to take on this position, I remember being told “We know you have a lot on your plate now with SG, but we would love for you to be the Co-Director of SGMP.” Looking back now, my response was unsurprising, “What’s the time commitment?” I laugh as I look back at my question and their response because it was “biweekly meetings”. Yeah, right! 😊 I laugh not just because of the response, but because my only worry at that point seemed to be the time commitment; if I had only known what SGMP had turned to over the next year, time commitment would have been the least of my concerns.

**Effectiveness. Impact.** Over and over, you can see a pattern in my writing and my positions; “I seek impact”. I do not seek titles, but rather the impact I can make with people around me. That impact is both on others and myself, as I pledged to take SGMP as a learning experience for myself as well. As stated previously, SGMP has Co-Directors in order to ensure for students the exposure to SG members that have had different experiences and paths in SG. I loved the idea of Co-directing with someone, as that meant that the entire responsibility of SGMP would not be on my shoulders. We would divide and conquer! We would lift each other up! We would inspire one another! Or maybe we won’t. I found that my most difficult experience in SGMP was working alongside of the Co-Director. This is when I realized that leadership requires vision, and not just for me but shared vision from the leadership of organizations. I soon became the sole Director of SGMP, and recruited 1 assistant in the Fall semester and 3 assistants in the Spring semester whom were Fall 2018 SGMP mentees.

**The basics.** As the Director of SGMP, I interacted with many individuals in order to ensure the success of the program. This included recruiting mentors, mentees, and having connections with all of SG (senate, videography, marketing, etc.) as well as different parts of campus. Recruitment played a large role in kicking off SGMP, as we relied on experienced SG members to hold mentor roles and become oriented with expectations, as well as reaching students from all around campus to apply. As the program switched from a one-year commitment, to one-semester, it was decided that each mentor would have two mentees for that semester so mentees can find a support system with more individuals in SGMP/SG. There were 36 mentees in the Fall semester! Though by the end of the semester this number became 30, but it was expected as expectations and accountability were highly enforced. Isn’t that what leaders should expect? Accountability? High expectations? I knew we were raising the next generation of leaders and I wanted them to become the best version of themselves, both on campus and the professional world. Additionally, I made it a goal to recruit and retain the most diverse SGMP over this year through reaching out personally to individuals or organizations that housed much diversity.

**Mentorship.** I have experienced the wonders of mentorship over the past few years and appreciated those who provided it in my life. Before I entered into this role, SGMP had a very specific mentorship goal and it was to have more students running for positions in Student Government. But when looking at retention rates, that goal was unrealistic and thus unachieved. Not just were previous SGMP mentees not running for positions, but they were not returning to SG as members in any capacity. Thus this mentorship was about inspiring not just future SG members, but learning about inclusive leadership traits, engaging in effective discussion and debate, as well as learning the details of the inner workings of SG. If students gained the intended skills and foundation that SGMP had the vision for, then they would become effective individuals both on campus and in their personal lives. Is that a stretch? Absolutely not. True mentorship should not be timed or scripted, but it’s about investing in an individual in multiple capacities, even if the process is through Student Government.

**The process.** Over the past year, though two different cohorts of mentees (fall and spring), I met with mentees once a week. During those meetings we discussed the inner workings of SG, brainstormed initiatives, had critical conversations about leadership, and students were given a chance to ask questions freely and engage in conversations regarding controversy on campus. Students had the opportunity to hear from different campus leaders and how they achieved their positions. Speakers were asked to speak about how they “climbed the ladder” and adversities and challenges they might have faced. In addition, mentors and mentees were required to meet biweekly and were sent monthly check-ins in order to assess those meetings and overall communication/engagement of their mentees, as well as opinion on the program. Additionally, the Spring 2019 class had the opportunity to hold a mock senate where they all had placards (as Senators do!) and wrote their names, as well as positions they want to earn. They were told to “Speak it to existence” and with their dedication, I am positive they will.

**Achievements.** The Fall 2018 cohort of mentees was the first “graduating” class of SGMP. A celebration was held in the 1819 Innovation Hub in the beginning of Spring semester which worked as a graduation for Fall 2018 mentees and a convocation for Fall 2019 mentees. Both classes of mentees received a tour of the 1819 and graduating mentees received certificates for their achievements. Previous mentees shared their words of wisdom, and a few sang SGMP-themed cover songs! This 2018-2019 year has proudly had the most diverse class of SGMP mentees! What is more impressive and truly warms my heart, is the number of SGMP mentees that ran for and achieved Senator positions during the Student Government elections!! Since the campus-wide Student Government elections, numerous SGMP mentees have applied and run for other positions on campus, whether that is in college Tribunals, Student Orientation Leaders, etc. These students were able to see leaders of diverse backgrounds in leadership positions and thus believed that they, too, can aim high and will achieve. As I near the end of my SGMP Director role, I hope to see continuity and innovation in the program, and the values of diversity, open-mindedness, accountability, and genuine/effective mentorship held highly as the program continues to advance and achieve.

**P.S.:** Look at the outstanding SGMP logo that was designed by Fall 2018 SGMP mentees! 😊