June 8, 2015

Newell/Spangenberg “It Takes a Mentor” Program
SEEDS You Choose Leadership Award Final Report

First off, we would like to thank SEEDS not only for giving us the opportunity to start our mentorship program, It Takes a Mentor, here at the University of Miami, but for all the opportunities this program funds throughout the university. Having benefitted from the work SEEDS does and attended many SEEDS leadership events, it was an honor to be able to contribute to what SEEDS is doing here at UM and continue the SEEDS legacy of striving to make a better university for everyone.

Our program was divided into two parts, the first of which matched UM undergraduate students looking for professional and personal mentorship with faculty and staff whose careers and interests dovetailed with their own. We matched, for example, students interested in a career in finance with people working in UM’s accounting offices, and students looking for general career advising with faculty who work in their chosen field of study. After matching mentees with their mentors, we requested that mentors and mentees meet at least twice over the course of the Spring semester, and were delighted to hear that some pairs mutually decided to meet weekly. Twenty-five students applied to be mentees, a higher number than we were expecting but which speaks to a desire among students for mentoring opportunities. Our goal was to set into motion relationships that could help propel students into the next phase of their professional lives, whether it was transitioning to a post-university position or helping to navigate the university system. We would like to think that this portion of our program was successful, as many relationships began that we have been told are likely to last for a very long time.

The second half of our mentorship program was centered on engaging mentors and mentees in a series of leadership and professional workshops. These three events—Leadership Strengths, Reflecting on U, and Networking—were intended to help not only mentees but the mentors who work with them identify their personal and professional strengths. Scheduling the events at times when everyone could attend was a challenge, but we made the content of the events available via email to participants so mentors and their mentees could still discuss the main points whenever was convenient for them. By the time of our final event in April many students could no longer attend due to academic commitments, but both mentors and mentees rated the content of the events as very helpful and informative.

In closing, we believe that “It Takes a Mentor” was successful in its goal to match students with mentors. We are grateful to have the opportunity to create this program, and look forward to participating in the work SEEDS is doing at the University of Miami in the future. Thank you and have a restful summer.

Sincerely,

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