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Alliance of Women Coaches Concludes First-Ever Mentor Program

July 9, 2018 - The Alliance of Women Coaches concluded its first-ever Mentor Program. The pilot program included a selection of 48 individuals to participate in a year-long mentor program throughout the 2017-18 academic year. The experience included an application process, ten sets of monthly discussion prompts, ten virtual check-ins, three skills assessments, and three participant video chats.

"I am very pleased and encouraged with our inaugural mentor program," said Alliance Executive Director Megan Kahn. "The intentional effort we put into developing this unique hybrid model of 'mentoring trios' and the monthly touchpoints provide a catalyst for helping keep women in the profession. Data tells us women are leaving coaching after 7 - 10 years. This program is aimed at providing support, development and cross-sport collaboration as a resource to increase retention and advancement."

Mentor Program participants, who included head and assistant coaches, administrators, and board members, were paired with two other participants to form mentor program trios. The program featured gold level mentors, silver level mentors/mentees, and bronze level mentees. Participants came from 45 different universities, clubs, organizations, and high school programs. Each person gave back to the coaching community and sought to empower future generations of coaches by creating a culture of growth, empathy, positivity, and respect.

This networking and professional development opportunity highlights the importance of mentoring as a channel for professional retention and advancement. Applications for the 2018-19 Mentor Program will be available July 26th through August 15th, 2018.

The Alliance of Women Coaches was founded in 2011 and has become the premier membership organization dedicated to the recruitment, advancement, and retention of women coaches of all sports and levels. For more information on the Alliance of Women Coaches and the Mentor Program, visit www.gocoaches.org.

What Participants Are Saying About the Alliance of Women Coaches Mentor Program...

Working in college athletics requires a strong network of people you can trust. I was lucky enough to add two incredible women to my network through the mentoring program offered by The Alliance of Women Coaches. Our monthly discussions were both impactful and meaningful. I've really enjoyed the mentoring process and have not only been able to help my peers, but also learn from them at the same time. It has been an incredibly rewarding experience and the friendships we have built will continue beyond the end of the program.

- Kristy Duncan, Illinois College, Head Coach, Volleyball

I have enjoyed the mentor program so much this year. I have even seen a difference in how I am with new coaches in swimming and reaching out to them more. This program has been great. I would do it again!

- Jeanne Fleck, Fresno State, Head Coach, Swimming & Diving

As a young coach new to the profession, the mentor program really expanded my horizons and helped develop my coaching philosophies through the experiences and stories of my mentors. I was fortunate to have a veteran head coach, as well as administrator to talk through all the issues and opportunities that arise as female coaches. These ladies were amazing role models and their passion for sport and growing the profession were obvious every call we had. I am grateful I had the chance to be involved in the mentor program and believe it would be an asset for any coach or administrator with a desire to grow.

- Caroline Powers, Michigan State, Assistant Coach, Women's Golf

Mentoring strong, dedicated women who seek to be their best is a passion of mine. Mentoring at its best is a commitment from the mentor and the mentee to believe in the process and each other so that everyone grows through honest and candid conversations. It has been exciting for me to see the process that I used in my business career translate well with great coaches. I could not be more pleased with the work that my Alliance of Women Coaches' mentor cohort did this year. I was teamed up with Kristy Duncan (Head Coach of Women's Volleyball at Illinois College) and Colleen Doherty (Assistant Coach of Rugby at Quinnipiac University). The truth is, I learned as much from them as they learned from me and therefore I know we met the criteria for 'mentoring at its best'.

- Elizabeth King, Managing Partner, Elizabeth M. King Consulting, LLC, and Alliance of Women Coaches Board Member

My experience in the Mentor Program was excellent! I was a silver mentor and learned so much from both our gold mentor and bronze mentee. We were not only able to share what was currently going on in our lives, but we also were able to talk about relevant topics that directly impact the sustainability and advancement of our careers. Most importantly, we were able to encourage and support one another.

- Stephanie Wheeler, University of Illinois, Head Coach, Women's Wheelchair Basketball

The mentor program has been a great resource for me this year. As a first-year head coach, it provided a network of support and a comfortable space to ask questions and bounce ideas around with other coaches. One of the really great things was that one of the other women in my group was in a similar place with her team. It didn't matter that our sports were completely different, at the end of the day, we are all working toward similar goals. I am so thankful to be a part of the program. I know that not only will these women be in my professional network, they will be wonderful friends.

- Britt Adell, Colgate University, Head Coach, Rowing