**Theme 3 Networking / Mentoring**

**Summary** – Create networking and mentoring opportunities with an intentional focus on people of color, women and veterans. Use “Grow Your Own” concepts to create mentoring and networking opportunities to provide encouragement in personal development, assistance in identifying and achieving career goals, and increase the talent and entrepreneurial capacity of the community.

**Objective** – Create \_\_\_\_ mentoring relationships (alum to alum, alum to student, upper level student to new student, community leaders to students, seasoned entrepreneur to beginning entrepreneur, etc.) by \_\_\_\_. Measure year over year improvements in the number of qualified POC college applicants, entrepreneurs, and DBEs contracting with the university.

**Tactics:**

1. “Grow Your Own” concepts can be used to grow diversity in a number areas relating to economic development that are enhanced through mentorship and networking:
   1. Grow your own employment pipeline – large institutions are sometimes one of the largest employers in the state and need to fill positions as they continue to grow and as their baby boomer employees continue to retire. Universities need to implement student internships that prepare students for full time employment after graduation.
   2. Grow your own faculty - Find scholars of color and put them on a career track in academia.
   3. Grow your own disadvantaged business enterprises  
      Help DBE companies become prepared to do business with larger organizations and hold “meet the primes” (primary contractors) events and implement other ways to engage DBEs in the university’s procurement process.
   4. Grow your own diverse leaders - Commitment to training and mentorship programs specifically to increase access to managerial and leadership opportunities in the community and at the university.

* Mentors of color – mentors for women – mentors for veterans
* Mentor the university’s own graduates through their early careers
* Partner with local minority leadership programs – examples [BMW program](https://www.bmwacademyky.org/). [YMCA Black Achievers](https://www.ymcacky.org/programs/education-enrichment/black-achievers), [Nerd Squad program](https://www.facebook.com/NERDSQUADInc/). Ensure access for all genders.
  1. Grow our own entrepreneurs – at many universities (particularly R1 universities) there are more technologies being developed than you can imagine. What is lacking are businesspeople to work with the inventors to commercialize their technologies.   
     Universities need to uncover and develop more what are called “hidden entrepreneurs” and match them up with experience mentors to help guide them through the commercialization journey. Universities need to help mitigate the risk of startup companies by providing training, market research and customer discovery to ensure a new company’s idea is viable. Once that is determines, universities can assist with fund raising and match making with potential strategic partners who ultimately would acquire the company or license the technology.

**Other Ideas or notes for Networking / Mentoring:**

1. Create a community advisory group to assist with the “grow your own concepts” above.