

**Offices of the Dean of Student Life**  
**Women's Resource Center**  
**AMPLIFY | Women's Mentoring Circle**  
**Fall 2021**

**Purpose of Assessment**

The Women's Resource Center (WRC) wanted to assess the experiences of both the mentees and mentors who participated in its mentorship program, AMPLIFY | Women's Mentoring Circle, during the fall 2021 semester. This was the first time Student Life Studies (SLS) assisted in developing surveys for the participants of the program.

**Key Findings and Recommendations**

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations that the WRC may take based on the results. However, staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the community. Staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students' and mentors' experiences.

- About half of the mentors felt like their relationship with their mentees was a positive experience. A few of the mentors shared that they could not develop a relationship with their mentees as some of them were nonresponsive throughout the semester. Some of the respondents also shared that the exercises added stress and seemed like busy work.
  - SLS recommends matching both parties' time availability and clarifying the time commitment expected from both mentors and mentees. SLS also recommends providing a list of discussion topics to allow the mentors and mentees to connect. Additionally, SLS recommends providing training to mentors on how to reach out to mentees and encourage communication without overwhelming them.
- Most mentees and mentors responding to the survey indicated they found the connection with one another the most beneficial aspect of participating in AMPLIFY | Women's Mentoring Circle. Mentees benefited from advice and encouragement from mentors, and the reflection that the relationship spawned. The mentees shared that participating in the program helped them meet their goals for the semester by practicing their networking skills, reflecting, and learning from their mentor's experience.
- About two-thirds of the mentees responding were satisfied with the mentor match selections presented by the platform. They elaborated about their satisfaction and shared that the connections with their mentors worked well because they had interests in common and received helpful career advice. Some of the most common suggestions for topics they would like to see covered in the future include professional growth, networking, and building confidence.
- Many of the mentors and mentees indicated they only used the mentor program platform for their initial connection and eventually moved their communication to email, text, and/or Zoom. Mentees and mentors noted the platform was cumbersome to work with, navigating the connection plan was challenging and its activities just felt like more homework for mentees. Likewise, when asked to rate the helpfulness of the five elements of the connection plan, 72% of the respondents found the Work, Health, Love, & Play Gauge Survey helpful, and approximately one-fifth to one-half of the respondents did not complete each element of the connection plan listed.
- Staff may want to consider developing reference materials to provide instructions on how to use the platform that can be accessed on-demand (website) by respondents. Including more information about the connection activities, either within the platform or as part of the reference materials may increase their use and usefulness, as some participants also asked that the activities be more concise. Perhaps fewer activities would make those available more impactful as well. Making the platform mobile-friendly would encourage the mentors and mentees to use it more. SLS recommends sending fewer emails to the mentors as some mentors had two mentees and kept receiving emails twice. SLS also recommends hosting more in-person events, if possible, considering the locations of mentors and mentees.

## **Method and Sample**

A survey was produced using Qualtrics®, a survey design software that creates web-based forms and databases. The 22-question fall 2021 survey contained nine quantitative and 13 qualitative questions and was sent to all mentors and mentees who participated in the program during the fall 2021 semester. The survey began distribution on December 20, 2021, and three reminders were sent to those who had not completed the survey before it closed. Of the 162 who received the assessment, 56 responded yielding a response rate of 35% which is higher than the 23% response rate from the spring 2021 survey.

Collected data were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®. Due to branching technology, not all respondents of the surveys saw all questions.

## **Results**

Results are reported as means, standard deviation (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the questions. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Comparisons to the spring 2021 and fall 2020 semester's survey data (collected through a survey designed and administered by WRC) are shown where appropriate. Summary themes are contained in this report; the entire list of qualitative responses can be found in a separate document.

The survey opened with questions asking respondents to indicate their role in the AMPLIFY | Women's Mentoring Circle during the fall. Of the 56 respondents, 75% indicated they were a mentor and 25% indicated they were a mentee.

Next, respondents were asked to select from a list of options how often they met with their mentor or mentee this fall. As noted in Table 1, respondents indicated most frequently meeting with their mentor/mentee three to five times during the semester. Seven percent indicated they were not matched; these respondents saw no further questions and ended the survey. Table 1 lists data in order of ascending times met.

<b>How often did you meet your mentor/mentee this fall semester?</b>	<b>Fall 2021 Response Percent [n=56]</b>	<b>Spring 2021 Response Percent [n=90]</b>	<b>Fall 2020 Response Percent [n=25]</b>
0-1 times	11%	14%	4%
1-2 times	23%	18%	20%
3-5 times	36%	26%	16%
6-plus times	23%	19%	48%
I was not matched	7%	23%	12%

Table 1: Frequency Meeting Mentors/Mentees

In a select-all-that-apply response, participants were asked to report the format of their meetings with their mentors/mentees during the fall. As noted in Table 2, on the next page, over three-quarters reported meeting virtually. Those who did not maintain contact with their mentee/mentor throughout the semester were asked to share the reasons or barriers that prevented them from maintaining contact. Twenty-six responded and many of the respondents noted scheduling issues due to work, extracurricular activities, personal issues, or being busy with classwork as the reasons why they did not maintain contact with their mentee/mentor throughout the semester. Some of the mentors noted their mentees just never responded.

How did you meet with your mentor this spring semester?	Fall 2021 Response Percent [n=47]	Spring 2021 Response Percent [n=54]	Fall 2020 Response Percent [n=25]
Virtually (Zoom, FaceTime, etc....)	76%	78%	68%
Text	38%	26%	12%
Email	26%	21%	12%
Phone call	26%	19%	24%
In Person	17%	11%	12%

Table 2: Format of Meeting

Respondents who identified themselves as mentors were asked how they felt their mentor-mentee relationship went during the fall semester and if there were changes that could be made in the program to foster a stronger relationship. Thirty-three mentors responded and about half said they felt their mentor-mentee relationship went well and that they had a good experience. Some noted their mentees were busy and that they were only able to meet a few times but thought the meeting was beneficial for their mentees. Others were not as positive about the relationship as they indicated their mentee did not seem interested in the relationship, some thought that a better match within the same professional field would have been better, and a few were just not able to connect with their mentee. Suggestions to foster stronger relationships included matching their time availability and clarity about the time commitment expected from both. Some commented that the platform was a challenge, and the exercises caused stress and were viewed as just another task or assignment that mentees had to do during the semester.

All respondents were next asked to identify the programs they attended during the fall. As shown in Table 3, the mentee/mentor training was most frequently selected.

Did you attend any of the following programs?	Fall 2021 Response Percent [n=34]	Spring 2021 Response Percent [n=49]	Fall 2020 Response Percent [n=25]
Mentee/Mentor training	88%	--	--
September Professional Development- Resumes and Cover Letters	18%	--	--
November Professional Development- Stress and Time Management	18%	--	--
Mentor training	--	82%	76%
February social	--	20%	36%*
Mentee training	--	18%	20%
<i>Using Social Media as a Tool in Networking and the Job Search</i>	--	12%	8%
March program - <i>Internships</i>	--	6%	24%**

Table 3: Program Attendance

\*October Social

\*\*November program

Those who indicated attending the mentor/mentee trainings were asked what else would be helpful to cover in the mentor/mentee training. There were fourteen respondents (one mentee and 13 mentors). The mentee who responded said that providing a list of topics of discussion could be helpful. Responses varied for mentors. A

mentor noted that emphasizing that both parties need to make themselves available is essential for the success of the program. Mentors suggested including a session about post-college life, more guidance on how to establish a mentor-mentee relationship, and how to communicate with mentors without overwhelming them.

All respondents were asked what topics they would like to see covered in the educational programs in future semesters. Nineteen responded; the five mentees suggested professional growth, online meeting etiquette, networking, and building confidence. Mentors suggested training cover topics such as salary negotiation, networking, remote work, interviewing, mental health resources, Clifton strengths, and building confidence.

Respondents who indicated they were mentees were presented five statements and asked to select those statements they felt applied to their relationship with their mentor. As noted in Table 4, just over 40% reported that they considered their mentor a person to whom they could speak about difficult issues and that their mentor helped them reach their goals this semester. In a separate qualitative question, those who selected the “other” response option were asked to elaborate. The only response indicated that there was not a relationship with the mentor.

<b>From the below statements, please select any of those that you feel are true regarding your relationship with your mentor</b>	<b>Fall 2021 Response Percent [n=12]</b>	<b>Spring 2021 Response Percent [n=16]</b>	<b>Fall 2020 Response Percent [n=4]</b>
I consider my mentor a person to whom I can speak about difficult issues.	42%	56%	50%
My mentor helped me reach my goals this semester.	42%	44%	75%
My mentor helped me to reflect on my experiences this semester.	33%	63%	50%
My mentor helped me expand my social and/or professional network.	33%	44%	100%
Other	33%	6%	--

Table 4: Relationship with Mentor

Mentees were asked how participating in the AMPLIFY | Women’s Mentoring Circle program helped them to meet their goals for the semester. Eight responded, several indicated their mentor helped them practice their networking skills. Others spoke about finding the advice from their mentor helpful in meeting their goals by being able to talk to them, reflect, and learn from their mentor’s experience.

All respondents were asked to share what aspects of the AMPLIFY | Women’s Mentoring Circle they found most beneficial. Thirty-six mentors and mentees responded, and aspects shared by the eight mentees responding included connecting to their mentor and someone in their career field. Some mentees mentioned more career-oriented aspects, such as networking and being able to ask questions of someone in their career field. Several of the mentors spoke about the connection with a young person, exchanging ideas, and the opportunity to support another and guide them as the aspect of AMPLIFY | Women’s Mentoring Circle most beneficial to them.

Self-identified mentees were asked further questions about the mentor matching process of the platform. A brief explanation of the connection plan in the platform preceded the questions, noting that it provided possible mentor matches determined by their responses to questions, which include certain criteria, such as desired industries of interest, identities, and classification. Respondents were asked to select two criteria from a list of options, which they felt were most important when being matched to a mentor. Table 5 shows respondents

selected desired industry or career path most. Those who selected “other criteria not currently included” could provide their input; no one selected that choice, thus there was no input.

<b>From the below items, please select two of the criteria which you believe are most important when matching.</b>	<b>Fall 2021 Response Percent [n=12]</b>	<b>Spring 2021 Response Percent [n=16]</b>	<b>Fall 2020 Response Percent [n=4]</b>
Desired industry or career path	92%	94%	50%
Specific focus areas (communication, graduate school, goal setting, job search strategies, leadership, networking, personal support, professional school admission, work/life balance)	75%	87%	75%
Identities (Race, Ethnicity, Religion, Sexuality, and/or Gender Identity)	17%	6%	--
Classification (faculty, former student, staff or peer)	17%	--	35%
Other criteria not currently included	--	--	--

Table 5: Platform Mentor Match Criteria

If respondents selected ‘other criteria not currently included’ in the previous question, they were asked which other criteria they believed mentors and mentees should be matched on. There were no responses for this question.

Mentee respondents were asked about their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the mentor match selections presented for them by the platform. As seen in Table 6, two-thirds of the respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied which is higher than the results in spring 2021. Respondents were then asked to elaborate on their reported satisfaction level. Nine provided a response. Those who were very satisfied or satisfied generally indicated their connections to their mentors worked well, that they had interests in common, and received helpful career advice. Two respondents who were dissatisfied. One of them noted that their schedules did not line up and the other respondent noted that as a woman of color, she did not feel like her mentor understood all of her concerns.

	<b>Very Satisfied (5)</b>	<b>Satisfied (4)</b>	<b>Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (3)</b>	<b>Dissatisfied (2)</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied (1)</b>	<b>Fall 2021 Mean (sd) [n]</b>	<b>Spring 2021 Mean (sd) [n]</b>	<b>Fall 2020 Mean (sd) [n]</b>
	42%	25%	17%	17%	--	3.92 (1.17) [12]	3.75 (1.18) [16]	4.00 (1.41) [4]

Table 6: Satisfaction with Mentor Match Selections

Respondents were asked if they used the platform communication and/or connection plan with their mentee/mentor throughout the semester. Forty-four chose to provide feedback; 10 of the respondents were mentees while the rest were mentors. Several of them said that they used the platform to communicate but they ended up using email or text messages to communicate. One mentee mentioned that there was a lot of information on the platform, and it was hard to find the information and activities that they needed. The mentors shared similar responses and said that they used the platform for initial connection and communication regarding scheduling meetings, but they eventually ended up moving to email, text, or Zoom meetings. Some of them shared that they did not find the platform user-friendly with two specifically sharing that it was not mobile-friendly. Respondents were also asked to rate the helpfulness of five elements of the connection plan. If respondents did not complete a specific element of the connection plan, they could select the response “Did not complete this element of the connection plan”. Those responses were not included in Table 7 but are displayed in Table 8. Element “Work, Health, Love & Play Gauge” survey and “Building your Compass” were found most helpful. Fall 2021 mean rates for all the elements of the connection plan increased when compared to the spring 2021 mean rates.

Element of the connection plan	Very Helpful (5)	Helpful (4)	Neutral (3)	Unhelpful (2)	Very Unhelpful (1)	Fall 2021 Mean (sd) [n]	Spring 2021 Mean (sd) [n]	Fall 2020 Mean (sd) [n]
Work, Health, Love & Play Gauge Survey	26%	46%	17%	9%	3%	3.83 (1.01) [35]	3.38 (1.13) [42]	3.44 (.96) [16]
Building your Compass	25%	33%	21%	17%	4%	3.58 (1.18) [24]	3.13 (1.07) [32]	3.33 (.62) [15]
Mind Maps	20%	25%	40%	10%	5%	3.45 (1.10) [20]	3.38 (1.35) [29]	3.38 (.87) [13]
Figuring out What Will Make you Happier-journal	11%	37%	42%	5%	5%	3.42 (.96) [19]	3.34 (1.23) [29]	3.38 (.77) [13]

Table 7: Connection Plan Helpfulness

As seen in Table 8, the percentage of respondents who did not complete elements of the connection plan increased for all four elements. Figuring out What Will Make You Happier-journal and Mind Maps elements had the highest percentage of incompleteness.

Element of the connection plan	Did not complete this element of the connection plan Fall 2021 Frequency % [n]	Did not complete this element of the connection plan Spring 2021 Frequency % [n]	Did not complete this element of the connection plan Fall 2020 Frequency % [n]
Figuring out What Will Make You Happier-journal	48% [28]	30% [27]	36% [9]
Mind Maps	45% [25]	30% [27]	36% [9]
Building your Compass	39% [22]	27% [24]	28% [7]
Work, Health, Love & Play Gauge Survey	21% [12]	17% [15]	24% [6]

Table 8: Connection Plan – Did Not Complete Element

All respondents were asked if they had any additional feedback about the connection plan. Twenty-seven chose to provide feedback, although seven of the responses said N/A or no. A few commented that the activities within the plan seemed to be busywork, felt like homework, and thought those pieces needed to be optional. Some thought the exercises needed to be more concise. A few mentors shared that they had two mentees and preferred to not receive email reminders twice. One of the mentors also shared that they wish they could see their mentees' responses so they could come up with follow-up questions and discussions in their next meeting.

When asked how the Women's Resource Center could improve the AMPLIFY | Women's Mentoring Circle, twenty-one responded. About one-third of the comments were complimentary saying the program was great. Several of the respondents suggested more in-person activities to connect and network. The rest of the responses varied with some respondents suggesting improvement such as clearer expectations of the mentees and mentors participating in the program, providing a variety of times for meetings and trainings, more direction on what mentors and mentees should discuss during meetings, and sharing success stories on LinkedIn.

Respondents were asked if they planned to continue their involvement in AMPLIFY | Women's Mentoring Circle. As seen in Table 9, of the 49 respondents, about three-fourths said yes. The respondents who chose no were asked why they had decided not to continue in AMPLIFY | Women's Mentoring Circle. All four of them said that they were busy working. One of them also said that she had additional family commitments and another respondent said that she had a busy school schedule.

<b>Do you plan to continue your involvement in AMPLIFY   Women's Mentoring Circle next semester?</b>	<b>Fall 2021 Frequency % [n]</b>	<b>Spring 2021 Frequency % [n]</b>	<b>Fall 2020 Frequency % [n]</b>
Yes	74% [36]	65% [40]	62% [13]
Undecided	14% [7]	27% [17]	24% [5]
No	8% [4]	8% [3]	14% [3]
No because I am graduating	4% [2]	--	--

Table 9: Plan to be Involved in AMPLIFY | Women's Mentoring Circle (n=49)

## **Background**

Per their website <https://studentlife.tamu.edu/wrc/>, the Women's Resource Center "pursues equity and enhances the campus climate for women through visibility, advocacy, support and programming. The center advocates by educating campus and community constituencies on women's issues and functions as a resource and referral center." A signature program of the Women's Resource Center, AMPLIFY | Women's Mentoring Circle is described on the WRC website as:

A collaboration between the Women's Resource Center and the Aggie Women Network, a Constituent Network of The Association of Former Students. AMPLIFY provides Texas A&M University students access to Aggie women whose professional and personal accomplishments align with the student's ambitions. These connections help mentees build career relationships. Mentors gain the opportunity to remain connected to the University and give back to the next generation of Aggie women.

As of the fall 2020 semester, applications to participate in the AMPLIFY program were available and managed via the Aggie Mentoring Network platform.

## **Project Details**

The Department of Student Life Studies provides quality assessment services, resources and assessment training for departments in the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and

other assessment projects done through Student Life Studies can be found at <https://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/results/>. Additionally, division staff can follow Student Life Studies on Facebook.

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Prepared on: March 21, 2022