Sprint 3 Mentorship Report

Juan Robledo Mendoza • CSU Monterey Bay • November 2025

Section 1: Introduction

Goal: Complete **Rung 3,** where I will secure at least one 15-minute informational interview with a cybersecurity professional (mentor) in a blue-team or SOC role who uses or understands AI/ML for defense. Create a **3-page Google Doc** (outreach log, interview notes, key takeaways) and a **5–8-slide presentation** comparing mentor insights on how AI is applied in modern SOCs.

Timeframe: October 22 – November 19, 2025

Summary:

 "My goal was to reach out to cybersecurity professionals to learn how AI and automation are transforming SOC and blue-team defense work. Through LinkedIn outreach, mentorship conversations, and event participation, I gained a better understanding of how AI supports, not replaces, human decision-making in cybersecurity."

Section 2: Professional Outreach & Planning

Evidence: [Screenshots from "Sprint 3 Mentorship Project by Juan Robledo Mendoza."](#)
Reflection:
This was where my Sprint 3 project truly began. I reached out to multiple cybersecurity professionals to explore how AI is changing blue-team defense. Writing these messages taught me the importance of clarity, respect, and confidence in professional communication. Even without immediate replies, I learned that professional outreach is about building relationships, not just getting answers.

Section 3: Professional Engagement

Evidence: ["Sprint 3, Mentorship Interaction Posts"](#)
Reflection:
Engaging on LinkedIn helped me build visibility in the cybersecurity community. Commenting on posts and sharing my own learning progress gave me valuable feedback and helped me feel more connected to others in the field. I learned that professional networking is an ongoing process that rewards consistency and curiosity.

Section 4: Confirmed Mentorship & Interview Preparation

Evidence: Farzan Karimi meeting invite

Meeting with Farzan Karimi

November 2, 2025, 1:00pm – November 6, 2025, 1:30pm

Join with Google Meet

meet.google.com/nmg-zfym-gun

Join by phone
(US) +1 442-600-4809 PIN: 948 297 246#

Take meeting notes
Start a new document to capture notes

Business and Information Technology Building (BIT) -...
3052 Divarty St, Marina, CA 93933, USA

2 guests
1 yes
1 awaiting

Juan Robledo Mendoza
Organizer

farzan.karimi@gmail.com

Meeting with CSUMB Student, Juan Robledo Mendoza

15 minutes before

Juan Robledo Mendoza

Public

Free

Going? Yes No Maybe

Reflection:

Setting up this interview was a big milestone! It represented the effort from all my outreach. Preparing detailed questions for Farzan Karimi taught me how to connect theory with real-world applications of AI in security. It also gave me a structure for professional conversations that I'll carry into future mentorships and interviews.

Section 5: Industry Event — WiCyS Silicon Valley

Evidence: [Mentorship Experience in the Silicon Valley, WiCys](#)
Reflection:

Attending the WiCyS × Cisco event at Santana Row was an eye-opening experience that showed me how deeply AI is reshaping cybersecurity. Hearing from leaders like Ramana Kompella, Neha Pattan, and Dr. Yu Fu helped me understand that AI isn't replacing human analysts, it's amplifying them. Ramana's discussion on defense-in-depth and zero trust reminded me that even AI needs protection. Neha's advice on continuous learning and staying technically curious reinforced my commitment to keep growing beyond the classroom. Dr. Fu's insights into AI-driven malware and polymorphic threats revealed how critical ethical awareness is in security work. What stood out most was the emphasis on trust. In data, in AI systems, and in ourselves as defenders. This event strengthened my goal of becoming a SOC Analyst who uses AI responsibly to detect, protect, and innovate in an ever-changing threat landscape.

Section 6: Continuing Professional Development

Evidence: LinkedIn reflections and new technical skills
Reflection: Continuing to update my LinkedIn profile and share professional posts helped me build consistency and confidence. Each post, from my mentorship reflections to my event takeaways, expanded my professional network and visibility. I also began planning my next steps, including certifications like Google's AI and Cybersecuirty and Splunk's Core Certified User. These actions are helping me stay connected and keep growing beyond this sprint.

Section 7: Reflection & Takeaways

Sprint 3 taught me that progress in cybersecurity come from initiative, curiosity, and persistence. From my first outreach messages to interviewing Farza Karimi and attending WiCyS x Cisco, I learned how AI and human judgement work hand-in-hand in modern defense. I aslo learned the importance of showing up, even when I was super scared, because every interaction uilt my confidence and professional network. Moving forward, I plan to deepen my skills through hands-on projects, certifications, and continued engagement with the cybersecurity community.

Section 8: Next Steps:

What I will do from here on out are some things that do expand on what I have learned this sprint:

- Complete Google AI & Cybersecurity certification.
- Build an AI-powered log analyzer project (Probably an AI Log Anomaly Detector)
- Apply for 2025 Internships
    - Currently have NVIDIA, HP, and Lawrnence Livermore National Lab
    - Dremed to intern or work for Cisco, SPlunk, and Palo Alto Networks.