

Business Case: FAMU Mentorship Bridge System

1. Clear Problem Statement

Florida A&M University (FAMU) has a strong, loyal, and multi-generational network of students and alumni rooted in a culture of “Excellence with Caring.” However, the current mentorship process uses through informal, inconsistent, and accidental networking channels.

Valuable lived experience, professional guidance, and knowledge of the “hidden curriculum” are trapped within social circles, student organizations, or alumni networks that are not universally accessible.

As a result:

- Undergraduates lack structured access to guidance on internships, career pathways, and academic decisions.
- Upperclassmen face professional readiness gaps despite academic success.
- Alumni who want to give back lack a low-friction, trusted channel to do so.

This creates unequal access to opportunity, especially for first-generation students and those without proved campus networks. The issue is not student motivation — it is information accessibility and system design.

2. High-Level Description of the Proposed Solution

The proposed system is a centralized, FAMU-exclusive mentorship bridge that transforms “hopeful networking” into intentional connectivity.

At a high level, the system would:

- Provide a trusted platform dedicated to connecting students and alumni within the FAMU ecosystem
- Enable structured mentorship interactions (including micro-mentorship such as short Q&A sessions or resume reviews)
- Centralize access to institutional knowledge and the “hidden curriculum”
- Reduce activation energy for alumni participation

- Ensure every student has equitable access to guidance regardless of social background

This is not merely a communication tool. It is a value-driven social capital infrastructure designed to institutionalize knowledge transfer across generations of Rattlers.

3. Key Stakeholders and Beneficiaries

Primary Stakeholders

Underclassmen (The Seekers)

- Freshmen and sophomores navigating major selection, internships, and professional direction.
- Primary beneficiaries of structured access to guidance.

Upperclassmen & Recent Graduates (The Navigators)

- Students with localized expertise who can provide relevant peer mentorship.
- Benefit from leadership development and professional credibility.

Alumni (The Stewards)

- Professionals eager to give back but currently deterred by friction and lack of structure.
- Gain an efficient, meaningful channel to contribute.

Institutional Stakeholders

- Academic departments (e.g., CIS, Journalism, Engineering)
- Career services and employer engagement offices
- University leadership and alumni relations

These stakeholders benefit from improved student outcomes, stronger alumni engagement, and enhanced institutional reputation.

4. Expected Benefits

Tangible Benefits

- Increased internship placement rates
- Higher retention and graduation rates
- Improved career readiness outcomes
- Stronger alumni engagement metrics
- More consistent participation in career events and competitions
- Reduced missed opportunities due to lack of information

Intangible Benefits

- Increased equity in access to opportunity
- Strengthened culture of collaborative learning
- Enhanced student confidence and reduced decision fatigue
- Stronger intergenerational bonds within the FAMU community
- Reinforcement of the university's legacy and brand identity

The system preserves and amplifies institutional knowledge rather than allowing it to disappear with each graduating class.

5. High-Level Risks and Uncertainties

- Adoption Risk: Students or alumni may not consistently use the system.
- Engagement Imbalance: High student demand may exceed alumni participation.
- Sustainability Risk: Without institutional ownership, the system could lose momentum over time.
- Perceived Redundancy: Stakeholders may believe existing tools (LinkedIn, GroupMe, career fairs) are sufficient.
- Trust & Privacy Concerns: Users may be hesitant to share professional information without strong institutional backing.

These risks must be acknowledged to ensure strategic implementation and long-term viability.

6. Major Assumptions and Constraints

Assumptions

- Alumni have a genuine desire to give back if friction is reduced.

- Students will engage if access is structured and clearly beneficial.
- Institutional support can be secured from FAMU departments.
- Centralized knowledge improves equity and outcomes.

Constraints

- Limited university funding and resource allocation
- Competing student attention (academics, jobs, organizations)
- Need for institutional alignment with alumni relations and career services
- Time constraints for both students and alumni

Conclusion: Why This System Should Be Pursued

The FAMU Mentorship Bridge System should be pursued because it addresses a structural inequity in access to social capital within the university ecosystem.

It transforms mentorship from a chance encounter into an intentional institutional capability. By centralizing and preserving the “hidden curriculum,” the university strengthens student success, alumni engagement, and long-term institutional reputation.

This initiative is not simply about building a platform — it is about safeguarding the collective wisdom of the Rattler community and ensuring that no student’s success is left to chance.