Business Narrative-Mentoryship System

This narrative should demonstrate cultural, organizational, and contextual awareness rather than assuming a single "default" user.

Clearly articulates the problem context, stakeholders, and why the problem matters; avoids solution-first or tool-first framing; demonstrates awareness of organizational or community context

- Describe the organization, domain, or community your system serves
- Clearly articulate the *current problem or inefficiency*
- Identify who is affected and why the problem matters
- Explain why existing processes or tools are insufficient
- Avoid technical design details (focus on need and value)

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Describe the organization, domain, or community your

Organization and Community Context: The FAMU "Rattler" Ecosystem

The proposed mentorship system serves the **Florida A&M University (FAMU)** community, a premier Historically Black University (HBCU) characterized by a deep-rooted culture of "Excellence with Caring." The community is not just a collection of students, but a multi-generational network where success is often driven by **social capital** and peer-to-peer guidance.

The system specifically addresses three core segments of this community:
- **The Underclassman (The Seekers):** Students in their first two years who are navigating the "hidden curriculum" of the university. This includes high-stakes transitions like choosing a major within the **School of Journalism and Graphic Communications** or the **College of Engineering**, where early decisions impact long-term career readiness.
- **The Upperclassman & Recent Graduates (The Navigators):** Students like those in the **Computer Information Systems** program who have gained "localized expertise"—knowing how to navigate specific academic structures, campus organizations like **BDPA** or **U-Design**, and competitive events like the **Mastercard Data Challenge**.

- **The Alumni Network (The Stewards):** A vast network of professionals, such as the **Doctor of Pharmacy Class of 2025**, who have a vested interest in FAMU's legacy and frequently express a desire to "give back" through mentorship.

The Domain: Social Capital and Intentional Connectivity

The domain of this system is **Social Capital Development** within a high-stakes academic environment. At FAMU, success is often determined by a student's ability to access informal knowledge that isn't found in a syllabus—such as how to prepare for the **SBI Employer Showcase** or the **Spring Intern and Career Expo**.

Currently, this knowledge transfer is "accidental," happening only for students who are already part of established social circles or specific clubs. The community suffers from a "mentorship vacuum" where students without an existing family network at the university are at a disadvantage. By serving this community, the system aims to move FAMU from a place of individual navigation to a **Collaborative Learning Network**, ensuring that every student has a "roadmap" and every alumnus has a direct, low-friction way to provide guidance.

Clearly articulate the current problem or inefficiency

Problem Statement: The Mentorship Gap and Knowledge Silos
While Florida A&M University (FAMU) boasts a powerful and loyal network, the current method of connecting students with mentors is highly inefficient, relying almost entirely on "hopeful networking." This creates a significant problem where valuable lived experience and professional "playbooks" are trapped within silos, inaccessible to the majority of the student body.

The Inefficiency of "Accidental Networking"
Currently, mentorship at FAMU happens primarily through three informal channels:

Student Organizations: Groups like the FAMU Robotics Club or BDPA provide excellent peer support, but only to those who are already "in the know" and have the time to attend meetings.

Physical Career Fairs: Events like the SBI Employer Showcase are high-pressure environments. Underclassmen often feel too intimidated to approach recruiters or alumni, and these interactions are usually too brief to form a lasting mentorship bond.

Manual Outreach: Students often attempt to reach out to alumni via LinkedIn or email. However, without a shared, trusted platform specifically for FAMU, these "cold calls" have a low success rate. Alumni are

often overwhelmed with generic requests and have no low-friction way to filter for students who truly need their specific expertise.

The "Hidden Curriculum" Barrier
The core problem is the unequal distribution of the "hidden curriculum." This refers to the unwritten rules of academic and professional success—knowing how to secure a spot in the Mastercard Data Challenge, which certifications are most valued in the CIS department, or how to pivot from a freshman internship into a full-time role.

Underclassmen, particularly first-generation students, often lack the social network to access this information. This lack of guidance leads to "decision fatigue" and missed opportunities. When a sophomore doesn't have a senior to tell them that a specific elective is a prerequisite for a top-tier internship, they fall behind. This is not a failure of student effort, but a failure of information accessibility.

Alumni Disconnection and Underutilized Social Capital
From the organizational perspective, FAMU's alumni are an underutilized asset. Many graduates, such as those from the Doctor of Pharmacy Class of 2025, are eager to give back but are deterred by the high activation energy required. There is currently no official university system that allows an alum to offer a "micro-mentorship" session (e.g., a 15-minute resume review or a quick Q&A). Without a dedicated bridge, the vast wealth of alumni experience remains untapped, and the bond between the university and its graduates slowly weakens over time.

Identify who is affected and why the problem matters

The lack of a structured mentorship bridge creates a culture of "hopeful networking," where students are left to hope that a chance encounter results in a life-changing connection.

Underclassmen: Freshmen and sophomores are at the highest risk. Without a "Rattler Roadmap," they often miss critical windows for internships or specialized programs. This matters because it creates an uneven playing field for first-generation students who don't have an existing family network at FAMU.

Upperclassmen: Juniors and seniors face a "professional cliff." They have the GPA but lack the "insider playbook" for their specific industry. They spend hours at the SBI Employer Showcase hoping to catch the eye of a mentor, which is an inefficient use of their professional development time.

Alumni: Many alumni, such as the Doctor of Pharmacy Class of 2025, want to give back but are deterred by the friction of current tools. Without a dedicated system, their desire to help remains a "hopeful intention" rather than a realized action, weakening the university's long-term alumni bond.

Explain why existing processes or tools are insufficient

LinkedIn is too "Noisy": It is a global tool that lacks the "FAMU-only" trust factor. A student reaching out to a high-level alum feels like a "cold call," which is intimidating and often results in zero response.

GroupMe is too "Messy": While student clubs use GroupMe, valuable advice is lost in the "scroll." When a senior leaves the chat, their knowledge leaves with them, forcing the next class to start from scratch.

Physical Events are Limited: Events like the Spring Intern and Career Expo are great but only help students who are socially confident and available during those exact hours. It excludes commuters or students working jobs during the day.

Avoid technical design details (focus on need and value)

The goal of this system is to transform the FAMU experience from a journey of "hopeful networking" to one of "intentional growth." We are not building just an app; we are building a Value-Driven System that ensures no Rattler's success is left to chance. By centralizing this "hidden curriculum," we ensure that the collective wisdom of our alumni stays within the university ecosystem to fuel the success of every generation that follows.