Pearson Announces Expansion of Mentorship Program for Students and Young Professionals with Disabilities

Second cohort of mentees will receive additional networking advice from legal and business experts, career planning workshops, and informational interviews in a variety of career fields

HOBOKEN, N.J. – Pearson, in collaboration with the National Federation of the Blind, today announced that it is expanding a mentorship program to help college students and young professionals with disabilities explore career opportunities in a variety of fields. This expansion follows a successful pilot program, with eighteen mentees being paired up with mentors in Pearson’s legal department. In addition to discussions and advice from their mentor, mentees were given access to Pearson’s MyCareerPlanning Lab, offered informational interviews with leaders in their desired career field, and given resume and interview advice from human resources professionals.

The second cohort of mentees will be able to participate in a special webinar with networking expert and author of A Lawyer’s Guide to Networking, Susan Sneider. Mentees will also receive a complimentary copy of her book, published by the American Bar Association, and produced for the first time ever in an accessible format.

“It has been an honor to participate in the pilot of Pearson’s mentoring program. It couldn’t have come at a better time in my life,” said Sylvia Modesitt, a twenty-four year old graduate of William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. “My mentor’s knowledge and insight really gave me a leg up as I entered the professional world myself, and she has always been more than willing to advise me on topics big or small. This program is an incredible resource for individuals with disabilities--especially those who are interested in learning from successful role models.”

“I am so excited to see how this unique mentoring program has given young, aspiring professionals with disabilities the guidance and encouragement they need to launch new careers and imagine new horizons,” said Bjarne Tellmann, general counsel and chief legal officer at Pearson. “The program has also enlightened our Pearson Legal mentors, providing them with a newfound sense of optimism about the incredible resources that professionals who are blind or disabled bring to the workplace. As we kick off our second round, we are looking forward to expanding the program include to an ever more diverse group of participants with disabilities.”
“For over seventy-five years, the National Federation of the Blind has fostered mentoring relationships in order to raise the expectations of the blind and help them live the lives they want, so this partnership with Pearson is a natural fit for us. We are delighted with the success of the pilot program and commend Pearson for its continued commitment to this important work,” said Mark Riccobono, President of the National Federation of the Blind. "We look forward to our continued work together to get more blind people on the road to leadership positions in the world's major corporations.”

The mentorship program emphasizes a belief in capabilities, not disabilities. Mentors support mentees in identifying and removing barriers that are often self-set in order to allow them to pursue a career that will be rewarding and reflect their interest and skills – not their disability. Applications for the second round of the mentorship program are now being accepted. Please e-mail Elizabeth Delfs at elizabeth.delfs@pearsoned.com for more information. The program is available to college students and young aspiring professionals with a range of disabilities. ###

About Pearson

Pearson is the world’s learning company, with expertise in educational courseware and assessment, and a range of teaching and learning services powered by technology. Our mission is to help people make progress through access to better learning. We believe that learning opens up opportunities, creating fulfilling careers and better lives.

About the National Federation of the Blind

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back.