

AOF Mentoring

FELLOWS SHARING KNOWLEDGE WITH POSTS - MENTORING SMALL BUSINESSES

SAME Fellows are a valuable resource to groups across the Society's spectrum by sharing their knowledge and experience and helping members expand their capabilities and achieve their goals. SAME Posts offer a particularly fitting forum for sharing knowledge and mentoring on various initiatives and the Academy of Fellows (AOF) is well-positioned to share its resources to facilitate mentoring in various areas of a Post's activity. This is reflected in the template titled "[Post Mentoring Achievement Dashboard](#)" on page 8.



It is in this context that the AOF, through an initiative led by its Vice Chair – Mentoring, Philios Angelides, P.E., F.SAME, partnered with the Mid-Maryland Post (MM Post) to organize a Mentoring Program for Small Businesses.



This mentoring program was aimed at organizing a forum to share knowledge, experience, and best practices regarding various business operations topics with the Post's small business member firms. Over a period of three months, the SB committee of the MM Post in collaboration with Philios, engaged in member firm surveys to develop topics of interest in various operations areas and make these topics a focus of the panel discussion. As a result of the member firm survey, the following topic areas were identified:

Marketing & Business Development: Means to market and build relationships; effective federal marketing and BD practices; effective teaming agreements; identifying and meeting key decision makers; capture management of leads; resources to find leads.

Proposal Preparation: responding to Sources Sought opportunities; preparing winning proposals.

Human Resource Practices: dealing with the great resignation; right-time hiring of staff; hiring and retaining.

Financial Operations: Strategies for recognizing revenue; understanding P&L practices; accounting software and related functions to manage financial data.



Professional Development: Supervisory and management skills; coaching seller-doers; developing staff with the right credentials.

To facilitate effective and productive dialog between panel and small firm attendees, the program was limited to only the first 8 firms expressing interest. The attending firms were of varying backgrounds in terms of service and market sector focus within the AEC industry and included: AFG Group, Inc; CES Consulting; Princeton Hydro; Mimmar Architects & Engineers, Inc; Kim Engineering; Cube Root Corporation; RSG Building Solutions; Engage Federal.



The Fellows panel were Philios Angelides, P.E., F.SAME, President of The Angelides Group, LLC, who also served as moderator of the discussion; Susan Merrigan, F.SAME, FSMPS, CPSM, LEED GA, Associate Principal and Senior Marketing Manager – Skidmore Owings and Merrill; and William (Bill) H. Haight III, P.E., F. SAME, ENV SP, Senior Vice President – Federal Programs, WSP. Another panel member was Catherine Niles, Senior Business Development Manager, AFG Group, who brought the small business perspective in the overall discussion.

The program was held on June 13, 2022 from 11am to 2pm at the Harkins Builders HQ in Columbia, MD. Each panel member offered insights on the various topics in the agenda and a good discussion between panel members and attendees allowed for more in-depth understanding of subject areas. This was further reinforced by the sharing of real-life examples by the panel members based on their backgrounds and own experiences. The feedback received was very positive and all have expressed a desire to see this forum be repeated annually and perhaps more frequently and in different formats in terms of working groups and topics. The program value gained in the words of the attendees was shared with the Post in follow-on feedback as reflected below in sample responses:

"Learning different perspectives on a variety of topics."

"Sooo many tidbits of information learned in each category that were all relatable to my role and to my company."

"I learned a great deal about federal contract procurement."

"Loved getting real practical insight from the mentors."

The AOF would like to extend its appreciation to the MM Post - and leaders Megan Kellner, Post President, and Marcos Miranda, Post SB Committee Chair - for their willingness to host this event and create a strong example for the value gained by members in this type of mentoring program. Special appreciation also goes to Harkins Builders and Ben Nichols, President of Harkins, for hosting the program and luncheon. And lastly, many thanks to the panel members – Merrigan, Haight and Niles - for their preparation for and insightful contributions during our program.

The AOF stands ready to support other Posts with similar mentoring programs and leveraging the expertise, knowledge, and experience of our Fellows in supporting various initiatives with your Posts as reflected in the diagram above. For more information or assistance in exploring such opportunities please contact Philios Angelides, P.E, F.SAME, Vice Chair – Mentoring at angelidesp@gmail.com.