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Nine League Executives Participate in Mentorship Program
1-to1Woman supports rising African American credit union leaders

Washington, DC (June 1, 2023) – Nine women executives from eight Leagues and League Foundations participated in the 1-to-1Woman Mentoring Program’s most recent cohort, sponsored by the American Association of Credit Union Leagues (AACUL). The 1-to-1Woman Mentoring Program pairs Caucasian C-suite executive level females with rising African American women professionals.

“Diversity, equity and inclusion are keys to the sustainability of the credit union industry,” said AACUL President Brad Miller. “Montana’s Credit Unions President Tracie Kenyon was one of the original mentors in the program. When she enthusiastically shared her experience with me, I reflected on the many amazing women leaders in the League System and knew AACUL could mobilize our League partners to support this important mentorship opportunity.”

Miller and Kenyon collaborated with their League colleagues, and the first League System Mentor cohort was established. The mentees in the cohort included:

- Chelsea Best, Callahan & Associates
- Bethaniy Brown, Zeal Credit Union
- Jasmine Lovelace, Zeal Credit Union
- Brittany Ortiz, SchoolsFirst FCU
- Annisha Rose, SchoolsFirst FCU
- Tamara Slaughter, Zeal Credit Union
- Shayla Tanner, Civic Credit Union
- Lydia Hartley, SchoolsFirst FCU
- April Williams, Congressional Federal Credit Union

These mentees were paired with the following League Mentors:

- Kristi Arrington, League of Southeastern Credit Unions & Affiliates
- Laura Auxter, Ohio Credit Union League
- Mara Humphrey, Minnesota Credit Union Network

- Beth Ellis, Wisconsin Credit Union League
- Melia Heimbeck, Credit Union Association of New Mexico
- Emily Leite, Ohio Credit Union League
- Tena Lozano, Richard Myles Johnson Foundation
- Andrea Molnau, Minnesota Credit Union Network
- Courtney Moran, Cornerstone Credit Union Foundation

1-to-1Woman Mentoring Program facilitates conversations between the mentors and mentees about gender bias and racial disparity in the workforce. 1-to-1Woman aims to form relationships between otherwise unlikely connections with the goal of fostering a space where mentors and mentees serve as both teachers and pupils.

“1-to1Woman proves to be valuable and impactful for both the mentor and mentee,” described Shellee Mitchell, President of Sapphire Dimension and founder of the 1-to-1Woman Mentoring Program. “1-to1Women proves to be valuable and impactful for both the mentor and mentee,” described Shellee Mitchell, President of Sapphire Dimension and founder of the 1-to-1Woman Mentoring Program. “Research shows that the vast majority of the time people mentor those who resemble themselves. Since African Americans lag in influential positions within credit unions, 1-to1Woman is a wonderful opportunity to connect up-and-coming young African American women with successful credit union leaders.”

Mentee Chelsea Best shared, “My mentor’s knowledge, expertise, and genuine investment in my success have propelled my personal and professional growth to new heights. She has provided invaluable guidance, empowered me to speak up more, present my ideas, and inspired me to reach for my dreams.”

“I’m honored to have been part of this incredible opportunity,” said mentor Kristi Arrington. “I believe both my mentee and I learned something that we will keep with us from this experience, and we formed a friendship that I hope will last.”

Mitchell further explained, “Our program is not easy, nor is it a fit for everyone. It takes courage to address gender and race issues – especially with a perfect stranger - in a society that exposes unresolved bitter histories. However, these conversations are essential, as I believe the best action to support Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) is to disrupt normal tendencies and discuss sensitive issues in order to identify and act on commonality. With structured tools and research resources, 1-to-1Woman attempts to facilitate these important discussions.”

If you are interested in participating in 1-to-1Woman, either as a mentor or mentee, you can contact Shellee Mitchell at sam@sapphiredimensions.com.

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*The **American Association of Credit Union Leagues (AACUL)** is the national association for the state and regional credit union leagues/associations throughout the United States. AACUL's mission is to cultivate the success of individual leagues as well as the collective League System by supporting league efforts to advocate, communicate, collaborate and influence policy on behalf of credit unions nationwide. We partner with the Credit Union National Association (CUNA) to foster the CUNA-League System relationship and the prosperity of the credit union movement.*