

2026 SSSP MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Submitted to: Michele Koontz- Smith, Administrative Officer & Meeting Manager

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2026 COMMITTEE REPORT

Prepared by:

Dr. Meghna Bhat (Chair)

(E) megbhat@gmail.com

Committee Members:

Rafia Mallick

(E) rmallick1@student.gsu.edu

Dr. Claire M. Renzetti

(E) clairemrenzetti716@gmail.com

Natasha Israt Kabir

(E) natashaisratkabir@gmail.com

SUMMARY:

This report provides updates on the SSSP Annual Mentorship Program and the Conference Mentorship Program.

Mentorship Program Type	Mentee applications	Mentor Spots <i>* Each mentor has offered to support 1 to 4 mentees</i>
2026 Annual Mentorship Program	35	39
2026 Conference Mentorship Connection	17	24

1. Committee member **Rafia Mallick** led the initial organization and pairing process for both programs. She consolidated all applications, created a structured Excel sheet with mentor–mentee pairing options, and shared it with the committee for collective review. Although the full committee was unable to meet synchronously due to unforeseen personal circumstances, this shared document allowed us to collaboratively address gaps and make informed pairing decisions.
2. Chair **Meghna Bhat** and Rafia met virtually on July 13th to resolve remaining roadblocks and finalize pairings. A small number of mentors and mentees in each program could not be matched across every category (division alignment, career goals, meeting frequency, etc.). Still, all were placed as appropriately as possible.
3. Drawing on two consecutive years of experience serving on the Mentorship Committee, Rafia and Meghna identified three action items for Board review and approval. Committee members **Dr. Claire Renzetti** and **Natasha Israt Kabir** have also provided their feedback and action items to be shared with the board for review and approval. The SSSP Mentoring Program Information Tips Sheet was also updated with the committee’s feedback.

ACTION ITEMS:

Action Item	Recommendation	Rationale
ITEM 1: Adjust Application Deadline	Move the application deadline for both mentorship programs from June 30 to June 1 .	<i>The current deadline leaves only two weeks for the committee to review applications, organize pairings, and meet as needed. A June 1 deadline provides adequate time for thoughtful review and matching.</i>
ITEM 2: Reduce the maximum mentee load for each of the programs	Reduce the maximum mentee load for each mentor to three .	<i>Reducing the mentee load to three ensures mentors can offer meaningful, individualized support without being overstretched. We believe a smaller cap strengthens the overall mentoring experience.</i> <i><u>Note:</u> Our committee recognizes that we have received lesser mentor applications than the mentee spots for two consecutive years, and hence a second callout was done to request members to apply as mentors. This may be the reasons, mentors may be requesting for more mentees. The maximum cap of three mentees per mentor may be adjusted at the committee's discretion.</i>
ITEM 3: Add a Short Video Tutorial Online about the programs	Include a brief video tutorial on the webpages about each of the mentorship programs- that explains membership criteria, sets expectations, and provides clarity.	<i>Including a brief video tutorial on each mentorship program's webpage will help ensure consistent understanding across applicants, mentors, and future committee members.</i> <i>A short, accessible overview can clarify key elements such as membership criteria, how committees typically approach mentor-mentee pairing, and important reminders about alignment and expectations (e.g., "pairings may not</i>

		<i>be perfectly aligned; please use this program as an additional resource”).</i> <i>This added clarity supports transparency, reduces confusion, and helps set realistic expectations for all participants—especially given the annual turnover of committee members and the virtual nature of our work.</i>
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Acknowledgments

Sincere thanks to all committee members, Dr. Claire Renzetti, Natasha Israt Kabir, and Rafia Mallick, for their time, commitment, dedication, and service. Their articulate feedback and commitment to strengthening this committee’s work have been inspiring. A special acknowledgment to Rafia Mallick, whose proactive leadership and organizational expertise significantly strengthened this year’s pairing process, as I dealt with a family emergency. Her structured approach can serve as a template for future committees.

Feel free to email us with any further questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Meghna Bhat.