



SEED: Sun engineering enrichment & development

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SEED: Sun engineering enrichment & development

Introduction

This document describes the SEED - Sun Engineering Enrichment & Development - program and its major processes. SEED was created by Sun Microsystems in 2001 and has proven to be remarkably successful. The details here will be of particular interest to companies interested in creating a technical enrichment and mentoring program.

SEED participants should be those who can reasonably be expected to rise to the top of Sun Microsystems' Engineering's individual contributor or management ranks. The overall purpose of SEED is to increase the value, satisfaction, and retention of program participants and their Mentors. In addition, the program builds Sun's Engineering community by making and strengthening connections between its members and with the rest of Sun. This program is sponsored by Sun's Chief Technology Officer and Executive Vice President, Dr. Greg Papadopoulos. More information about the SEED program is available in the 18 February 2004 article "Tapping into the Knowledge Network: The SEED Program is a Showcase for Nurturing and Developing Top Engineering Talent" available at URL <http://research.sun.com/spotlight/2004-02-18.SEED.html>

The program offers two groups: Recent College Hires (who have been with Sun less than 3 years, this is a 1-year term), and Established Staff (who are Principal Engineers or higher in seniority, & have been with Sun more than 3 years, this is a 6-month term). Members of both SEED groups participate in mentoring and program events. The Recent College Hires must also spend at least two weeks working directly with external customers. The SEED program includes works to balance the diversity of participants in terms of demographics, professional area, and geographic location.

SEED has two major fully-documented processes: the "Participant Selection Process", and the "Mentor Selection Process". Flow charts of these processes follow. The program is largely managed through internal web pages and email. This is particularly helpful to international and remote-location participants who have fewer casual sources of information than those who work out of Sun's headquarters in the Bay Area of California. More information about the SEED's Recent College Hire program is available at http://www.sun.com/corp_emp/zone/special.html

Success Measures

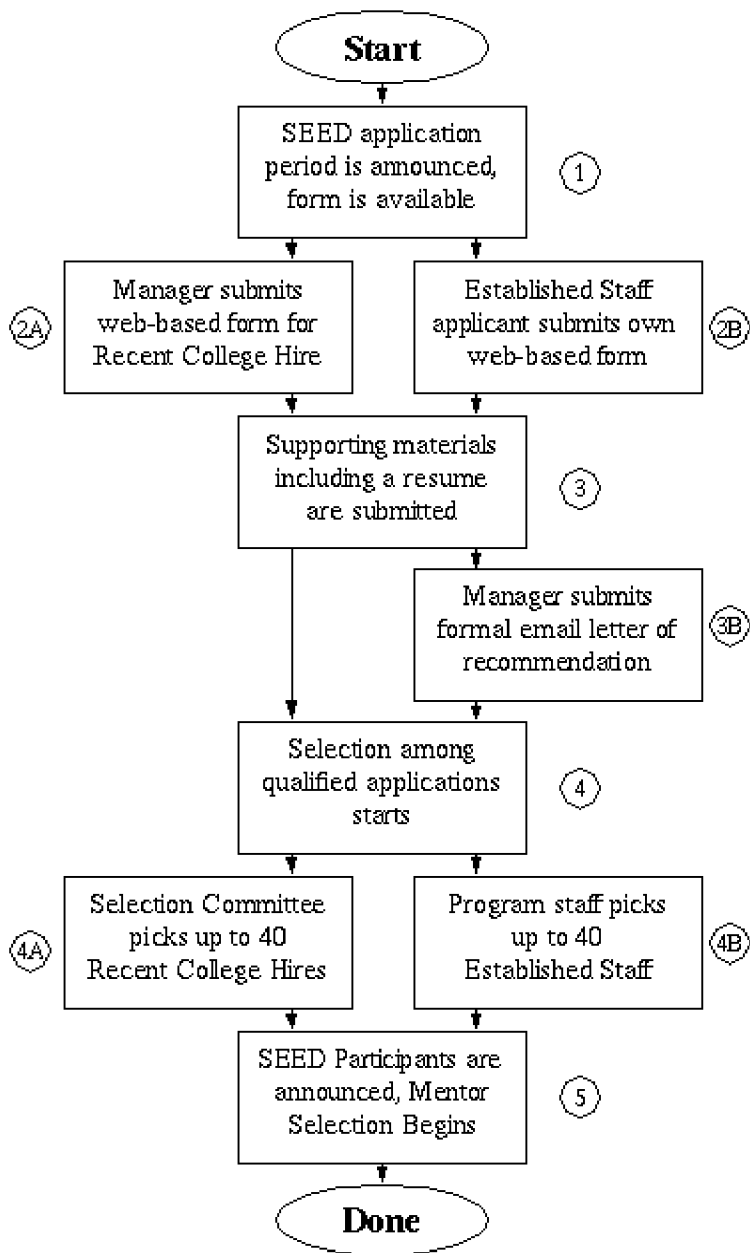
Since the program started in 2001, SEED success metrics have been impressive. Key measurements are the rate of promotions and employee performance ratings among SEED participants, plus their own satisfaction with the program:

- 1) In the 3 completed terms, many more SEED Participants are promoted than the company average. This trend has continued even in the year after participation. For example, the 1st term's Participants earned over triple Sun's average promotion rate at the end their term. A year after their term ended (two years after they entered the SEED program), that same group had earned ten times the Sun average promotion rate.
- 2) About double the number of SEED participants earn the highest performance rating (“Superior”) than the company average (for the three completed terms).
- 3) The program consistently gets very high satisfaction ratings from its participants. In the most recent quarterly reports, 91% thought the meetings with their Mentor were worthwhile and 87% were satisfied to very satisfied with the program.

Other SEED metrics have to do with the demographic, professional, and geographic diversity of Participants. For example:

- About 20% of SEED participants work internationally, mostly in China, India, and Europe. About 70% of participants list a country of origin outside of the USA. Many mentoring partners are working across boundaries of business units and professional area. Others work at a distance geographically.
- SEED includes participants from all Sun Engineering professional focus areas (software, hardware, chip design, service, storage, research & development, etc.). During most terms, all of Sun's Engineering business units have Participants accepted.
- About a quarter of all SEED participants are women. This is consistently higher than the pipeline of women graduates with engineering degrees, specifically in electrical engineering or computer science, from colleges and universities.

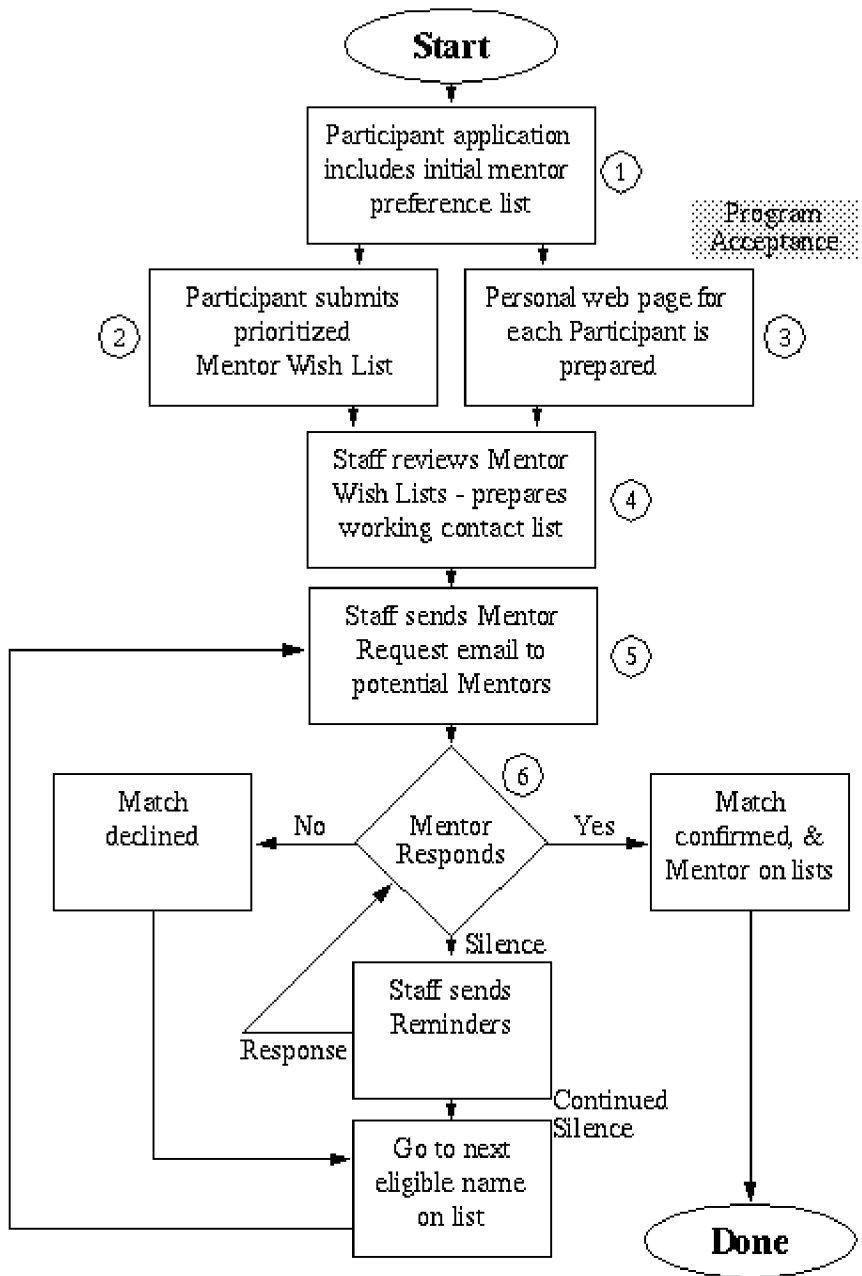
Figure 1 - SEED Participant Selection Flow Chart



A path is for Recent College Hires
B path is for Established Staff

- 1) Announcement is made to Engineering, application form is available
- 2) Application is submitted
- 3) Supporting materials are submitted
- 4) Selection by Selection Committee
- 5) Announcement to Engineering of selection results

Figure 2 - SEED Mentor Selection Flow Chart



Mentor Wish List (preference list) developed by participant

- 1) Mentor Wish List submitted to SEED program staff
- 2) Participant web pages developed
- 3) Working contact list of Mentors developed
- 4) Potential Mentors contacted
- 5) Mentor responds