

# 5 Years of Mentoring by the Numbers

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of Women and Computing**

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# Agenda

- **Introductions**
- **The SEED Program – A Case Study**
  - **Overview**
  - **History**
  - **Structure and Process**
  - **Case Study Learnings –  
What Worked, What Didn't**
- **Apply the Case – What Might Work for You?  
(break out - discussions)**
- **Prepare Report for TechLeader's Workshop**

# Introductions

- **Who are we?**
- **Who are you?**  
*(each participant summarizes in 1 minute)*
  - **Name**
  - **Company (how long?)**
  - **Profession (how long?)**
  - **What are you famous for?**
- **What is your experience with mentoring?**  
*(each participant summarizes in 1 minute)*
- **What questions do you want answered today?**

# The SEED Program: A Case Study

## *Current Overview*

- **Sun Engineering Enrichment & Development (SEED) is a world-wide mentoring and development program for Sun Microsystems' Engineering staff.**
- **SEED program participants are expected to rise to the top of Sun Engineering's individual contributor or management ranks.**
- **Strong, consistent, visible executive sponsorship by Sun's CTO & Executive Vice President for Research & Development, Greg Papadopoulos**

# SEED Current Overview 2

- **17 terms since 2001:**
  - **Over 550 SEED Participants**
  - **Over 280 Mentors**
  - **73% of SEED Mentors are executives**
- **SEED program has a proven track record:**
  - **Strong diversity**
  - **87% satisfaction by participants\***
  - **High regard by management**
  - **High retention**

\*87% of participants since 2001 gave SEED an overall program satisfaction rating of 5, 6, or 7 where 4=neutral and 7=very satisfied. 91% of program participants have described their meetings with their mentor as "Worthwhile", over the past two years of quarterly reports.

## *SEED Current Overview 3*

- **Women and non-US staff take advantage of the SEED program at a consistently higher rate than their representation in Engineering overall.**
- **Since 2001, 24% of all SEED participants are women (28% of participants are women among senior grades). This exceeds the percentage of new hire or existing women engineers.**
- **Attrition of SEED participants is consistently lower, in some categories significantly lower, than Sun overall. Loss of any regular Sun employee (world-wide, voluntary or involuntary) is counted.**

# SEED Current Overview 4

- **SEED participants as a group consistently earn many more promotions than the Engineering average (six times more in FY06), and many more top annual performance ratings than Sun overall (twice as many “1” ratings in FY06). \***
- **Since 2001:**
  - **3 SEEDs have become Distinguished Engineers**
  - **4 SEEDs have become Directors**
  - **Not counting those who started as DE/Director or those who have left Sun after promotion**

\* The success of the individual participant is due to their own capabilities and hard work (plus available opportunities and good management!). Increased success of the participants as a group may be attributable in part to the SEED program.

# SEED History

- Human Resources (HR) developed original program scope, design, and executive support.
- HR Goal in 2000 to launch a Sun-wide employee Best of the Best program in support of high potential employees in one of the functions to aid in attraction and retention of top employees.
- Original Top Goals:
  - > Enrich the experience of future Engineering leaders.
  - > Engender the value of mentoring systemically across Sun Engineering.
  - > Build the Engineering community.
  - > Improve the retention of key Engineering staff, especially recent college hires.
  - > Promote and increase the diversity of Engineering leadership in the areas of demographics, professional area, and geographic location.
  - > Required time with external customers.
  - > Strong affirmative action related goals, with focus on women.

# SEED History 2

- Development process:
  - > Modified 6 Sigma method: voice of the customer drove the original design
  - > Partnership between Human Resources and Engineering from the start
  - > Six months brainstorming, interviews, and process architecture with stakeholders and executive participants
  - > Months-long presentation road show to build support prior to announcement
- Original Design team in charge of program met regularly with the Executive sponsor. Program built in partnership with cross functional team including a diagonal slice of program participants: technical managers, high potential new college grads, Distinguished Engineers, and HR support functions.
- Original pilot modeled after existing Best of the Best new hire program in Sun Sales and Sun Service emphasizing rotation and sales training.

# SEED History 3

- **Implementation process:**

- > On-the-fly redesign to eliminate cost in 2001-2002 term: only program to survive! US-based pilot in CTO and Software organizations for recent college hires only.
- > No budget.
- > Undefinable entry requirements dropped (such as: “top schools”, “high GPA”).
- > Two formal 6 Sigma projects to evaluate and extend program: measure to manage.
- > Pilot programs regularly test innovations and build up network of key groups.
- > Process and web documentation key.

- **SEED Timeline**

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Brainstorming	Pilot Recent College Hire (RCH) Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> RCH Term	3 <sup>rd</sup> RCH Term	4 <sup>th</sup> RCH Term	RCH changes to “Recent Hire” Term 5 <sup>th</sup> RH Term	6 <sup>th</sup> RH Term
Program Proposal Development		Pilot Established Staff (ES) Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> ES Terms	4 <sup>th</sup> ES Term	5 <sup>th</sup> ES Term	6 <sup>th</sup> ES Term
Engineering Roadshow		Name Changed from EboB to SEED			India and China Pilot Terms	EMEA-1 EMEA-2 Storage Pilot Terms

# SEED Current Program Structure & Process

- **2 SEED Groups:**
  - Recent Hires (Under 2 years, any seniority level)
  - Established Staff (Over 2 years, only Principal level & above)
- **3 SEED Priorities:**
  - Value, satisfaction, and retention
  - Build Sun's Engineering community
  - Work to balance the diversity of Participants (geographic, demographic, & professional)
- **4 Basic Requirements:**
  - All Participants in Engineering
  - Only regular Sun employees
  - Superior annual performance ratings preferred
  - Manager support required

# SEED Current Program Structure & Process 2

- **All SEED partnerships are one-on-one. Each relationship is unique.**
- **SEED is not a rotation program: the participant continues to report to their home manager throughout the program term.**
- **There is no cost to participate in this program. It is an investment of the Mentor's and Mentee's time. The program does not fund regular headcount or participant costs (such as telephone, travel, or training): those come from individual department budgets.**

# SEED Current Program Structure & Process 3

- **Most SEED presentations are phone-in only. All are recorded for timeshifted listening.**
- **SEED Mentees select their potential mentors and drive the mentoring relationship. The mentoring pair decides what to discuss and work on. That is, SEED is focussed on accelerating participants' career development and learning overall (not on specific skills development).**

# Key Learnings

- **Strong, consistent, visible executive sponsorship is essential.**
- **Participant selection must be fair & be seen to be fair.**
- **Take a long term view: mentoring is about learning, and creating relationships and community.**
- **Have a quick "no fault divorce" option if the mentoring pair is not getting along.**
- **Mentoring vs. Patronage needs to be explicitly discussed to establish realistic expectations.**

# Key Learnings 2

- **Partnership between Human Resources (Personnel) and Engineering works well for both.**
- **Pick your battles – focus on improving a few related success metrics at a time.**
- **Involve the mentee's manager in the process and program.**
- **Never run a satisfaction survey the day after a reduction in force.**

# Key Learnings 3

- **To avoid normal backlash in making change, ask:**
  - **Who are natural allies (shared goals)?**
  - **Who else benefits from this work?**
  - **How to increase allies' involvement?**
  - **How to reward allies?**
- **Listen regularly to participants, managers, and mentors and follow good advice.**
- **Publicly honor and applaud both the mentees and mentors.**
- **Don't expect or promise miracles. The goal is not perfection but improvement.**

# What has worked for Sun

- **Matching is “by hand”, centrally run by a senior and well-known person in Engineering. That is, the source of the mentoring partnership request matters to potential Mentors.**
- **Continuity of sponsorship and management builds program strength.**
- **The program is run to ensure ease of participation and convenience of Mentors. Mentors who are happy with their experience recommend SEED to others. A company culture that expects and values mentoring develops over time.**
- **2 hour phone-in mentoring facilitation training is provided by SunU. SEED and SunU have evolved the training materials together.**

# What has *not* worked for Sun

- Hand-matching Mentees to executive Mentors is very time consuming and *does not scale*. Even in an Engineering population of many thousands, only a certain number of executives are available at a time.
- “Not invented here” can be a problem. Some groups want their own locally controlled program.
- Language and culture barriers can reduce success and satisfaction.
- Time zone problems get in the way of world-wide conference calls. Travel costs get in the way of world-wide events.

# Barriers to Original Launch

- “What's in it for me?” From the various stakeholder groups, especially managers and potential mentors.
- Managers don't want their best staff to spend time on other projects.
- “Who owns the program – HR or Engineering?” (A partnership was the answer.)
- Original SunU generic mentoring program structure had to be integrated and evolved to meet needs of Engineering program.
- Finding the right program manager in Engineering who had credibility.

# Questions? Learnings, Report Out

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- Key learnings from today?
- What do we want to report?  
(2 to 3 minute synthesis)



# APPENDIX

## *SEED Metrics*

### Participation

- Total applications: 1414  
Total selected: 565 (40%)
- Total mentors: 312  
Total exec. Mentors: 212 (68%)
- Total partnerships: 544  
Total exec. partnerships:  
398 (73%)

### Repeat Participation\*

- Repeat mentors overall:  
135 (43%)
- Repeat exec. Mentors:  
104 (77%)
- Mentored 3 or more times:  
59 (19%)  
49 of those are execs. (83%)
- Participant alumni who have served later as  
mentors: 25  
(42 have volunteered)
- Most partnerships by any Mentor: **10**  
(by a Sun Fellow)

An executive is someone who holds the title of Director or higher, including Distinguished Engineers, Fellows, Vice Presidents, etc.

\* Mentors can participate as often as they want. So far, Mentees can only participate in one SEED term.

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## SEED Metrics 2

### Gender Diversity

- Participants Overall:
  - > Female 24%
  - > Male 76%
- Range by Participant Category:
  - > Established Staff Female: 28% (most senior group)
  - > Recent Hire Female: 22%
  - > Pilot Term Female: 21%
- Mentors Overall:
  - > Female: 21%
  - > Male: 79%

Gender is a subset of Demographics, one of SEED's 3 diversity balance areas. The others are: geographic location, and professional focus within Engineering. Because SEED looks for diversity, selection in those 3 areas is higher.

### Mentor Requests by Gender

- SEED participants request Mentors by submitting ten to fifteen name "Mentor Wish Lists". In those lists, male participants requested:
  - > 84% Male Mentors
  - > **16% Female Mentors**
- Female Participants Requested:
  - > 69% Male Mentors
  - > **31% Female Mentors**
- Male-only "Mentor Wish Lists" came from
  - > 27% Male Participants
  - > 12% Female Participants
- No female-only "Mentor Wish Lists" in the last three years

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## *SEED Metrics 3*

### **Mentor Matching by Gender**

- Male Mentees were matched with
  - > 85% Male Mentors
  - > 15% Female Mentors
- Female Mentees were matched with
  - > 60% Male Mentors
  - > 40% Female Mentors
- Gender is one of many considerations when a potential Mentor considers taking on a new Mentee. Others include: availability when asked, accomplishments, experience, personality, capabilities or skills, common intellectual or professional interests, personal compatibility and commonality, & physical or time zone proximity.

### **Consistent Patterns**

- More male Mentors are requested by both male and female Mentees overall.
- Female Mentors seem more willing than male Mentors to accept a Mentee, regardless of gender.
- Female Mentees request twice as many female Mentors on their Mentor Wish Lists as do male Mentees.

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## *SEED Metrics 4*

### Participation by Professional Area

- 5% Research (Labs) +
- 20% Hardware (systems, chips) -
- 7% Network storage =
- 3% Operations +
- 2% Sales/marketing +
- 6% Service +
- 56% Software -
- + higher compared to Sun Engineering overall  
- lower compared to Sun Engineering  
= same as percentage of Sun Engineering

### Participation by Geographic Area (Work Location, not Origin)

- 56% Americas -
- 21% Asia Pacific +
- 23% Europe/Middle East/Africa +

### Participation by Geographic Area (Origin)

- 26% USA
- 40% Asia Pacific
- 29% Europe/Middle East/Africa
- 6% Other

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## *SEED Metrics 5*

### Partnering at a Distance

- During the past four worldwide SEED Terms, **68%** of the mentoring partnerships have been at-a-Distance. “At-a-Distance” may mean on opposite coasts of the USA, or it may mean in different countries entirely.
- Participants who are co-located with their Mentor report that they meet for longer than participants who are at-a-distance from their mentor. While mentoring pairs who are at-a-distance do report meeting slightly more often, co-located partners appear to spend several more hours together overall over the course of their relationship.
- Whether participants are co-located or at-a-distance from their Mentor does not have any impact on their reported satisfaction with the SEED program.

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## *SEED Preferred Accomplishment Areas*

Papers, patents,  
presentations

Experience in open source,  
industry standards  
development, architectural  
review, mentoring

\* Academic performance

Demonstrated leadership

Demonstrated technical  
excellence

Enthusiasm shown in program  
application

Demonstrated creative  
ability

Work history

Ability to communicate

Publications

Earning the excellent  
opinion of senior staff or  
executives (who write  
recommendation letters)

\* Recent College Hires Only

# APPENDIX

## *Recent SEED Feedback*

- "The SEED program has opened doors for us to the most innovative and senior part of Sun's engineering community... It all adds up to SEED being a great tool for us."  
(AUG 2006 report from a SEED Participant's Manager based in Dublin, Ireland)
- "The SEED program provides great value to Sun and is very well managed. Having run a local program in FY06 (to expand the number of folks that were exposed to mentoring within my org and a sister org), I know the program logistics are extremely complicated and difficult to do well. Hats off to Katy and team."  
(AUG 2006 report from a SEED Vice President Mentor on his third SEED experience)
- "My mentor... has a genuine desire to provide a positive experience through the SEED program. If all mentors share this attitude, the SEED program is a very valuable tool not only for the participants, but for Sun as a development organization. I'm very pleased thus far with what I've gained/learned from the program."  
(AUG 2006 report from a new SEED participant)

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## *Recent SEED Feedback 2*

I contacted my SEED mentee from 2 years ago. It was a good opportunity to go thank him for the work he had been doing. I gave a talk to some of the team here on what we're doing. They were very appreciative to have a DE visitor as they rarely have the opportunity to meet senior people from the Bay Area. They had a good half hour of questions on how the industry is going and what's happening internally in Sun.

Without the work that you've put into the SEED program this wouldn't have happened, so thought you might like to hear this anecdote of the unplanned positive results it can have.

(SEP 2006 email from a Distinguished Engineer (DE) who has been a SEED mentor 4 times so far, about his recent UK trip)

# APPENDIX

## *What Executive Mentors Say*

- "I've been struggling with this however I've (finally) decided that I want to do it. I've asked other people for help along these lines so I guess it's time for me to give a little back."  
(email from a SEED Mentor who had turned down several prior requests)
- "I look forward to our mentor-mentee relationship. This will be a good experience for both of us. I will learn some and you will learn some, it is up to us to make the most out of it."  
(email from a Sun Fellow-VP to his 3<sup>rd</sup> SEED mentee)
- "This is a very worthwhile program that I'm pleased to be able to participate in. In the two times I've participated as a Mentor I've gotten at least as much out of the experience as the mentee."  
(from the quarterly report of a Distinguished Engineer)
- "I was travelling around Europe last week and one of the engineers in my organization who has been at Sun for over a decade told me that his six months in the SEED program was the best six months he has had at Sun. Congratulations to you!"  
(email from a VP who had served twice as a SEED Mentor himself)

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