**Name of person being nominated:** Mary Conrad

**Nominee Team #:** 321

**Name of person submitting nomination:** Daniel Ueda

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The ability to inspire, communicate, and demonstrate role model behavior are three essential aspects to being a good mentor. These are characteristics that are venerated by FIRST Robotics when describing an ideal mentor, but it is rare to actually find a person who represents all of these qualities. Mary Conrad, once a member of the RoboLancers for two years, is currently a pre-junior engineering major at Drexel University. Every day she volunteers her time and devotes her effort to mentoring the team, and thus exemplifies what it means to be a great mentor.

Mary Conrad is our engineering inspiration. Not only is she currently working toward a degree in mechanical engineering, but more importantly she has experience working as an engineer. At Drexel she has co-oped with the CDI Corporation and has worked with Boeing. With all her experience, she comes back and shares every bit of her knowledge with the team. A few examples among many are how she has run workshops on CAD modeling, guides students through the design process, and goes beyond to provide invaluable mentorship for students in every aspect of our robotics team.

Being a FIRST Robotics mentor is about more than just communicating engineering concepts, but rather it is about communication in general. What makes Mary such an effective mentor is her experience gained from working closely with team members. Her experience and maturity gives her the ability to understand many of the students on the team, and they are comfortable enough to approach her with almost any given problem, whether internal, external, robot related, or any other matter. Because of this, she is a friend as well as a mentor. She is genuine and understanding, the type of mentor that high school students need. Not only does she communicate with the members of the team, but she works directly with our two coaches to help ensure the team runs smoothly. Her ability to communicate with students and adults alike amplifies her impact as a team mentor.

The purpose of a mentor for a student is to be a role model figure they can look up to. Mary is a role model for the RoboLancers in so many ways. She personifies the idea of gracious professionalism, and dedicates all of her free time to supporting students in robotics programs, whether it be through the RoboLancers or through starting her own non-profit called Philly FIRST in STEM to support robotics programs in the city of Philadelphia. She understands her responsibility and influence as a mentor, and appropriately acts to show members of the team what it means to be a professional and a leader. She is fair and has confidence in every member on the team, but in return she expects effort and determination. She is the quintessential role model example of a young mentor that all members of the RoboLancers benefit from having.

There is no cookie-cutter definition for an effective mentor. Each FIRST Robotics mentor volunteers their priceless experience, time, and knowledge to support students. Mentorship of a FIRST Robotics team is to help members learn STEM related skills, grow as students, and develop as tomorrow’s young leaders. While all mentors are special, the person who dedicates all of their free time to supporting the students of the RoboLancers and the city of Philadelphia is exceptional. Mary Conrad is a person who the RoboLancers are so grateful to have had as a member and now as a mentor. She embodies the true meaning of a mentor through her ability to inspire, communicate, and be a role model for the members of the RoboLancers.