Since 2001 Professor Lancie Affonso has been mentoring College of Charleston students and connecting them with formative, high-impact experiential learning opportunities. His influence over that time has been both remarkable and wide-reaching. He has served for many years as the director of the Honors College Entrepreneurship Living-Learning Community (E-LLC), a year-long cohort experience for incoming students focused on empowering purposeful student ideas. He’s also served as a faculty mentor for Impact X, a sustainability-focused entrepreneurship course in the School of Business, and as the Director of the Data Science Program from 2019-2021.

Professor Affonso, a Senior Instructor with a joint appointment in the Department of Management and Marketing and the Department of Computer Science, teaches courses in management, entrepreneurship, decision sciences, and computer science. This unique blend of expertise makes him an ideal fit to nurture innovative ideas. But Professor Affonso makes a point to welcome students of all backgrounds, academic interests, and career goals to participate in his various programs and cohorts.
He is not only a champion of inclusivity, but also a proponent of an interdisciplinary, liberal arts education.

Professor Affonso’s mentorship model is focused in equal parts on experience and community. Students in his E-LLC cohort participate in entrepreneurial pitch competitions and public presentations. They attend networking events, connect with faculty mentors, and interact with local industry leaders. All of these experiences help them to develop the types of transferable skills necessary of today’s resilient and creative changemakers.

But Lancie also fosters a genuine sense of community and collaboration among students. From the moment they arrive on campus, his mentees are provided with a built-in support system. He organizes regular bonding events and activities, and introduces students to leadership opportunities and student organizations based on their interests. Time and again, students that participate in the E-LLC talk about the friendships they develop through the program, and how those friendships have benefits them professionally and personally.

It’s telling how frequently Professor Affonso’s mentees choose to give back to one another. Upperclassmen who have completed the E-LLC go to great lengths to serve as formal and informal mentors for incoming cohorts. Mentees who have gone on to successful careers stay in touch with Professor Affonso and share internship and job opportunities to be passed along to current students. This has led to the development of several professional pipelines with companies like CapGemini and Lending Tree, who now routinely hire CofC students. Graduates will also frequently return to campus to talk with current students about their careers.

Professor Affonso isn’t just mentoring students to help them succeed. He is showing them the value of community and the impact they can have on one another. In short, he’s helping them develop into mentors themselves who will go on to make an outsized difference on the world.