A Practical Approach to Personalized Medical Student Advising

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TITLE: A Practical Approach to Personalized Medical Student Advising

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SUBMISSION ROLE: Research and Innovation Abstracts

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ABSTRACT BODY:

Short Description: Many medical students struggle to form successful advising and mentoring relationships with faculty. We developed and implemented a longitudinal advisory program that incorporates self-reflection and regular advisor-advisee discussions on wellness and work-life balance, scholarship, academic performance, and career goals. Infrastructure was put into place to ensure accountability. Program outcome data will be shared along with information to allow replication.

Abstract: Problem Statement: Many medical students struggle to form successful advising and mentoring relationships with faculty, yet such relationships are essential for professional development and success. Early and frequent advising has been proposed as a strategy to reduce barriers to mentorship, but little is known regarding how best to structure and implement advising programs for medical students.

Approach: We implemented a longitudinal Mayo Medical School (MMS) Advisory Program based on a successful program used in the Internal Medicine Residency program that incorporates self-reflection and regular advisor-advisee discussions on wellness and work-life balance, scholarship, academic performance, and career goals. Faculty were recruited from all specialties, received access to the AAMC’s Careers in Medicine website, and participated in a training workshop. Students were assigned to faculty with similar career interests. Biannually, medical students were prompted to complete a web-based self-reflection form addressing multiple dimensions, and staff scheduled advisor-advisee meetings on physicians’ calendars. During the meetings advisors reviewed the reflection form and student academic performance data, engaged the advisee in a conversation about each dimension, and added comments to the form. Completed forms were forwarded to the MMS Student Affairs team for review.

Lessons Learned: In 2014-2015, 97 faculty from 20 specialties advised 85%, 85%, 73% and 98% of first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year students respectively at least once during the academic year. Most physician advisors had 3 (42%) or 2 (32%) advisees. In addition to the formal advisee meetings scheduled by MMS, 68% of physician advisors met with their advisee additional times. Among the students, 70% were satisfied with their physician advisor. Students reported a high level of comfort discussing the various topics with their advisor, and 68% reported the meetings were moderately or very useful. Seventy-four percent of advisors were satisfied with their advisee interactions, and nearly all advisors were comfortable discussing each domain with their advisee.

Significance: The MMS Advising Program included a broad representation of faculty, provided structured advising on a range of personal and academic topics, compensated faculty for time, and provided an infrastructure that resulted in experiences for all students, independent of faculty or student initiative. Further research is needed to clarify the effectiveness of the advising program, including referrals to potential research mentors and impact on scholarly output, student stress, career decision making, and residency match outcomes.

References


Level of Audience: Mid-career
Focus of Presentation: UME

References: References


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