

Etiquette Dinner and Professional Dress Educational Session

Background

When students begin to interview for jobs and residency programs, they typically encounter situations in which proper dining etiquette, polite conversation, and appropriate business attire are essential. For example, residency program interviews are often day-long events, and business dinners/lunches are sometimes a key component of them. Recognizing this, our SSHP felt that our students needed the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to handle these situations well. Our business etiquette dinner was created to provide a unique approach to helping students foster the raw techniques and social skills necessary to operate in professional environments.

Methods

Our first step was to contact our career development and advising office and other pharmacy organizations to determine their interest in involvement. This was done three months before the actual event was to be held. After the level of involvement was determined, we began personally approaching the organizations that we thought would be vital to organizing an event of this magnitude. After everyone was contacted, the interested participants included our chapter of Lambda Kappa Sigma, our university's Career Development and Advising department, and our very own SSHP. Next, representatives from each of the parties met together and began to plan the event itself. During this meeting, Career Development and Advising was tremendously helpful in providing both institutional backing and financial support. The contact that they were able to make with Conference Services, a NEOUCOP campus-based catering business, was particularly vital. Conference Services was contracted to provide food, utensils, and other dining equipment for the actual meeting. Additionally, Lambda Kappa Sigma offered their services in developing a Professional Dress Educational Session. As for our SSHP, we helped to organize and execute a cocktail party networking session and etiquette dinner. The night began with the mock cocktail party and was subsequently followed by the Etiquette Dinner and Professional Dress Educational Session.

Results

Overall, the 2010 SSHP Etiquette Dinner was an enormous success, with nearly 60 students, pharmacists, and physicians in attendance. Students who attended the event were exposed to and interacted with a number of professionals from a variety of healthcare settings. In addition to this, attending the etiquette dinner helped students to better understand the proper ways in which to conduct themselves during meals in professional environments. Finally, the Professional Dress Educational Session both strengthened and expanded the knowledge base on proper dress for all of the individuals who were in attendance.

Conclusions

An Etiquette Dinner such as ours provides students with a unique opportunity to develop and refine their dining etiquette techniques and knowledge of appropriate professional dress. Additionally, the student/practitioner interaction present in this event might help to serve other student organizations by providing an exciting approach to honing students' networking skills. Any students who are interested in developing an event such as this should seek to gain support from campus-based career advising programs (if applicable).