

Mentorship Program

Fostering Meaningful Connections Among Peers

Midwestern University Chicago College of Pharmacy

What We Did:

Objective: To facilitate the transition of incoming pharmacy students and foster professional relationships between all levels of students on campus.

Plan: The need for guidance within the first year pharmacy class was finally met when the Mentorship Program was launched in Fall 2015. When developing this program, we first identified our target groups: first-year students as mentees and second- and third-year students as mentors. In order to participate in the program, both mentors and mentees were required to be a member of the student society of health-system pharmacy (SSHP) organization, complete a mentorship program questionnaire, and attend a mandatory orientation. The questionnaire assessed each student's preferences by inquiring on their pharmacy field(s) of interest, strengths/weaknesses, hobbies, and desired frequency/length of meetings. This information was used to help match mentors and mentees. Following the match process, students were required to attend an orientation session that introduced the program's objectives, advantages, and expectations. The goals of the orientation were to set the standards of the program and help both mentors and mentees maximize the benefits of their meetings. During the orientation, the mentors and mentees were able to exchange contact information and participate in icebreaker sessions. The minimum requirement of the peer-to-peer mentorship is to meet at least once per quarter; the meetings are documented with an online form provided by the student chapter. This online form is beneficial for both the mentors and mentees because it ensures that the meetings occur and documents the time mentors spend volunteering. Our SSHP will offer quarterly meeting agendas with talking points that are specific to each academic quarter (such as inquiring about interests on Summer Internships during the Fall since most applications are due by Winter) to help guide mentor-mentee meetings.

Outcome: During the first year of the mentorship program, we enrolled a total of 98 participants with 49 mentors and 49 mentees. A quality improvement analysis is under way to identify opportunities for future improvements; mentors and mentees will be surveyed throughout the year. To date, we have recorded that each mentor-mentee pair has met for an average of 60 minutes and so far, they have found these meetings very beneficial.

What You Can Do:

1. Identify the need for a peer mentorship program at your school.
2. Investigate the interest of upperclassmen pharmacy students and their commitment to a role as a mentor.
3. Utilize the Mentoring Program Tool Kit at http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_418.pdf.
4. Create a Questionnaire to help facilitate the match process by assessing their pharmacy fields of interest, strengths/weaknesses, and preferences in frequency/length of each meeting.
5. Organize an orientation date to share the objectives, advantages, and expectations of the program.
6. Encourage quarterly meetings by coordinating social events for the mentors and mentees to build their professional relationships.
7. Set up a form to keep track of the time mentors volunteered for each meeting. It is also necessary to keep records to reinforce minimum meeting requirements.
8. Evaluate the success of this program and devise improvement strategies by constructing an end of year survey.

Resources:

- <http://www.mentoring.org/>
- ASHP offers a match program for mentorship: <http://connect.ashp.org/mentoring1/aboutmentormatch>

Contact Information: ICHPMWU@gmail.com