

Strategies to Cultivate and Sustain Mentoring Relationships between Students who are Underrepresented in Medicine (URiM) and Physicians

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Project Overview

Mentoring relationships are integral to the personal and professional development of a medical student. Despite this well-established fact, URiM medical students often struggle to locate a mentor. This may be due to the limited number of URiM faculty members at medical institutions and challenges mentoring across differences for non-URiM faculty. To close this gap, we created a mentoring program based on the following three foundational steps:

1. Initial establishment of expectation for mentee and mentor
2. Thorough discussion of long- and short-term goals
3. Provision of forum for frequent and open discussion

In our opinion, these steps are imperative to facilitate stable, productive mentoring relationships in the unique purview of minority students. We will assess the success of these principles in the context of this program over the next two years.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the importance of an individual development plan for mentoring relationships and self reflection
2. Describe how a multifactorial questionnaire can be utilized to create compatible matches between URiM medical students and physicians
3. Develop jointly delivered, regular programming about mentoring and professional development provides the groundwork for medical students and mentors to develop/create a prosperous mentoring relationship

Procedure

Step 1

Develop a multifactorial questionnaire for students to assess personal goals, professional goals, gender preferences, shared race or ethnicity, specialty interests, and desired mentor qualities.

Step 2

Assess physician comfort providing advice and guidance with specialty choices, work life balance, finances, and more through a questionnaire

Step 3

Compile tips for successful mentoring relationship
Create mentorship plan to be distributed and utilized by each mentor-mentee pair

Step 4

Student-facilitated match-making between mentors and mentees based off the results of the questionnaires

- Utilizing development plans, mentorship – focused programming and required monthly meetings to foster strong, goal-oriented relationships

Step 5

Provide a Basics of Mentoring and Mentoring URiM students workshops to medical students and physician mentors

Observations

- Number of mentees in program = 40
- Number of mentors = 42
- Number of pairs = 40
- Attrition = 2 students, 2 mentors
- 57.8% of respondents reported that specialty was the most important match factor
- 20% had no preference for any match factor
- 17.8% had a preference based on race and ethnicity
- 4.4% had a gender or gender identify preference

Conclusion

- A stepwise mentoring program for URiM students successfully paired 38 students with 40 URiM and non-URiM faculty.
- To date, informal communication supports a favorable response to a structured orientation to the mentor-mentee relationship and scheduled monthly meetings
- After collecting data at 12 months, we will assess compliance to the three foundational principles. We foresee that orienting students and faculty to the mentor-mentee relationship and frequent scheduled mentoring meetings will determine the efficacy and productivity of the relationship.

Future Directions of the Program

- Solicit faculty and student ideas for future programming
- Build a sustainable model
- Offer in-person mixers to further widen the network for students involved in the program
- Continue providing workshops to help mentors to be more attuned to the needs of their mentees
- Compare the experiences of students with URM mentors with those with Non-URM mentors
- Assess the success of each mentoring relationship with multiple surveys

Works Cited

- Abernethy, A D A mentoring program for underrepresented-minority students at the University of Rochester School of Medicine, Academic Medicine: April 1999 - Volume 74 - Issue 4 - p 356-9
- Campbell KM, Rodríguez JE. Mentoring Underrepresented Minority in Medicine (URMM) Students Across Racial, Ethnic and Institutional Differences. J Natl Med Assoc. 2018 Oct;110(5):421-423. doi: 10.1016/j.jnma.2017.09.004. Epub 2017 Nov 6. PMID: 30129519.