Physician Executive Leadership: Assessing a Student-Led Approach to Healthcare Leadership Education in Medical School

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Overview

The Problem: Gaps in Medical Education

Healthcare in the U.S. continues to evolve, and topics such as healthcare delivery, health finance, and patient experience are now central to the practice of medicine. However, the sheer volume of material students are required to learn in the preclinical years makes it challenging to introduce new subjects into traditional medical school curricula. Although these topics in healthcare leadership are often left out,[2] only 40-60% of medical students report appropriate training in the “practicals” of medicine, including subjects such as medical economics, healthcare systems, and managed care.[3]

A Proposed Solution: Physician Executive Leadership

In response to this gap in medical education, students at Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC) at Thomas Jefferson University founded Physician Executive Leadership (PEL) in 2013. PEL is an entirely student-led, student-centered, extracurricular program open to all SKMC students. The mission of PEL is to provide medical students with a platform to build healthcare knowledge and cultivate leadership skills, in order to become well-informed and capable physician leaders and innovators.

By connecting students to healthcare leaders and introducing them to key topics in healthcare leadership, PEL enables students to develop both depth and breadth of knowledge in a number of subject areas underrepresented in medical education.

Connecting to Healthcare Leaders

Employing Multiple Learning Modalities

Lecture Series

Small Group & Workshops

Interdisciplinary & Special Events

Research & Student Journal

For the Program

Our students are surveyed at the beginning and end of each academic year to assess student satisfaction with their participation in PEL. The survey was administered to medical students at SKMC at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, PA. All students surveyed completed the PEL program during the 2015-2016 academic year by attending at least five events.

174 students completed the start-of-year survey, and 112 completed the end-of-year survey. Our sample consisted of the 90 students who completed both surveys: 62 of whom were in their first year of medical school, 32 in their second, and four in their third.

Standardized test scores of 4 and 5).

What are ACO’s?

Exposure to PEL topics will

discovering the breadth and complexity of medical leadership and management responsibilities.

Because this new set of requirements is more extensive than those of previous years, and because students continue to encounter these topics throughout their medical education, PEL participation will become a multi-year engagement that tracks the length of the medical school experience, rather than resetting at the beginning of each academic year.

We hope that by extending PEL participation through all four years of medical school, and creating a more structured set of completion requirements, we will be able to help students achieve both breadth of knowledge in all the PEL relevant fields and depth of knowledge in the topics that interest them most.

For the Research

In an effort to more accurately capture the impact of the PEL program and address some of the limitations of the current study, we have implemented a number of changes in our research and assessment process, encompassing the questions themselves, the process of administering assessments, and the creation of a control group.

Questions:

We are working in collaboration with the experts who lead lectures and small-group sessions on each of PEL’s key subject areas, as well as the Director of Medical Education Research at SKMC to write board-style questions externally validated to cover the material most pertinent to each topic.

Assessment:

Students will complete individual before-and-after assessments for each of the events they attend that focus on one of PEL’s five key subject areas. At the end of the year, all students participating in PEL will take an end-of-year assessment including all of the questions from each topic’s individual assessment.

Control:

For each topic, students who attended a PEL event focused on a particular topic and completed the individual assessment will comprise the study group. Students who did not attend an event focused on that topic, and complete the questions relevant to it only at the end of the year, will comprise the control group.

We are in the process of developing a method to recruit a focus group of students not involved in PEL.

Citations