Vital Signs Mentoring Program

Creighton University School of Medicine, Office of Student Affairs

VSMP Program

In the complex world of healthcare and increasing pressures on healthcare professionals, medical students have a need for purposeful personal and professional development. The Vital Signs Mentoring Program has been created to provide structure and multiple opportunities for faculty, clinicians, students and alumni to interact and impact one another through mentoring relationships.

Mentoring

A dynamic relationship in which one who is experienced guides another in their personal and professional development.

Mission Statement

VSMP will provide multiple opportunities for personal and professional development of Creighton University medical students through layered mentoring relationships with those who have gone before.

Objectives

- Incorporate ethical principles and philosophy into training and future clinical practice.
- Encourage, demonstrate and promote professional behaviors and attitudes.
- Increase awareness and management of stresses within medical education and the profession of medicine.
- Promote and demonstrate a balanced and healthy lifestyle and relationships.
- Increase adjustment and ease of transition through each stage of medical education.
- Increase interaction between students and faculty.
- Increase interaction between students in all stages of medical education.
- Increase access to professionals and resources within the field of medicine.
- Create opportunities for conversations about issues in medical education and becoming a professional physician.
- Increase a proactive approach to residency applications and specialty selection.

Students

M1/M2 Students: Students, upon matriculation, are paired with an M2 buddy to help the transition to medical school and Omaha. Four to five “buddy pairs” are placed into one of 30 small groups, lead by a team of M3/M4 Peer Mentors and a Faculty Mentor. These groups meet at the beginning of the year for a “group-bonding” activity, mid-semester for a meal and conversation with an optional spring semester gathering. The goal of the small groups is to create opportunities for conversations with students who are a step ahead about upcoming requirements and transitions. In addition, the faculty mentors add their wisdom to the group as they gather in a restaurant or home for meals and sharing. These students are also asked to have a 1:1 meeting with their choice of a peer or faculty mentor in the both fall and spring semesters.

M3/M4 Students: As students enter their clinical rotations during the third year, they choose a career mentor from a list of nearly 100 volunteer physicians to meet 1:1 for conversations about specialty choice, residency requirements or about the profession of medicine. M4 students have the option to meet with a mentor as needed to prepare for residency applications and interviews.

Mentors

Peer Mentors: M3 and M4 students may volunteer to help mentor the small groups of M1/M2 students, with over 150 M3s/M4s choosing to participate. They receive training to provide leadership in facilitating group meetings and 1:1 mentoring meetings with their students.

Faculty Mentors: Each of the 30 small groups are assigned a faculty mentor to work with the Peer Mentors and provide guidance and professional expertise to the group. They also are available for 1:1 mentoring meetings for their students.

Career Mentors: Clinicians volunteer to mentor M3/M4 students as they move into their clinical training. Nearly 100 physicians have volunteered to provide 1:1 mentoring each semester aiding in specialty decisions and transitions into the profession. They also act as advisors, signing off on schedules and externship applications.

Alumni Mentors: A pool of nearly 300 CUSOM alumni from across the U.S. have volunteered to be available to students via phone or e-mail to provide information about specialty areas, practice situations, residency and fellowship programs and even geographic information about their area of the country.

Resources

Mentors and students have training and access to materials placed within a mentoring “class” on Blueline as well as on-line resources, such as the Careers in Medicine website through the Association of American of Medical Colleges. These resources provide assessments for self-understanding, information about specialties and resources to assist the student in discovering their most fulfilling area of medicine and the opportunity to become a consummate professional.