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Title of Abstract: Is Healthcare a Business? A Novel Approach to Educating PAs in Management and Leadership.

Problem/Needs Assessment:

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a 30% growth in employment of PAs by 2024 resulting in an increased need for leadership and management in the profession^{1,2}. Faculty within the Wake Forest Schools of Medicine and Business implemented a novel 34-month sequential degree program combining a Master of Science (MS) in Management and Master of Medical Science (MMS) in PA Studies. The Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) strives to produce leadership-oriented PAs equipped with business competencies to succeed in a complex healthcare environment³.

Program Objectives:

1. Explore the intersection of medicine and business for future healthcare providers
2. Discover innovative solutions to alleviating the provider shortage by educating PA leaders

Description of Program:

The management curriculum is a 10-month experiential learning program focused on practical competence and character building. The PA program utilizes inquiry-based learning and incorporates leadership training into a curriculum based on six clinical competencies. Integrated courses concentrate on professionalism and service leadership. ELP applicants must meet standard admission requirements and demonstrate aptitude for leadership. Academic performance is measured using traditional methods.

Evaluation/Assessment:

Target enrollment for the pilot was met with six students (N=6/159). Upon completion of the management program, ELP pilot students were ranked within the top 10% by final GPA. After experiential learning projects with local and multinational organizations, students reported a clear understanding of the connection between business principles and application to healthcare. Students demonstrated leadership capabilities in their curriculum teams and were selected as the overall project winner by course faculty. The pilot cohort successfully completed the full ELP pathway in 2017, have passed the PA National Certifying Exam (PANCE) and have begun clinical practice. Successes of the pilot cohort led to program expansion of approximately 15 students each year since 2014.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned:

Despite all ELP matriculates being drawn from a typical applicant pool for the PA program, the ELP students' academic achievement was among the highest in the management program. Plans are to grow the program and to track the graduates' performance and trajectory toward assuming healthcare leadership roles. In 2018, the ELP expanded with a Health Law & Policy track through a partnership with the WFU School of Law.

References:

1. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-17 Edition*, Physician Assistants, on the Internet at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm> (visited *January 04, 2017*).
2. Jocelyn Kaiser. NIH Report Warns of Looming Shortage of Physician-Scientists. Available at: <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2014/06/nih-report-warns-looming-shortage-physician-scientists>
3. Huckabee, M. J., & Wheeler, D. W. (2008). Defining Leadership Training for Physician Assistant Education. *The Journal of Physician Assistant Education*, 19(1), 24-28. doi:10.1097/01367895-200819010-00005