

Health Professions Education Institute (HPEI)

Navigating medical school: supporting students through medical school and an ever-changing pandemic via student-to-student seminars and networking events

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WORKS IN PROGRESS-Curriculum Innovation

Background:

NMS is a student-led and faculty-supported program that mentors medical students on topics such as the medical curriculum, board examinations, career preparation, and work-life balance. NMS delivers three curricular programs: a near-peer guides program, student-to-student seminar series, and networking events. During the COVID-19 pandemic, NMS had to shift to incorporate virtual mentoring, online networking, and remote panel discussions into a hybrid model.

Objectives:

To evaluate the feasibility of the newly implemented hybrid program that includes both virtual and in-person student-student seminars and networking events and explore the impact on student navigation during critical time points in medical school.

Methods/Description of Program: Over the past year, NMS held 10 seminars and networking events with 90% being virtual and 10% being in-person as permitted. At each event, attendance is taken and attendees complete a 4-question survey (5-point Likert). Each survey consists of one question specific to the event and three questions about session organization (1: not organized, 5: extremely organized), utility to medical school (1: I will implement none of what I learned, 5: I will implement nearly all of what I learned), and open-ended feedback. Descriptive statistics were performed.

Anticipated Results/Evaluation Plan: To date, feedback data has been collected from three seminars. Average attendance rates for these seminars was 16 students which is lower than seminars held pre-pandemic. However, responses to the *Summer planning seminar* included that it was “very helpful” and helped “eased a lot of the pressure” students felt. At the *Keys to success in the organ systems curriculum* session, students reported that it helped to “conceptualize how to put all of these resources into your daily routine” and they were “pleased with the diversity of study habits present”. At the *M4 scheduling seminar*, students wanted to hear more from “different backgrounds and specialty interests”. Sessions were run well with 90.63% of students reporting sessions were organized and well delivered.

Next Steps: Based on qualitative responses, it is clear that students who are attending NMS events are benefitting. However, there has been a change in uptake of these events which were previously well attended. New innovations are needed and planned to adapt to the constraints of the pandemic.