

Using Pharmacy “Families” to Improve a Faculty Advising Program

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Background/Introduction

Encouraging professional identity formation and overall well-being for students is important to faculty advising programs. Barriers to engagement including confusion about the purpose of the program; lack of orientation for new faculty; time commitment to arrange meetings; and costs associated for social events. The University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) College of Pharmacy (COP) sought to overcome those barriers by moving from a traditional one-on-one advising model to a group “Pharmacy Family” model consisting of a faculty advisor and student representatives from each of the 4 classes.

Objective/Purpose

The objective is to give an overview of the UNMC Pharmacy Family program.

Methods

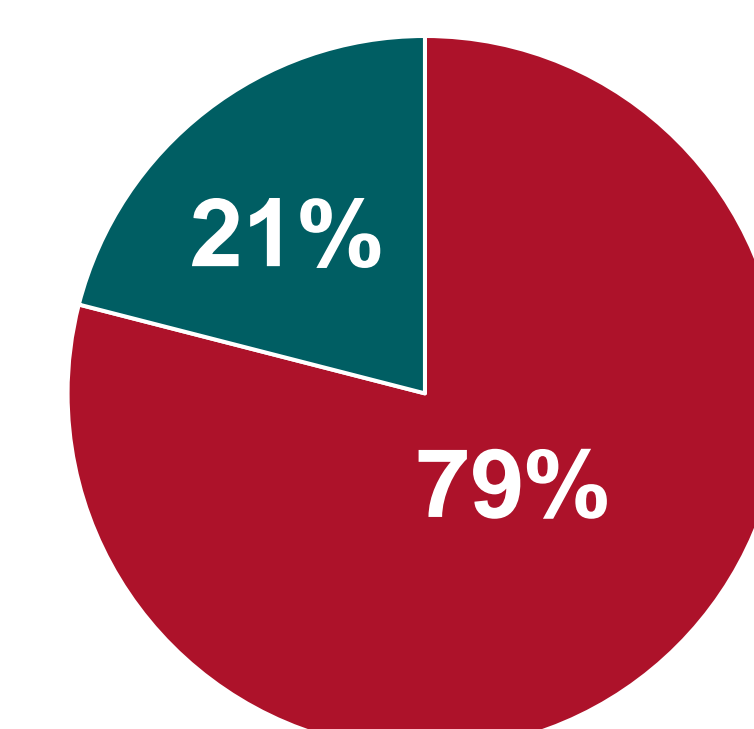
The UNMC COP conducted a review of its advising process. Interviews with student leadership and faculty revealed barriers to engagement and routine meetings. Based upon this feedback, the following guidance, structure, and training was implemented.

- Student coordinators (P2 or P3 students) within each family were appointed to facilitate family meetings.
- A food stipend of \$100 per semester/family was implemented.
- A program overview at a COP Faculty meeting, included: Purpose and structure of the family; Faculty expectations and responsibilities; and Talking points for faculty at family “gatherings”.
- This was followed by the UNMC Director of Counseling and Psychological Services discussing signs associated with student wellness and psychological concerns.
- Families were free to be creative in how they interacted.
- Meeting frequency and student perceptions are collected each semester

Results

Based on a survey of students, as of March 2023, all but two of 24 families had met at least once. Student feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and the interactions deemed beneficial.

Student Value of Program



■ Students that find value in program
■ Students that do not find value in program

Student Ranking of Family Advisor Engagement



Ranking based 5-point scale with 5 being excellent engagement.

Pharmacy Family Outings



Pharmacy families were encouraged to meet at least once a semester. Families often met for lunch, but also participated in activities such as bowling and yard games.

Pharmacy Family Holiday Card



Pharmacy families submitted holiday cards to be displayed on the college's digital information system.

Conclusion

Developing a structured advising program with students from all classes, clear expectations, and financial support from the College, has improved student sense of community and well-being.