



EFFECTIVE STUDENT ADVISING SERIES

Building a Better Mentor-Mentee Relationship

Introduction

This correspondence is intended as a guide for faculty or residents who serve as a mentor to medical students, or who have been identified by a medical student as a potential mentor.

By definition, a mentor provides guidance and an advisor provides direction. Their impact on the career of a student is very different. As a mentor, it is important to distinguish between these two roles. The scope of the role of a mentor involves a partnership between the mentor and the mentee. The aim is to provide guidance in career development, socialization within the field of obstetrics and gynecology, and bi-directional communication that allows the growth and development of the student as a reflective practitioner capable of problem solving in areas of career decision making.

This relationship develops through networking: gaining in-depth knowledge of the student's needs for elective choices and clarifying short term and long term goals for completing their education. In addition, it is important to set guidelines for the relationship, including boundaries, modes of communication, accountability and consequences. It should also include a defined timeline for assessment of the relationship, with the option to end the relationship amicably if it no longer meets expectations of either party.

Meetings between the mentor and mentee should be structured. The length of meetings, appropriate meeting place, and expectations of preparation by both sides should be outlined in order to promote meaningful work. The mentor should approach the meeting prepared with specific goals, questions to be explored, and prompts to promote self-reflection and growth in the mentee. A healthy balance between guidance, giving advice and listening is the goal of the sessions.

Objectives of the Mentoring Relationship

- Defined by the needs of the student
- Fosters a mutually-beneficial mentoring relationship between the student and mentor
- Addresses questions or challenges related

to career choice as a future obstetrician-gynecologist

- Helps student reflect on circumstances that affect career, life balance and family considerations
- Helps student prepare for the application and interview process for residency

Mentor Expectations

- Help the student identify feasible and strategic elective choices with the student's role clearly defined
- Provide clear, yet challenging expectations
- Provide guidance through the application process for residency
- Provide constructive feedback using appreciative inquiry and strengths-based approach
- Assist professional and personal development
- Foster a mentor-mentee relationship based upon respect, confidence, and a comfortable working relationship

Mentee Responsibilities for the Student

- Timely scheduling of meetings
- Preparation prior to the meetings with specific goals for each session based on the student's needs
- Understand expectations and consider having a contract of the expectations of the relationship with responsibility for timely notification of either party for cancellations, tardiness, etc.

Mentor Responsibilities

Before the first meeting:

- Meet with the student to discuss goals of the mentoring partnership, roles of each party and responsibilities of the student as it relates to successful navigation of the fourth year through the residency process
- Consider signing a mentoring agreement to establish the ground rules of the partnership
- Identify possible challenges that the student will need to overcome and suggest resources for the student



During the Mentorship Period

- Guide and advise the student throughout the fourth year period and check in with the student at least once per month.
- Ensure that the student is utilizing resources available through the Dean's office that can help them successfully navigate the fourth-year planning and residency application requirements
- Celebrate successes (even the small ones)

Summary

In this pamphlet, we have outlined the steps to developing a good mentor-mentee relationship especially where it relates to career advising. Establish the expectations, determine the needs of the student, set the meeting schedule, listen carefully and provide feedback. Remember to always celebrate the student's successes.





The Effective Student Advising Series is a project of the Association of Professors of Gynecology and Obstetrics (APGO) Undergraduate Medical Education Committee (UMEC) 2018-2020:

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The Association of Professors of Gynecology and Obstetrics (APGO) promotes excellence in women's health care by providing optimal resources and support to educators who inspire, instruct, develop, and empower women's health care providers to improve the quality of life for all women.

This publication is part of the APGO Effective Student Advising Series. Advising medical students on a career in women's health can be one of the most fulfilling things that a medical educator does. Many physicians find themselves in the role of faculty advisor without any formal background or training in advising. The APGO Effective Student Advising Series pamphlets are intended to educate medical educators and learners about best practices for advising medical students on a career in women's health.



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