

Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (JHU SOM) approaches career advising from a different perspective than many other medical schools. Rather than directing the majority of effort toward the choice of a specialty and a list of potential residency programs for application purposes, the Colleges Advisory Program (CAP) of the JHU SOM directs its efforts toward developing the complete medical student and professional. To promote the success of the program, dedicated core faculty advisors, counselors, and mentors are employed to guide students while utilizing a number of program evaluation mechanisms.

To ensure a comprehensive program of development for each student, Dr. David Nichols, Vice-Dean for Education, and Dr. Thomas W. Koenig, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, initiated the Colleges Advisory Program four years ago. It was based on the University of Washington's similar college system and with similar goals of overseeing a four-year integrated curriculum of clinical skills, personal development, and professionalism as well as providing students with consistent faculty mentoring. The integration of the CAP into the curriculum provides extensive opportunities for mentoring, advising, and counseling tailored for each student.

Another goal of this career advising method is to teach relationship-centered care, where all parties are instrumental in determining a health outcome. As such, the CAP is integrated with the JHU SOM's clinical skills program, where technical proficiency, bedside manner, and professional ethics are inculcated into each medical student. Due to the philosophy of the JHU SOM in fully developing each student, most students extend their medical school careers to include training outside their traditional medical school curriculum and graduate in five years. These types of outside training are encouraged and include experiences in research, public health, community service, other degrees (MPH, MHS, MBA, etc.), or entirely unique experiences requested by or tailored with a student's ideas in mind.

Upon matriculation, students are assigned to one of four colleges and to one of the faculty core advisors within that college. To ensure that advisors were available to aid students, 24 physicians, known for their dedication to teaching and patient-centered care and who were recommended by students, were subjected to a rigorous selection process and then chosen to lead clinical education and serve as student advisors. Students participate actively in the selection of advisors and faculty candidates must seek letters of recommendation from students, thus insuring that outstanding teachers with student-centered teaching skills are identified. Each faculty core advisor is ultimately responsible for five students in each class. The advisors are trained in student career advising through a robust Faculty Development Program. They are the students' primary resource for connections with other faculty and advisors and take the lead in their relationship with the student. Core faculty advisors are supported for 20% of their time through the budget for medical education. On the other hand, it is the student who takes the lead for mentorship relationships. The students are provided contact information and introduction to the mentor from advisors and other faculty contacts so that the mentoring relationship meets the individual personal and professional training needs of the student.

The Colleges provide an environment where students gain from continuous interaction with upper classmates, peer, and faculty advisors. To enhance this effect, specific efforts to incorporate student social leaders with peer advising and faculty advising programs are being planned for the future. In addition to the interactions provided by each student-student and student-faculty unit, ancillary career development opportunities are provided. An example is the AIM program whereby third and fourth year students take first and second year students into the clinics to shadow and learn about potential specialty and residency choices and interests. Other programming includes student interest groups in different specialties and "What it is Like to be" seminars by faculty and guest speakers.

Upon each student's decision of a specialty career choice, clinical advisors within that field provide career-specific advising interactions to aid the student with the preparation and planning

to be successful in applying for residency programs. At this later stage in a student's career, the Colleges advisors continue to play a more general supportive role, such as mentorship with applications, preparing for personal interviews, and support as needed with Match list-related concerns.

The Colleges Advisory Program does not utilize a timeline nor emphasize milestones for students to reach, but instead sees students as being on independent, individual career trajectories each with its own timeline. Nonetheless, developmental objectives for every three to six months of medical school experience are utilized to guide students toward their career paths. As described earlier, many students at JHU SOM take five years or more before receiving their M.D. degrees to allow the pursuit of additional or complementary training experiences. As such, each CAP advisor ascertains the unique talents and interests of each student and helps them with a personalized career trajectory that emphasizes excellence in training, leadership, research, and innovation.

Each year students provide a write-up of their level of satisfaction with advisors and complete a graduation survey regarding their experiences with involvement in the medical school community and CAP. These evaluations demonstrated that in the first two years of the program, students were wary of the new advising and learning structures, and program developers noted some feelings of alienation among non-participating faculty. However, later evaluations demonstrated student satisfaction with the CAP and the success of the program, leading to acceptance of the CAP by students and faculty alike.

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Best thing about the program?

"The faculty member's devotion to the students is the best thing about the program. Each faculty member takes joy in the successes of their student advisees and in the success of the medical students, as a group." – Student Affairs Office

"Colleges set-up where each student is a part of a larger group composed of students from all years and 6 dedicated faculty advisors. Furthermore, the fact that all advisors receive specialized training before participating in advisors ensures structured and effective advising, counseling, and mentoring sessions and offering of opportunities." – OSR representative