

## Comprehensive Support: Enrollment to Graduation

### Learning Community Mentors

(Assigned at the beginning of medical school and remain with the student throughout all four years.)

Upon matriculation, students will be assigned to one of two Learning Communities headed by a mentor who will model professional behaviors and promote collegiality. Prior to clerkships, a clerkship director (the Learning Community Clerkship Lead) will be assigned to each Learning Community to foster a smooth transition into the clerkship experience.

After students begin the clerkship portion of the curriculum, they will remain in their designated Learning Community with access to their pre-clerkship mentor. Other clerkship directors will also provide mentorship to students during clerkships.

Learning Community mentors will monitor the academic performance of their assigned students during all four years of the curriculum. The mentors will play a valuable role in helping students proactively identify and address any evolving problems, whether academic in nature or not (e.g. stress, burnout, depression, etc.). They will be available to discuss issues, such as group skills and processes, curricular matters, study strategies, academic performance, and professionalism.

The mentors will also be trained to observe students and identify other issues (e.g., lack of focus or personal stressors). The Learning Community mentors may refer students to other professionals or other student resources within the medical college or university community, such as student counseling, financial aid office, the office of student disability services, and others, as recommended and available to address student needs.

The student's initial meeting with the Learning Community mentor will occur during Orientation to medical school. Thereafter, students will be required to meet with their Learning Community mentors at least once a semester to discuss academic performance and other matters of concern. Learning Community mentors, who will receive training on [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) rules, will have access to their advisees' academic records. Other required meetings will occur within each course and academic period to "check in" if there are identified concerns.

Students who fail or perform poorly on any assessment and/or examination will be directed by their Learning Community mentor to meet with one of the following: the block, course or clerkship director; the assistant dean for admissions and student affairs; or the assistant dean's designee. The goal of this meeting will be to develop a plan for appropriate remediation, test re-taking, or other action. The student will be required to report the result of this meeting to their mentor.

### **Research Mentors (assigned during second semester of the first year of the curriculum and remain with the student throughout the remaining 3.5 years)**

All students will receive mentoring from a faculty advisor for research. The research mentor will assist students with their selection of a research project and will be available to proactively identify any problems associated with completing the required research project. In addition to challenges in selecting and completing the project itself, these problems may include the same sort of difficulties students will encounter elsewhere in the curriculum, such as group skills and processes, level of participation, study strategies, communication skills, critical thinking, and professionalism. Research mentors will be expected to work with the Learning Community mentor to address student issues.

### **Learning Community Clerkship Leads (assigned during Year 2 of the curriculum and remain with the student throughout Years 3 & 4 of the curriculum)**

The clerkship leads assigned to students will guide students throughout the clinical phase of the curriculum in specific disciplines. There will also be specific, assigned advisors to help the students with medical specialty selection, choice of elective experiences, and preparation for the residency selection process.

Students will have meetings with a variety of their clinical advisors in Year 3 and 4 and will be urged to choose an individual for assistance with career goals. If this is not possible, students will be paired with clinical advisors who may offer guidance congruous with their future educational and professional aspirations. The details of clinical years' advising system will be explained at the Clerkship Orientation, midway through Year 2.

### **Academic Remediation**

The M.D. College curriculum is fast-paced and demands a high level of preparation and participation for student success. When remediation is necessary, policies and procedures have been formulated that are outlined in detail in the Student Handbook.

Students failing any curricular element will be contacted by the block/course/clerkship director or other responsible faculty member to discuss potential reasons for the failure and establish an initial plan for remediation. The block/course/clerkship director will confer with the student's Learning Community mentor and the assistant dean for admissions and student affairs to discuss the need to remediate and to formulate strategies to assist the student.

The block/course/clerkship director will then meet with the student to discuss remediation strategies tailored to the student's individual needs, including tutoring and/or an individual educational program. The goal is to provide prompt and effective intervention to correct academic deficiencies.

In addition, all students who require remediation will be noted in a report to the Student Progress and Advising Committee (SPAC). This reporting will serve as the first step in monitoring a student who is in academic difficulty.

While some remediation activities/examinations may be given at the end of the respective RIA for the block, most remediation attempts for failed blocks or required curricular activities in the first year of the curriculum will take place during the summer break between first and second year.

Remediation attempts for failed blocks or required curricular activities during the second year will take place at least two (2) weeks after the end of the second-year blocks, during winter vacation or Step 1 study time, for the following reasons:

- to prevent students from falling behind in ongoing work,
- to give students ample time to adequately remediate and prepare for the associated assessment of the remedial work, and
- to allow the preparation in other blocks to be an additional aid in preparing for the remediation.

Multiple block failures (two or more, including remedial exam failures) in one year will be evaluated by the SPAC, which, after due consideration of factors contributing to the student's performance, will propose to the student one or more of the following options: remediation of the course(s), repeat of the full academic year, or dismissal.

Any decision in favor of remediation or repeating the year will be accompanied by specific academic recommendations and support services.

### **Academic Support Services**

The assistant dean for admissions and student affairs, the Learning Community mentor, and the chair of the Student Progress and Advising Committee will monitor students' academic progress routinely and will meet with the individuals who are concerned with their academic progress, identified from performance data, or referred by faculty or students as potentially needing assistance.

The rigorous medical curriculum is often more than a student expects and may call for new test-taking strategies, study strategies, and better time management. For many students, it may be the first time that they experience an academic failure.

The student affairs office will offer both advising and referral services which may include, but are not limited to:

- Test-taking and study skills
- Time management
- Access to various discipline-specific study guides
- Tutoring services

- USMLE / NBME preparation
- Referral to psychological learning specialists for diagnostic services (e.g., learning disabilities, intellectual disorders, specific learning disorder, and ADHD).
- Devising a study plan
- Stress management
- Test anxiety
- Writing skills
- Communication skills

The student affairs office will also have a dedicated staff member, an Academic Success Coach, who has no role in making assessment or advancement decisions about medical students.

Students will have an option to contact this coach who will provide academic counseling, and as needed, refer the students to an appropriate internal or external specialist who has no relationship in making assessment or advancement decisions for the student.

Faculty members will have scheduled office hours for direct student contact during the blocks/courses and students will be encouraged to utilize these hours. In addition, faculty members will arrange a one-on-one meeting when requested by a student. These early interactions should promote an environment in which students seek out additional academic advisors and mentors from among the faculty. The interactions will be the foundation of a collegial mindset in which students and faculty share goals for teaching and learning and become colleagues in medicine.

As part of Orientation and throughout the curriculum (e.g., during the RIA Weeks), the College's Academic Success Coach will provide students with sessions designed to deal with the stress of attending medical school, time management, critical thinking, and study skills. Additionally, as described above, the students will be part of a Learning Community led by mentors with whom they are required to meet regularly.