

Assessment and Implementation of a Dual PharmD/MBA Degree Mentorship Program

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Abstract

Background

This project presents a continuation of research conducted at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) School of Pharmacy by Cody Rettinghouse, PharmD/MBA, Sidney Robertson, PharmD/MBA Candidate, and Casey Reed PharmD/MBA/MS in 2019-2020. The previous research established interest in a PharmD/MBA mentorship program and assessed the desires of students who would participate. The highest-ranking scores related to exploring different career options, creating networking opportunities, and connecting students with professionals in the field with shadowing or similar experiences³⁻⁴. Based on this research, the PharmD/MBA mentorship program was established in 2020.

Methods

To further this research, three sessions were planned in Fall 2020. The sessions included career options with a guest speaker, interview preparation and cover letter review, and a resume discussion. All sessions were conducted in an online learning environment in compliance with COVID-19 restrictions. After the sessions were complete, an electronic survey was created and distributed via Qualtrics. The goal of this survey was to assess the impact of the program and to discover improvements for the future. All dual PharmD/MBA students were invited to participate even if they did not attend any sessions. Students were only asked to answer questions about the sessions they marked attendance to. If they marked that they did not attend any sessions, they were directed to a free response question about suggestions to improve the program.

Results

There were 15 complete responses to the survey. There were five responses to session 1 questions, two to session 2 questions, and four responses to session 3 questions. All statements regarding the overall impact and objectives of each session were rated as agree to strongly agree on a 5-point Likert scale. Next, there were 2 additional questions regarding the impact of the program overall. Six students answered this set of questions. These statements also received agreeable ratings on the 5-point Likert scale. Finally, there were two free response questions about the most helpful parts of the sessions and suggestions for improvement. There were five and ten responses to each question respectively. Themes for the most helpful parts of the program were CV/resume building (n=3), career options (n=1), and overall helpful information (n=1). Suggestions for improvement encompassed improving communication about sessions (n=3), avoiding scheduling conflicts (n=2), including more alumni and guest speakers (n=2), and introducing personal feedback or one-on-one meetings (n=1). These suggestions for improvement will be important moving forward to continue the program and promote participation.

Conclusion

Overall, the PharmD/MBA mentorship sessions held in Fall 2020 were well received and impactful based on attendance and survey data. Ideally, further development of this program will assist students in bridging the gap between the PharmD and MBA degrees to help create successful, confident, and well-rounded graduates entering the workforce.