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Background

The learning communities' structure at the University of Kansas School of Medicine became curricular and co-curricular with the implementation of the new ACE curriculum in 2017. The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) and the Office of Medical Education (OME) collaborated to grow the societies into learning communities (LCs) whose faculty have the dual role of facilitating Problem-Based Learning (PBL) activities for OME and serving as student academic coaches for OSA. Implementation of this structure created growing pains that ultimately yielded benefits for students, faculty and the learning and teaching environments.

Program Description

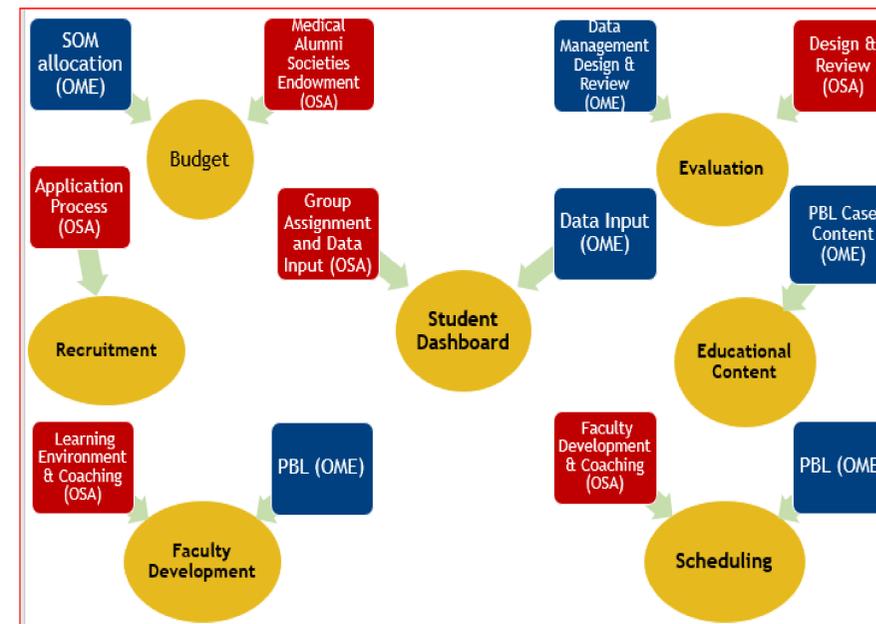
There are eight academic societies between the Kansas City, Salina and Wichita campuses. Each consists of LCs with seven-eight students per group. A cadre of assistant directors reports to each society director and facilitate PBL and coach students. OME coordinates the curricular budget and PBL program. OSA coordinates the co-curricular budget and academic coaching program.

Program Evaluation

Students formally evaluate the assistant directors (i.e. coach and PBL facilitator) and the society program at regular intervals through surveys and/or focus groups. Feedback is provided to assistant directors at regular intervals and only when a minimum threshold of students has responded. Assistant directors formally evaluate their director.



Office of Student Affairs (OSA) & Office of Medical Education (OME) Shared Roles



Discussion

Implementing a LC program with dual citizenship within OME and OSA created new challenges to navigate regarding LCME compliance, content management, designated contacts, and scheduling compliance. OME and OSA roles had to be redefined, implemented, and redefined again.

Despite the growing pains, the benefits were significant. Students build a relationship with three clinical faculty during their first-year and maintain these relationships throughout their academic career. The relationships provide role-modeling, assistance with identification of mentors, and shadowing and research opportunities. Given the dual role in OME and OSA, faculty are trained to be knowledgeable about the curriculum and student affairs resources. As a result, faculty are more aware of the resources for student success.

The joint LC program has also led to increased awareness of the roles of OME and OSA by their respective staff members, producing greater collaboration on projects and scholarly work. Educational research and research mentorship by LC faculty has also increased.

Conclusions

The collaboration between OSA and OME has resulted in a unique LC structure. The dual-role model provides faculty with an understanding of curriculum content, goals and objectives, as well as the opportunity to build early and longitudinal relationships with students. It also affords faculty a more comprehensive role and impact on student learning and wellness.

The collaboration has also resulted in a greater understanding of the mission and roles of OME and OSA. Regular program and personnel evaluations provide the feedback necessary for continuous quality improvement.

The OSA- and OME-partnered LC program has led to enhanced faculty awareness of the curricular and co-curricular aspects of the student experience and the teacher-learner experience. LC faculty are extension agents promoting the offices' missions and the LC's mission for student success. The relationship between OME and OSA enhances the staff's and administration's commitment to the LC program and its success.

Faculty Shared Roles: PBL Facilitator (OME) Coach (OSA)

