

Structural Success: Faculty and Student Collaboration on Curriculum Changes to Improve Student Wellness



WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY

James MacKenzie¹, Elizabeth Jakubowski¹, Victoria Badia¹, Diane Levine MD², Eva Waineo MD²
¹ Medical student, Wayne State University School of Medicine ² Faculty, Wayne State University School of Medicine

INTRODUCTION

- Undergraduate medical education can be a time of significant distress for students nationwide (1).
- Though stress is multifactorial, curriculum decisions that are targeted to reduce student role conflict can be effective in maximizing learner wellness (2).
- Identifying areas for improvement and implementing curriculum changes that reflect the needs of a class requires a close working relationship among students and faculty.
- This initiative aims to identify areas for curricular change to positively affect student wellness, make specific recommendations, and track as changes are made.

METHODS

- The preclinical wellness taskforce composed of preclinical students, faculty from clinical and basic science courses, and administrative officials met biweekly over the course of three months.
- The group's goal was to make recommendations on policy changes to improve student satisfaction and reduce role stress associated with a variety of activities in the School of Medicine.
- 8 main categories were tasked by administration to the committee for development of recommendations.
- We utilized open discussion to identify current opportunities for improvement in the curriculum. Within each category, recommendations were presented and refined using an iterative process. Final recommendations were agreed upon by consensus and presented to the preclinical education committee.



Figure 1: A timeline of the work of this project in its various stages.

RESULTS

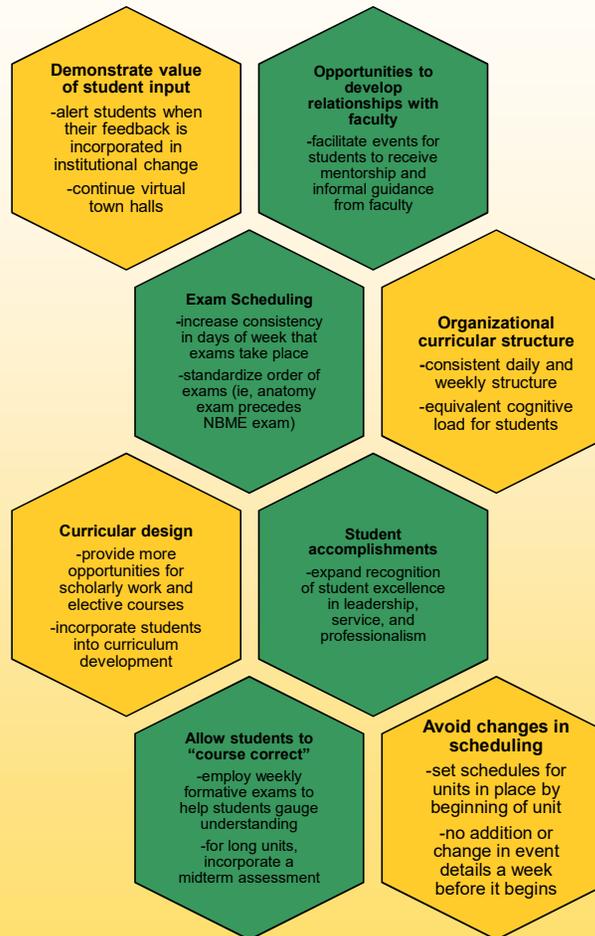


Figure 2: A summary of the recommendations made by the preclinical wellness task force. The eight categories listed reflect the major goals of the taskforce, and the bullet points demonstrate action items that the task force aimed to alter.

RESULTS

- Recommendations made by the taskforce included improved communication between administration and student body about required events, expanding a program to reward professionalism, developing a scholarly concentration program to allow students to explore individual areas of interest, and offering consistent and predictable scheduling of required events each week.
- The following initiatives have been implemented:
 - Scholarly concentrations are introduced for class of 2024
 - A communication strategy has been established, including:
 - ✓ Regular class town halls held virtually over Zoom
 - ✓ Zoom "Med Talks" to help understand policies & resources
 - ✓ Weekly class "snapshot" communication
 - ✓ Monthly school-wide academic digest
 - Procedure to acknowledge outstanding professionalism is established
 - Leadership awards recommended
 - Consistency of exam scheduling has improved
- Implementation strategies for the remaining recommendations are under development.

CONCLUSIONS

- Collaboration between students and faculty to address problems in the preclinical education experience impacting wellness was an effective way to identify initiatives focused on student well-being.
- These initiatives were well-received by administration and some initiatives were in place within just a few months.
- Continued conversation between students and faculty is necessary to identify areas for improvement as they arise and implement solutions that are beneficial for all stakeholders.
- Next steps are to evaluate the impact of these changes. Surveys for the preclinical student body are being developed to determine the impact on student wellness.

REFERENCES

- Dyrbye, L. N., et. al. (2008). Burnout and suicidal ideation among US medical students. *Annals of internal medicine*, 149(5), 334-341.
- Rotenstein, L. S., et. al. (2016). Prevalence of depression, depressive symptoms, and suicidal ideation among medical students: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Jama*, 316(21), 2214-2236.
- Slavin, S. J., Schindler, D. L., & Chibnall, J. T. (2014). Medical student mental health 3.0: improving student wellness through curricular changes. *Academic Medicine*, 89(4), 573.