

Proposal for the WellMentor Distinction Program

July 16, 2025

Description

The WellMentor Distinction Program is designed to provide medical students with an interest in wellness culture and mentorship, the tools necessary to become champions in the field. Through a structured curriculum, the program equips medical students to lead in **mentorship** and **peer support**. The program emphasizes the **long-term developmental guidance** of mentorship and the **mutual, supportive exchanges** of peer support. Students will receive structured instruction and experiential opportunities to practice each, ensuring they can promote a culture of wellness through both mentoring relationships (faculty, near-peer) and peer networks. This dual approach prepares students to enhance wellness culture across all phases of their training and into their future roles as residents and clinicians. This deep understanding will transcend into the development of wellness culture and mentorship programming at NJMS.

Co-Directors:

Dr. Luis Alzate-Duque
Assistant Dean, Student Affairs

Mrs. Mercedes Padilla-Register
Program Supervisor, Student Affairs

Program Requirements

I) **Didactics/Practicum**

Students will participate in interactive lectures/seminars and group sessions. A webinar series will be hosted by experts in the field of wellness and peer support to include Dr. Sperling, Dr. Swarbrick, Dr. Shimoni, Dr. Brazeau, and mental health faculty at Student Health Services.

II) **Capstone**

The student will develop a peer support/mentoring project within the field of medical education. Students are expected to submit their project proposal as part of their initial application at the end of Year 1, with an identified faculty mentor. The co-directors of the distinction program will provide final approval of the project. Students are expected to produce the following by Year 4:

- Written manuscript(s) ready for submission for publication
At least (1) regional/national conference poster presentation
- Presentation in Year 4 at the Distinction Symposium

Students in Year 4 will enroll in a one-month Independent Study to complete their capstone project.

Outline of Curriculum and Proposed Activities by Year

Summer Year 1: Foundations of Mentorship

Theme: Self-Awareness, Time Management, and Foundational Mentorship Skills

*** Students will propose a project and select a faculty mentor for the project. The student then can use the summer between Year 1 and 2 to continue to work on the distinction project***

Core Topics:

- Time Management & Prioritization Strategies
- Study Techniques & Cognitive Load Management
- Active Listening & Empathic Communication
- Introduction to Mentorship Models (peer, near-peer, faculty)
- Using Wellness Frameworks (PERMA, Self-Determination Theory)

Activities:

- Serve as leads in the ENGAGE program (*Embracing New Goals to Adapt, Grow and Evolve*), a program designed to mentor and assist first years find their footing in medical school, helping them to network with the help of upper-class students to find various school resources and to adapt more easily to medical school life. As leads they will be expected to recruit mentors, assign mentees and oversee ENGAGE programming throughout the year.
- Reflective journaling on wellness habits
- Learning plan outlining mentoring development goals

Year 2: Deepening Skills and Peer Support

Theme: Peer Mentorship and Applied Wellness Strategies

Core Topics:

- Stress Management & Burnout Prevention
- Conflict Resolution & Giving Constructive Feedback
- Peer Mentorship: Roles, Boundaries, and Ethics
- Cultural Humility in Mentorship

Activities:

- Facilitate mentorship workshops for first-year students
- Case-based discussions on mentorship dilemmas

Year 3: Clinical Integration and Leadership

Theme: Mentorship in the Clinical Environment

Core Topics:

- Navigating Clinical Rotations with Resilience
- Mentorship in Hierarchical Settings
- Emotional Intelligence & Professional Identity Formation
- Supporting Peers Through Transitions (e.g., Step exams, clerkships)

Activities:

- Continue to serve as mentors through the ENGAGE Program

- Oversee STEP 1 Peer Support Program

Year 4: Capstone and Legacy

Theme: Leadership, Program Development, and Legacy Building

Core Topics:

- Designing Sustainable Mentorship Programs
- Preparing for Residency: Mentorship in GME
- Transitioning from Mentee to Mentor in Residency

Capstone Project:

Students will complete an independent study elective to finalize their capstone/research project

- Design and implement a mentorship initiative at NJMS (e.g., peer support group, mentorship network, curriculum modules)
- Present at the NJMS Distinction Program Symposium and submit for publication