**Proposal for an academic coaching group**

Problem: “[Our students, faculty, and staff form a **tight and inclusive** multinational community.](https://ipib.wisc.edu/why-ipib/)”

Within the current IPiB curriculum, students develop relationships with professors primarily through the formation of an academic committee made up of mentors meant to support a student’s professional well-being. However, each of these mentoring moments are behind closed doors and part of an evaluation process that determines a student’s progress towards their degree. Simultaneously, the 2023 IPiB DEI Climate Survey has shown data that suggests that there is a gap between students and others within the community, usually feeling less supported than the other groups thing. To address this issue within our community, I am proposing that we implement academic coaching within IPiB.

Academic coaching allows students to reflect on successes and challenges alongside a faculty coach, who aids students with their experience to help create goals and develop plans1. Medical schools around the United States have begun implementing a voluntary coaching group for their students2. The goal for these groups is to create a safe and supportive environment for students to reflect on both academic and personal goals alongside a faculty coach. **“Coaching allows for a consistent, longitudinal, and open relationship that is neither supervisory nor evaluative, but offers structured opportunities for students to discuss personalized, actionable goals and action plans as they progress through different phases of medical school.2”** [More recently, a coaching program at UW-Madison is being started by the Office of Human Resources.](https://hr.wisc.edu/professional-development/programs/coaching-circles/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=wordpress_workingatuw&utm_campaign=facstaff_comms&utm_content=2023_06_07)3 Through the help of people on campus as well as the attached resources, IPiB should be able to develop a coaching program that benefits and builds relationships within our program4,5.

**Climate Survey**

The data from the IPiB Climate Survey suggests that the IPiB program is lacking in the following:

* If graduate students are reported as a group, their responses with respect to race are closer to the responses of marginalized students than people in other categories (undergrad, postdoc, staff).
* If graduate students are reported as a group, their responses with respect to LGBTQ+ are further from the responses of marginalized students than people in other categories (undergrad, postdoc, staff).
* The DEI community building events are appreciated, but people want more faculty engagement.
* There is a desire to focus on also welcoming groups with invisible diversities (LGBTQIA+, neurodivergent groups, etc.).

In addition to the above takeaways, the survey also found that there is a clear disconnect between how welcoming the IPiB program is between faculty and students. When faculty responses are dissected as a group, their responses with respect to **women**, **underrepresented** **minorities**, and **individuals from financially disadvantaged backgrounds** are more positive than those found in those groups. This suggests that faculty perceive the IPiB program to be more welcoming to individuals of these groups than people found within these groups. By further developing relationships between faculty and students within coaching groups, faculty may develop a better understanding of the struggles that groups such as these face within the program. By creating these coaching groups, students and faculty will have an additional opportunity to bridge the gap and share perspectives on a variety of topics, with a focus on helping students attain their personal goals.

**Plan**

Create a curriculum based on goal oriented discussion, similar to medical coaching examples. Implement a 1-year trial run with any students and faculty interested. Take feedback to determine if this was helpful for the people involved in terms of personal and professional development, and with strengthening the IPiB community.

**Session Structure6**

* Check-in: Spend a few minutes just talking about how things are going.
* Review goals: Are you making progress? Do your goals need to be revised?
* Discuss new goals: What changes would you like to make to feel more successful?
* Review frequency of meetings: Be aware of your own needs and seek guidance. Don’t be afraid of speaking up, but then also be sure to follow through.
* Wellness: Discuss how you are incorporating personal interests into your life to preserve your well-being. Have a mindful discussion about maintaining balance through transitions.
* Follow-up: Close with plans for the next session and record pertinent thoughts and discussions.

**Goals**

* Provide a safe space for student/faculty supported reflection on academic, personal, and professional goals
* Assist students in developing goals for their personal satisfaction and professional future
* Encourage reflection and shared perspectives between students and faculty within IPiB to enhance the camaraderie within our “**tight and inclusive** multinational community”

**Idea outline**

1. Determine curricula for each meeting, modified from the AMA coaching handbook and other medical coaching resources
2. Create small groups of 5-6 from volunteering students
3. Find 1-2 faculty members to facilitate and lead each coaching group
4. Meet 3-4 times a year
5. Evaluate the coaching experience7

**Sources**

1. [Academic coaching in medical education](https://www.ama-assn.org/education/changemeded-initiative/academic-coaching-medical-education#:~:text=An academic coach is a person assigned to,achieve these%2C and helping the student be accountable)
2. [Coaching in Medical Education Handbook](https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2019-09/coaching-medical-education-faculty-handbook.pdf)
3. [Coaching Circles at UW-Madison](https://hr.wisc.edu/professional-development/programs/coaching-circles/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=wordpress_workingatuw&utm_campaign=facstaff_comms&utm_content=2023_06_07)
4. [American Medical Association Coaching Overview](https://www.ama-assn.org/education/changemeded-initiative/academic-coaching-medical-education#:~:text=An academic coach is a person assigned to,achieve these%2C and helping the student be accountable.)
5. [A starter’s guide to pursuing an academic coaching program](https://www.ama-assn.org/education/accelerating-change-medical-education/starter-s-guide-pursuing-academic-coaching-program)
6. It Takes Two: A Guide to Being a Good Coachee (attached)
7. Wolff, M. *et al.* Academic coaching: Insights from the medical student’s perspective. *Medical Teacher* **42**, 172–177 (2020). [Source](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0142159X.2019.1670341?journalCode=imte20)