Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of a Senior Mentor Program in PA Education

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Abstract. As the US population ages, improving geriatric-related medical and interpersonal skills among healthcare providers is increasingly important. Senior mentor programs (SMPs) partner students with older adults for the purpose of increasing positive attitudes about aging and improving communication skills. The purpose of this project is to design, implement, and evaluate the benefits of a SMP for the Wichita State University (WSU) Physician Assistant (PA) program. Literature reviewed identified characteristics of successful SMPs. Assignments and activities were designed to achieve developed learning objectives. Qualitative and quantitative research methods will evaluate for program success. Implementation of a SMP will improve PA student attitudes and beliefs towards aging, increase empathy and respect for older adults, and better prepare them for providing quality care to older adults.