**History**
Prior to the fall of 2011 Nova Southeastern University College of Pharmacy (NSU-COP) facilitated a new student/mentor program. Groups of new students were randomly matched with a faculty member from NSU-COP. Faculty members were asked to be present at a luncheon during the New Student Orientation Program and to be available to the first-year students for (1) general questions about the Doctor of Pharmacy program, (2) offer sound advice with regard to the many professional organizations, (3) be a conduit to other faculty for shared research interests, and (4) be an overall source of support.

At about that same time three integral events occurred that caused NSU-COP to evaluate the existing student/mentor program:

- An administrator from NSU-COP had been on a visit to another COP and was impressed by their student led Peer Mentor Program.
- Leadership development and co-curricular programming were hot topics within the Center for Advancement of Pharmacy Education (CAPE) and Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE).
- The turnover in NSU-COP faculty resulted in a group of students who did not have a mentor.

**Purpose**
The Peer Mentor Program at NSU-COP was developed with three primary goals:

1. To help ease a first-year student’s transition into a rigorous professional degree program.
2. To encourage professionalism and involvement of all students.
3. To encourage professionalism and involvement of all students.

**Introduction**
The Peer Mentor Program at NSU-COP was launched in August 2012. In that inaugural year, one first-year student was matched up with one second-year student, and they were introduced to one another at a meet and greet event during the New Student Orientation Program. There were no other pre-determined meetings scheduled for the first-year and second-year students to interact.

Two first-year students came to the NSU-COP Office of Student Services asking to take lead of the program for the 2013-2014 academic year. They had been involved in a Peer Mentor Program at their undergraduate institution and wanted to bring their knowledge and experience to NSU-COP’s Peer Mentor Program. From that point on, they were designated as the Peer Mentor Program Leaders, and began to develop a plan to enhance the Peer Mentor Program for the coming academic year.

**Methods**

### Selection of Peer Mentors
Those interested in becoming a second-year Peer Mentor were asked to submit an application and write a brief statement (<250 words) about why they would like to take on this role. 37 students applied to the program. Applications were reviewed by the Peer Mentor Program Leaders and an administrator from NSU-COP. The Peer Mentor Program Leaders and the administration from NSU-COP had lengthy conversations about what would be done if a student in poor academic standing wanted to be a second-year Peer Mentor. It was decided that those cases would be reviewed on an individual basis. In the 2013-2014 academic year, all students who applied to the program were accepted, and all students were in good academic standing.

### Methods Continued...

#### Training of Peer Mentors
Once the selection process was complete, the Peer Mentor Program Leaders began to work on enhancing the existing program. They wanted to focus on educating the second-year students about what it really meant to be a Peer Mentor. The summer months were spent reviewing the literature and defining the expectations of being a Peer Mentor. Time was also spent randomly placing first-year students into groups of 4-5 students and then assigning each of the 37 second-year Peer Mentors to a group. Finally, the Peer Mentor Program Leaders along with the administration from NSU-COP worked through the logistics of obtaining and distributing lunch coupons. This information was synthesized into a mandatory training session for the second-year Peer Mentors that would take place the first week of classes in the 2013-2014 academic year.

The Peer Mentor Program Leaders led the mandatory training session. At this session they shared references to mentorship in the literature, with both pharmacy references and non-pharmacy references, distributed the Mentor/Mentee group lists including phone and email contact information, and reviewed the expectations associated with being a Peer Mentor. Second-year Peer Mentors were asked to reach out to their Mentees within the two weeks and to schedule an on-campus lunch with the coupons provided by NSU-COP.

#### Survey of Outcome
To evaluate the Peer Mentor Program a survey was distributed to first-year students (Mentees) and second-year students (Mentors) and second-year students (Mentors). Participants were asked to rate their experiences with the program on a Likert Scale and to answer open-ended questions. The assessment asked the same questions to both groups, but one version was designed for Mentors and the other for Mentees. Participants were also asked to answer basic demographic questions in the quality assurance assessment.

There was no informed consent given with the survey because the data was collected for quality improvement purposes. Once, it was determined that the data collected through the Peer Mentor Program would be used for research and possible publication, JRB approval was obtained, and an email was sent to those students involved in the program stating that data collected surrounding the Peer Mentor Program will be used for research and possible publication.

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**Peer Mentorship Reduces Stress for First-Year Pharmacy Students**
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