



# MATCHMaker Program: Aligning Alumni Mentors to Osteopathic Medical Students

Lisa Shelburne<sup>1</sup>, Amy Drittler<sup>2</sup>, Brian Kessler<sup>3</sup>

DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine, Harrogate, TN 37752

Career Services<sup>1</sup>, Alumni Services<sup>2</sup>, Administration<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

### Introduction

Literature advocates that mentoring of medical students is paramount for students' academic success<sup>1</sup>. McIntosh-Scott et al. in the book, Key Concepts in Healthcare Education state "a mentor is someone who: gives wise advice and provide[s] a spectrum of learning and supportive behaviours."<sup>2</sup> Launched in June 2015, Lincoln Memorial University-DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine (LMU-DCOM) developed a mentoring program that allows for alumni to provide guidance and advice for medical students during their clinical education years. At its inception, the program was presented to alumni and rising third- and fourth-year medical students. This discussion provides a program overview and addresses the implementation of the MATCHMaker Program at LMU-DCOM.

### Objective

To assess the impact on students' residency and career choices by pairing them with alumni mentors. As of March 2017, **135 Physician alumni volunteers with 178 student matches have been made.**

## Learning Outcomes

1. Recognize how formal mentorship through the COM engages alumni and students.
2. Understand how a structured mentoring program can provide additional opportunity for alumni to update their professional information and give back to the COM.
3. Identify how mentorship allows current students to actively engage with alumni and learn from their experiences.
4. Recognize how to increase networking opportunities for students making residency choices.

## Process

The LMU-DCOM MATCHmaker Program pairs physician alumni mentors to current third- and fourth-year LMU-DCOM osteopathic medical students wishing to learn more about specialty choices, the residency application process and residency programs nationwide. The MATCHmaker Program provides current osteopathic medical students an opportunity to correspond with physician alumni with similar interests to provide support and guidance as the students navigate clinical rotations and the residency application process.

## Assessment and Results

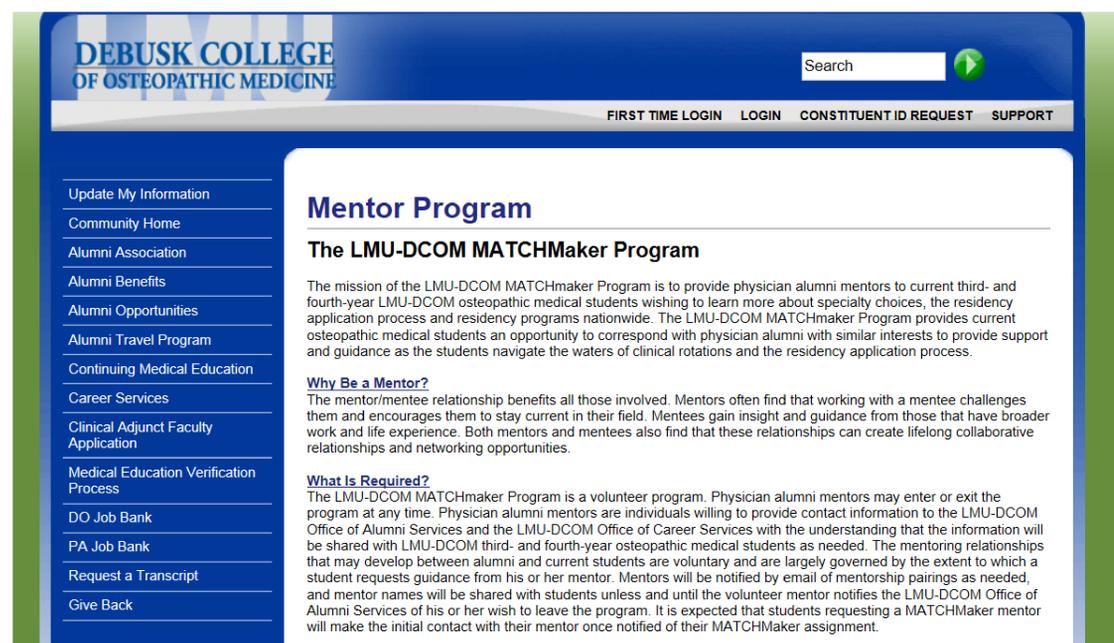


Figure 1: LMU-DCOM Mentor Program introductory page for alumni and students on website.

### National Distribution of Lincoln Memorial University-DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine (LMU-DCOM) DO Graduates (2011-2016)

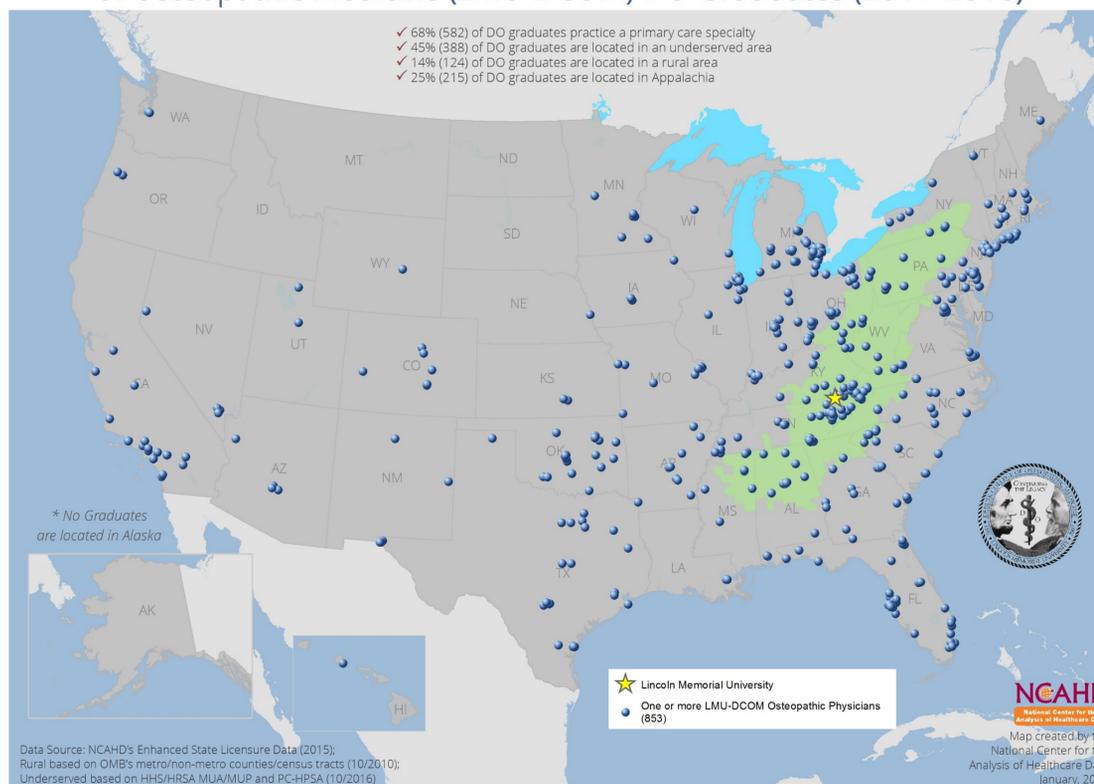


Figure 2: National distribution of all LMU-DCOM osteopathic physician graduates.

## Discussion

The LMU-DCOM MATCHmaker Program is a volunteer program designed to engage physician alumni mentors with third- and fourth-year medical students. Physician alumni mentors are individuals willing to provide contact information to the LMU-DCOM Office of Alumni Services and the LMU-DCOM Office of Career Services. Alumni participate with the understanding that information will be shared with LMU-DCOM third- and fourth-year osteopathic medical students. The mentoring relationships that may develop between alumni and current students are voluntary and are largely governed by the extent to which a student requests guidance from his or her mentor. Mentors are notified of mentorship pairings as needed, and mentor names are shared with students. It is expected that students requesting a MATCHMaker mentor will make the initial contact with their mentor once notified of their assignment. A volunteer mentor may notify LMU-DCOM of his or her wish to enter or exit the program at any time.

## Conclusion

The mentor/mentee relationship benefits the student, the graduate and LMU-DCOM. Alumni may find that working with a student challenges them and encourages them to stay current in their field. Students gain insight and guidance from those that have broader work and life experience. Through the mentorship program, LMU-DCOM engages alumni and provides opportunities for them to give back to their alma mater in the form of volunteer time. The program also creates lifelong collaborative relationships and networking opportunities. Future plans include implementing similar mentorship programs in other disciplines at the institution.

## References

1. Fransson G, McMahan S. Exploring research on mentoring policies in education. *Int J of Mentoring and Coaching in Ed.* 2013; 2(3), 218-232.
2. McIntosh-Scott A, Gidman J, Mason-Whitehead E. *Key Concepts in Healthcare Education.* SAGE Publications, 2010; 22:132.
3. Borges NJ, Navarro AM, Grover A, Hoban JD. How, when, and why do physicians choose careers in academic medicine? A literature review. *Acad Med.* 2010;85:680-686.
4. Sambunjak D, Straus SE, Marušić A. Mentoring in academic medicine: a systematic review. *JAMA.* 2006;296:1103-1115
5. Straus SE, Straus C, Tzanetos K. Career choice in academic medicine: systematic review. *J Gen Intern Med.* 2006;21:1222-1229.
6. Straus, S. E. and Sackett, D. L. (2013) *Front Matter, in Mentorship in Academic Medicine,* John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester, UK. doi: 10.1002/9781118446065.fmatter
7. Vetter MH, Carter M. Differences between first and fourth year medical students' interest in pursuing careers in academic medicine., *Int j Med Educ.* 2016 May 24;7:154-7.



For more information about Lincoln Memorial University and the DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine please see med.LMU.net.edu Follow LMU-DCOM on Twitter and Facebook.

6965 Cumberland Gap Parkway, Harrogate, Tennessee 37752 Tel: 800-325-0900