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ORLANDO COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

Orlando College of Osteopathic Medicine

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Dean & Chief Academic Officer

Policy Title: Student Retention

Purpose/Scope

Provide a guide and assistance to OCOM students in achieving academic success, culminating in graduation from OCOM.

Policy

OCOM is committed to student success and strives to retain all students who demonstrate appropriate academic and professional progress thought the curriculum.

Retention & Student Services Offered

OCOM has the following resources available to students to enhance retention:

1. **Learning Specialists**—Full-time learning specialists with academic credentials in advanced education and experience advising students will be available to help guide students through adjustments in time management, academic difficulties, and learning strategies.
2. **Academic Advisors** – The Academic Advisor Program plays a vital role at OCOM. The Academic Advisor-Advisee relationship is one of an institutional representative providing insight or direction to a student about academic,

professional, scholarly, and career planning issues. The nature of this direction may be to inform, suggest, counsel, discipline, coach, mentor, or even teach. The OCOM advising process ensures that both biomedical science and clinical faculty are involved in student advising and establishing relationships that create an atmosphere of trust and meaningful dialogue. The Advisor-Advisee relationship will ensure consistent feedback regarding academic performance and direct the student to additional resources within the institution as needed. All Advisors are essential in identifying students experiencing academic, personal, or behavioral health problems and providing them with referrals to OCOM's Office of Student Affairs, Student Support Services, and/or Behavioral Health Services. Students and faculty work closely together in the academic arena. Students are encouraged to use the advice, expertise, and help of the faculty through the Advisor program. Students should contact their assigned Advisor as frequently as necessary for guidance, encouragement, and support. Advisors may assume a proactive role and become involved with their students when performance levels fail to meet minimum academic standards. The Office of Student Affairs assigns advisors. The Director of Student Affairs appoints academic advisors to each incoming OCOM student, with input and approval from the Associate Dean for Pre-Clinical Education. First-year students are encouraged to see the student's assigned advisor at least twice each semester. Second-year students are encouraged to visit the student's advisor at least once each semester. Students requesting an advisor different from those assigned must submit the request in writing to the Director of Student Affairs. If a specific faculty member is named the preferred advisor, this faculty must agree to become the student's advisor before the change can occur. Third- and fourth-year students may continue to seek advising from their assigned pre-clinical advisor at the medical school. However, students on clinical rotations are advised to seek advice from the clinical rotation hospitals' clinical faculty. Students in the third and fourth clinical years are encouraged to work with the faculty and administration concerning any challenges they may experience while on rotations.

3. **Early Warning System** – Administered through the Office of the Associate Dean for Pre-Clinical Education, the Early Warning System tracks summative exam scores to identify students at risk of academic failure or experiencing a sudden change in academic performance. Once identified, students may be required to meet with a Learning Specialist, the Associate Dean for either Pre-Clinical and/or Student Services, and/or the student's assigned Academic Advisor. Students may be counseled in study skills, time management, exam taking, and self-assessment. Students may also be advised to meet with the school's behavioral health team to address personal concerns such as exam anxiety and stress management. Other resources available to the student may be identified and offered.
4. **Behavioral Health Resources** – For mental health counseling, OCOM makes resources for both in-person and virtual visits confidential to support the needs of the students. Licensed Behavioral Health Clinicians will serve on staff at OCOM to meet with students struggling academically, emotionally, or behaviorally. In addition to the Behavioral Health Departmental resources available to students by appointment on-campus, OCOM offers a free Student Assistance Program (SAP) for all students through Aetna. Aetna provides all OCOM students, wherever located, with free 24/7/365 telephonic clinical support through Aetna's toll-free 1-800 number. Aetna provides SAP consultation on unlimited issues per academic year. Aetna offers face-to-face, virtual, and telephonic counseling services. Students on clinical rotations have access to SAP-provided services wherever they are located.
5. **Course Directors** - Individual course directors may provide support through review sessions of course materials and in-person advising sessions.
6. **Peer Tutor Program** - Through the Office of Student Services, OCOM offers students peer tutoring services free of charge. Tutoring is available on a first-come, first-served basis during all academic years. It is designed to help students enhance their test-taking skills, modify their study habits, and/or focus on critical material and content. Request forms for tutoring services are available in the Office of Student Support. In some cases, students may request assistance with studying and learning skills, and the student may be referred to a Learning Specialist for further assessment and

assistance. Additionally, students do not have to experience academic difficulty to request peer tutoring. However, following the first examination in a course, those students who are identified as at-risk by their performance by psychometric measurement in a course will be given priority in the program. Applications to tutor and requests for tutoring services are available in the Office of Student Support. Students requesting a tutor must be registered in the Office of Student Support to benefit from tutoring services. Applications to become a peer tutor are available in the Office of Student Services. The appropriate course director grants final approval to tutor a subject. Peer tutors must communicate effectively, have mastered the course material, and be in good academic standing. Collectively, the entire system works together to communicate with students as early as possible and as often as possible in support of each student's academic progress.

7. **Career Counseling** - OCOM provides career counseling starting in year one to assist students in evaluating career options and applying to graduate medical education (GME) training programs. OCOM has developed a Career Counseling As mentioned previously, any SPPC Committee member(s) identifying a potential conflict of interest, including a previous or ongoing therapeutic relationship with a student, will be required to recuse themselves from both the discussion phase of the meeting as well as the decision-making process for matters in which a **Academic Sanctions:** Writing a paper, reduction of grade on an examination, assignment, or course; repetition of a course(s); being assigned additional clinic or laboratory activities or coursework; repeating of an exam, coursework, or even an entire academic year or semester or other appropriate penalties.

This policy shall be posted at ocom.org/policies.