

**Title:**

Transforming Physicians into Informationists: a Dual-degree Pathway to Developing Medical Information Specialists

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**Program Objective:**

This innovative program produces medical information specialists, or informationists, who blend the knowledge and skills of the clinician with those of the librarian and information specialist, by offering physicians-in-training a degree in the library and information sciences.

**Methods:**

Through a unique collaborative partnership, the University of North Carolina School of Library and Information Science and the Duke University School of Medicine offer a dual-degree program for creating medical information specialists. Duke medical students may pursue either the MSIS or MSLS at the UNC School of Library and Information Science, testing the concept of augmenting the training of a health care professional by providing graduate education in information science. A key program component is recruiting, including effective marketing materials, and describing possible career pathways for physicians with a library or information science degree. A federal grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, part of the Librarians for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program, supports the trail blazing students and the evaluation of the program and its outcomes.

**Results/Outcome:**

Project staff will share progress to date, including obstacles encountered, recruitment and marketing efforts employed, feedback received, and plans for evaluating the model. The format and requirements of the medical school program, as well as the degree components, will be described. The preliminary findings of a survey on information-focused career paths will be presented. The program may be a model for similar opportunities with other medical schools, and other schools in the health professions.

# A Dual-Degree Pathway to Developing Medical Information Specialists: Transforming Physicians into Informationists

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## MD/MSLS or MSIS



### Dual Degree Program

- ❖ UNC School of Information and Library Science
  - ♦ 2-year LS/IS program
- ❖ Duke University School of Medicine
  - ♦ 3<sup>rd</sup> scholarly/research year of medical school
- ❖ 2 students per year
- ❖ First student enrolled Fall 2006
- ❖ Duke and UNC mentors/advisors



### Medical Information Specialists Training Program (MIST)

- ❖ Institute of Museum and Library Services Grant
  - ♦ Librarians for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Program
- ❖ Study unique model for creating informationists
- ❖ Funding for in-state tuition
- ❖ Annual stipend and travel for one conference
  - ♦ 2 students per year for 2 cohorts

## Finding Future Information Specialists

### Marketing the Dual Degree

- ❖ Emails to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year classes
- ❖ Pizza parties, lectures and events
- ❖ Flyers, Web pages, School catalog
- ❖ 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Fair exhibit, presentations
- ❖ Personal contacts
  - ♦ Students, faculty, advisory deans
- ❖ Newsletter articles



### Recruitment Strategies

- ❖ Focus on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year medical students
- ❖ Identify potential career pathways
  - ♦ Change agent in information management; designer of Web, software, and information resources; clinical information systems manager; knowledge manager in pharmaceutical firm; information specialist on clinical or research team; administrator of library or IT functions; business entrepreneur; indexer; biomedical data miner; IT expert in a group practice; leader in institutional and national information policies; consultant; faculty member; biomedical librarian
- ❖ Finding role models
  - ♦ Clinical faculty with an information focus
  - ♦ Library faculty with a health focus

## Starting Up a Model Program

### Opportunities

- ❖ Duke's 3<sup>rd</sup> year /dual degree structure
- ❖ UNC and Duke interest in biomedical informatics
- ❖ MPH dual degree in already place with UNC
- ❖ Same geographic location
- ❖ Duke Vice Dean a champion for the program
- ❖ Informationist concept a hot topic
- ❖ Catalyzed interest and awareness among MDs

### Challenges

- ❖ Getting the students' attention, awareness
- ❖ Stereotypes of librarians and career pathways
- ❖ Out-of-state tuition costs



### Concurrent Research

- ❖ Interviews with physicians with information focus
  - ♦ Identifying career pathways and role models
- ❖ Student survey – evaluation of program
  - ♦ Awareness / decisions, career choice
  - ♦ Factors in choosing dual degree

