



Duke University
School of Medicine



UNC
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION
AND LIBRARY SCIENCE

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

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Objectives and Methods:

Objective: The concept of the informationist, or medical information specialist, calls for blending the knowledge and skills of the clinician with those of the librarian and information specialist. One possible pathway to is to train physicians in library and information sciences. Medical schools that support dual-degree tracks provide an opportunity for medical students to pursue a degree in library and information science.

Methods:

Through a collaborative partnership with the local University of North Carolina School of Library and Information Science, the Duke University School of Medicine is able to provide a dual-degree program for creating medical information specialists. A key component is the recruitment process, including effective marketing materials, and describing possible career pathways for those who choose to pursue a library or information science degree. A federal grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, part of the Librarians for the 21st Century program, supports the initial cohorts of students and the evaluation of the program and its outcomes. If successful, the program could also become a model for other medical schools that support dual-degree programs.

Results and Conclusions:

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 third-year 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.



Transforming Physicians into Informationists: A Dual-Degree Pathway

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MD/MSLS or MSIS



Dual Degree Program

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



Medical Information Specialists Training Program (MIST)

- ❖ Institute of Museum and Library Services Grant
 - Librarians for 21st 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 1st and 2nd year classes
- ❖ Pizza parties, lectures and events
- ❖ Flyers, Web pages, School catalog
- ❖ 3rd Year Fair exhibit, presentations
- ❖ Personal contacts
 - students, faculty, advisory deans
- ❖ Newsletter articles



Recruitment Strategies

- ❖ Focus on 1st and 2nd year medical students
- ❖ Identify potential career pathways
 - Change agent in information management; designer of Web, software, and information resources; manager of clinical information systems; 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

- ❖ Good fit with Duke's 3rd 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 is hot topic
- ❖ Catalyzed interest and awareness among MDs

Challenges

- ❖ Getting the students' attention, making them aware
- ❖ Stereotypes of librarians and career pathways
- ❖ Out-of-state tuition



Concurrent Research

- ❖ Interviews with physicians with information focus
 - Identifying career pathways and role models
- ❖ Survey students – evaluation of program
 - Awareness and decisions about dual degree
 - Long-term career choice

