

The Informationist and Information Specialist Revolution: Career Pathways for Physicians?

Peggy Schaeffer, Project Coordinator; Barbara M. Wildemuth, Professor; Claudia Gollop, Associate Professor, School of Information & Library Science, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill NC;
Patricia L. Thibodeau, AHIP, Associate Dean for Library Services & Archives, Robert James, Associate Director, Access Services, Duke University Medical Center Library, Durham NC



MD/MSIS or MD/MSLS

Dual Degree Program

- ✓ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Library and Information Science
 - ✓ 2-year LS/IS program
- ✓ Duke University School of Medicine
 - ✓ 3rd scholarly/research year of medical school
- ✓ First student enrolled August 2006
- ✓ Duke and UNC mentors/advisors



Medical Information Specialists Training (MIST) Program

- ✓ Funded by Institute of Museum and Library Services
 - ✓ Librarians for 21st Century Program
- ✓ Study unique model for creating informationists
- ✓ Funding for 4 students over 3 years
- ✓ In-state tuition, annual stipend and travel for one conference



Recruiting Future Physician Informationists

Recruitment Strategies

- ✓ Focus on 1st and 2nd year medical students
- ✓ Promote the degree & IMLS grant support
- ✓ 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; Director of library or IT functions; Faculty member; Biomedical librarian
- ✓ Expose students to role models
 - ✓ Medical faculty with an information focus
 - ✓ Library faculty with a health focus



Web survey of 2nd year students

- ✓ Online survey conducted at end of year
- ✓ Goal: assess awareness & interest
- ✓ Results show a high level of awareness
 - ✓ 72.81% aware of the MSIS/MSLS degree program
 - ✓ Equivalent awareness to MBA & JD programs and higher application rate
 - ✓ 10% would have been interested in medical informatics program
- ✓ Four students applied to the MSIS program
- ✓ Three students will start in Fall 2007



Interviews with MD Informationists

Purpose

- ✓ Input from 40-50 MD's with information careers
 - ✓ Background, training, career trajectory, current roles
 - ✓ Academic training in information work? Regrets?
- ✓ Recommendations based on their experience
 - ✓ Additional academic training
 - ✓ Skills important for effectiveness in medical information work
 - ✓ Opportunities for graduates with MD & information degrees



Preliminary findings

- ✓ About half of those without academic information training had regrets
- ✓ Primary skills and training most often cited:
 - ✓ Business/management skills: negotiation, personal productivity, project management, teamwork, presentation
 - ✓ Communication & interpersonal skills: verbal & written effectiveness, sensitivity to organizational and cultural issues
 - ✓ Information skills: data management and database, programming, literature searching/analysis, EBM, taxonomies, user interface design, usability, privacy, workflows, computer science, system analysis and design
 - ✓ Health care environment: standards, interoperability, HIPAA, trends
 - ✓ Other: quantitative skills, research skills, hard working, problem solving, intellectual curiosity, not arrogant!
- ✓ Opportunities abound...
 - ✓ Academia, bioinformatics, research, government, public policy, CMIO, EHR, PHR, IT health care roles, clinical librarian, consumer health, knowledge management, quality improvement, consulting, entrepreneur, software, vendors, & pharmaceutical industries

