MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HEALTH INFORMATICS

Health Informatics focuses on the use of information systems to facilitate the healthcare system. The Master of Science in Health Informatics, delivered in cooperation with the Kasiska School of Health Professions, bridges the long-standing gap between the medical and administrative knowledge possessed by healthcare personnel and the information technology knowledge possessed by technologists.

The Health Informatics major is designed develop sought-after skills to enable graduates to more effectively apply information systems in a healthcare environment. Skilled employees in this fast-growing field are in great demand, and graduates will have an opportunity to play an increasingly important role in the burgeoning healthcare domain.

Health care poses very unique and challenging obstacles to Informatics. The protection of confidential patient information, the complexity of health information models, the changing health landscape, and the required adherence to governmental initiatives, all create external forces that must be managed to ensure the successful implementation of health solutions.

HEALTH INFORMATICS DEMAND

A critical shortage of workers with skills spanning both informatics and health had led to 67% of healthcare providers reporting HI staff shortages. Healthcare providers, insurance companies, and drug and device firms compete with each other for talented HI people. The shortage has become so severe that some companies have resorted to poaching HI talent from competitors or engaging in bidding wars to lure HI employees to their firms. Projected job growth in the field through 2022 is 23%.

HEALTH INFORMATICS OUTLOOK

The average salary for HI workers in executive, management and other professional positions topped $111,000 in 2015, according to the recently released 2015 Health Information Management and Systems Society Compensation Survey. Those in executive management saw the highest average salary of $196,472, followed by senior management at $163,217, department heads at $132,089, managers at $104,897, and staff at $86,294. The average salary for all levels of Health Informatics in Boise is $91,115.

HEALTH INFORMATICS CAREERS

The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act and the $11 billion DoD Healthcare Management System Modernization effort have combined to increase the demand for health informaticists. Common positions for graduates include the following:

- Health Informatics Director
- Health Informatics Project Manager
- Health Informatics Developer
- Health Informatics Consultant
- Clinical Informatics Analyst
- Nurse Informaticist
- Chief Medical Information Officer

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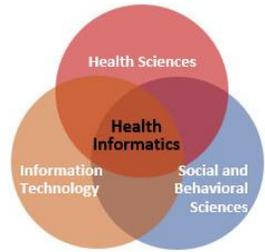
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HEALTH INFORMATICS

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HEALTH INFORMATICS COURSES

The MSHI is a 36 credit hour program. Students can select from two options: 33 credits of coursework plus 3 project credits, or 30 coursework credits plus 6 thesis credits.

The degree includes two required courses dedicated to data analytics, an increasingly important focus, and an informatics project management course.

The Health Informatics courses include:

- **Health Informatics** provides an overview of the evolution of information systems to support services in the healthcare industry, its current state, and future directions and challenges.

- **Health Information Governance** examines a range of issues of which IT professionals must be aware, including the security and regulatory environments, information risk assessment, information governance, and privacy/security.

- **Healthcare Workflow Process Analysis and Redesign** develops skills necessary to analyze and redesign patient flow processes and utilize health IT systems to achieve greater operational efficiency and quality of care.

- **Health Data Analytics** teaches skills to identify trends and transform data into relevant information to recommend better treatments, improve effectiveness and efficiency, and plan policy to achieve increased quality of care and patient satisfaction.

- **Electronic Health Records** teaches the technical infrastructure required for EHRs including distributed architecture, network and security design, and configuration approaches to support these designs.

Required courses taught by the Kasiska School of Health Professions include:

- **Health Law and Bioethics** develops a roadmap to facilitate risk management in the provision of healthcare services. Issues addressed include regulation and licensure, liability, selected aspects of public programs, and ethical issues regarding death, reproduction, and research.

- **US and Global Health Systems** explores the historical and contemporary multi-layered social, cultural, political, and economic determinants that shape health status, health behavior, and health inequalities. Practical application of creating appropriate interventions specific to the target population.

HEALTH CLINICAL PRACTICUM

Our Health Informatics program requires a Health Clinical Practicum, intended to provide field experience in a health informatics setting consistent with the student's career goals. The purpose is to go beyond classroom learning to include "hands-on" experience in the context of a particular health industry sector, providing students with the opportunity to synthesize all previous coursework, to develop competence in professional practice, to apply knowledge to the solution of health informatics problems, and to develop a respect for and a commitment to continued professional knowledge.

HEALTH INFORMATICS & WOMEN

The ICS department is affiliated with the National Center for Women & Information Technology and strives to promote increased participation by women in computing and technology.

HEALTH INFORMATICS FACULTY

We take great pride in our exceptional faculty members. The well-respected core of established Informatics professors has been supplemented with additional faculty members carefully selected for both their in-depth knowledge of Health Informatics and their experience interacting with healthcare practitioners and administrators. Our faculty members all have a helpful and caring approach to students.

Professor Velma Payne serves as the Program Director of Health Informatics.

HEALTH INFORMATICS AS INTERNATIONAL OPTION

Health informatics is a STEM major. F-1 students who have completed a U.S. degree in a STEM discipline may be eligible to request an OPT extension.

Further, recent medical graduates can benefit from enhanced knowledge of health informatics. Our MSHI degree provides an option for international medical graduates awaiting acceptance to a medical residency program. Pursuing an MSHI degree may be an attractive option for those who wish to be in US legally and work in an area of national interest.

CONCURRENT BBA AND MS

The concurrent BBA/MS program provides exceptional undergraduates with the opportunity to start working on their Master of Science degree while fulfilling requirements for their BBA. This degree program makes it possible for students to receive both an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree in five years, a shorter time than typically required to earn a B.B.A. plus M.S.

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