PROGRAM PLANNING SUMMARY

Master of Health Information Technology

College of Hospitality, Retail, and Sport Management

University of South Carolina Columbia

Harris Pastides, President

Date

Master of Health Information Technology with a major in Health Information Technology

Name of Institution: University of South Carolina Columbia
Designation: New Program Proposal
Name of Degree: Master of Health Information Technology
Name of Program: Health Information Technology
Number of credit hours in program: 36
If undergraduate, designation as four- or five-year program:
Program qualifies for supplemental Palmetto Fellows Scholarships/LIFE Scholarships: No
CIP Code: 11.0103
Proposed date of implementation: Fall 2011

Justification of need for the proposed program:

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of February 2009, often called "The Stimulus Act," included the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act. One goal of the HITECH Act is that all Americans will have electronic health records by 2014. To this end, approximately $36 billion is being made available over six years for the development and implementation of healthcare information technology.

This enormous stimulus is coming on top of an already large anticipated growth in healthcare and information technology (IT) employment. The Bureau of Labor Statistics 2010-11 *Occupational Outlook Handbook* predicts employment in computer systems design and related services will grow 45% by 2018; concurrently, healthcare jobs will grow by 4 million, accounting for 26% of all jobs in the U.S. economy.

The combination of the requirement for rapid computerization of healthcare records and the growth in demand for both healthcare and IT workers will tremendously increase the need for health information technology professionals. Hospitals, insurance companies, physicians' practices, state and local governments, and the information technology firms that provide health IT services will require specialists who understand the technologies associated with patient record systems, insurance claims processing, healthcare finance and operations systems, and the newly developing healthcare information exchange systems. These systems are highly adapted to the healthcare setting and must meet a host of state and federal regulations. Traditional degree programs in healthcare administration and information technology management do not address these particular systems in much depth. A degree program dedicated to training the next generation of health information technology managers is required. The Integrated Information Technology Program in the College of Hospitality, Retail, and Sport Management is proposing an interdisciplinary Master of Health Information Technology degree program to meet this challenge. A master's level program is appropriate to train information technology professionals in the application of IT to the health setting, and to train health professionals in appropriate information technologies.

Anticipated program demand and productivity:

We expect an enrollment of 10 to 20 students in the first cohort, with about 30 students in future cohorts. The program will be delivered in executive format, online, evening, and weekend courses. Students can be either full-time or part-time, with full-time students attending mainly classes on the Columbia campus and part-time students attending via Web-based delivery. Students may attend from any location in South Carolina, provided they have adequate Internet connectivity. We anticipate graduating 15 to 20 students at the end of each 16-month cohort.

Assessment of extent to which the proposed program duplicates existing programs in the state:

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education degree inventory does not list any master's programs in health information technology.

The Arnold School of Public Health at the USC Columbia offers Master of Public Health (MPH) and Master of Health Administration degrees in Health Services Policy and Management. These programs contain one course on healthcare information systems. This course is included in the proposed program, with five additional information technology courses.

The Medical University of South Carolina offers a Master of Health Administration degree that includes one course called "Management and Health Information Systems." MUSC also lists a Master of Science in Bioinformatics among its program descriptions. This concentration within the MS in Biomedical Sciences has an individualized program of study.

The College of Charleston offers a Master of Science in Computing and Information Sciences. This degree program contains no coursework in healthcare information technology. None of the master's programs in Computer Science at the University South Carolina or Clemson University contain any coursework in healthcare information technology.

The University of South Carolina Upstate offers a Bachelor of Arts in Information Management & Systems/Health Information Management (IMS/HIM) in conjunction with Greenville Technical College, Midlands Technical College and Florence-Darlington Technical College. Students earn an associate degree in HIM with the RHIT credential and can earn a BA with a concentration in HIM by adding two years of coursework. This is not a graduate program.

Relationship of the proposed program to existing programs at the proposing institution:

The proposed interdisciplinary program will be housed in the Integrated Information Technology (IIT) Program in the College of Hospitality, Retail, and Sport Management. Students will take coursework from both the IIT Program and from the Arnold School of Public Health. The curriculum includes a core of five courses (15 credit hours), three from IIT and two from the Arnold Schools' Department of Health Services Policy and Management, including HSPM 713 Information Systems in Health Administration. Students then choose five elective courses, at

least two from information technology and two from the Arnold School of Public Health. Students will complete an internship of six credit hours consisting of a minimum of 300 hours of approved health information technology work experience. Each student will complete a research paper related to the internship which will be evaluated as the student's comprehensive assessment of program learning outcomes.

Compared to other programs at the University of South Carolina Columbia, the proposed program will be unique. Computer Science and Engineering offers no master's program with coursework in any health related discipline. The Master of Science in Nursing programs do not offer a concentration in information technology. None of the master's programs in the Moore School of Business combine information technology and health care. None of the master's programs in the School of Medicine specialize in medical or health information technology.

The Certificate of Graduate Study in Health Communication is a collaborative effort of the USC School of Journalism and Mass Communications; the School of Library and Information Science; and the Department of Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior (HPEB) of the Arnold School of Public Health. However, this certificate program has a unique focus on health communications and it is designed to enhance the professional or clinical skills of working practitioners in public health organizations and the media.

The School of Library and Information Science is the eighth-ranked program in the U.S. in health sciences librarianship. The SLIS offers a master's program for those interested in the health sciences information profession. This program is not concerned with patient information systems, billing systems, or related health IT topics.

Relationship of the proposed program to other institutions via inter-institutional cooperation:

We do not anticipate that the proposed program will have any relationship with other institutions via inter-institutional cooperation.

Total new costs associated with implementing the proposed program (general estimates):

The IIT Program is seeking a faculty member with health information technology expertise to join the program by August 2011. This does not represent new costs for the proposed program, however, as this is an existing unfilled position. Current IIT Program faculty or adjunct faculty have the capacity to assume the advising, teaching, and internship supervision responsibilities for the courses in the IIT Program. The marginal increase in costs will be paid through tuition revenue from the proposed program. Existing computer laboratory facilities in the IIT Program have enough capacity for the proposed program. Current USC library database and journal subscriptions contain the relevant research materials.

The courses in the Arnold School of Public Health are existing courses already being taught by Arnold School faculty, so the marginal costs incurred by additional students will be minimal.