

## Proposal for BS and BA in Medical Humanities

- Proposed by: The University of Nebraska at Omaha
- (UNO) Proposed Program: Medical Humanities
- Proposed Degree: Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Sciences
- Other Programs in this field at UNO: Minor in Medical Humanities
- CIP code: 51.3306
- Administrative units: College of Arts and Sciences (in collaboration with the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media)
- Proposed delivery site: University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE
- Proposed delivery method: Campus at the University of Nebraska at Omaha
- Approved by the Governing Board: TBD
- Proposed Date the Program will be initiated: August 2019

### 1. Description and Purpose of the Proposed Program

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) proposes establishing the first undergraduate medical humanities major programs in the state of Nebraska to educate students with an interest and intent to pursue post-graduate education or employment in the growing field of healthcare. Medical Humanities complements the health sciences, and encompasses the humanities, social sciences and the arts. Medical Humanities is an interdisciplinary field that explores, from multiple perspectives, connections between humans, cultures, humanities, arts, medicine, and allied health sciences. This holistic approach benefits a wide-range of health professions.

Within this broad framework, issues studied include health disparities, medical ethics, art/music therapies and engagement, health communication, compassion fatigue/empathy to the provider-patient-caregiver relationship, spirituality and wellness, the interactions between health practices and conceptions of personhood, gender, and community, healing and medicine across cultures, and the nature of suffering and models of wellness. An education with a humanities perspective on health and medicine shapes individuals to think critically, compassionately and knowledgeably about the human condition, appreciate and respect diverse communities, and develop reflective and resilient habits of the mind.

In 2015, Dr. Michele Desmarais led the effort to create an interdisciplinary minor program in Medical Humanities in the College of Arts and Sciences at UNO. The same year, the **MCAT** added two new sections to test social science and humanities knowledge of students seeking admission to medical school. The change occurred in recognition of the increasing importance for pre-health professions students to understand the social foundations of health and disease. This shifted the need for education in these areas to begin during undergraduate education, rather than exclusively as part of post-graduate training. Indeed, medical and health humanities

programs are growing rapidly at the undergraduate level, increasing from 14 to 58 between 2000 and 2016 in the U.S. and globally. This is occurring for two reasons: First, they focus “on health and healthcare delivery in their cultural, historical, aesthetic, and political contexts”, and second, they “complement efforts of health professions schools to recruit students who are patient-centered, ethically intelligent, skilled in communication, and competent with diverse populations” (Berry, Jones and Lamb, 2017). In an August 2017 article in *American Association of Medical Colleges News* reinforced the last point: “As science and medicine continually change, there has been a growing recognition that studying the arts and humanities may help learners develop qualities such as professionalism, self-awareness, and communication skills that are increasingly important for physicians” and they help students “form deeper connections with patients, maintain joy in medicine, and develop empathy and resiliency” (Mann, 2017).

Health care professionals with higher levels of empathy have increased patient engagement and diagnoses that are more accurate. However, declines in empathy are common as students move through training in health professions (Nunes et al., 2011) and in multiple health professions low levels of empathy may put health professions students and professionals at a higher risk for burnout (Harscher et al., 2017; Williams et al. 2017). Burnout is common in medical students and the experience often persists into residency (Hester and Tsai, 2018). Moreover, burnout in physicians contributes higher rates of employment turnover, substance use, depression and suicide and burned- out clinicians tend to have less satisfied patients and report an increased rate of medical errors (Wright and Katz 2018). Medical humanities undergraduate coursework offers future healthcare providers with a solid foundation that may “help buttress empathy,” as well as improve communication skills and “deepen understandings of ethics and ameliorate burnout” (Ofri, 2015:2, 2017).

Medical humanities programs originated in medical schools, and much of the focus at the undergraduate level historically centered on pre-med student impact. However, interest in medical humanities education is increasingly widening beyond pre-medical and medical education to include other health professions, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant, and dentistry (Brett-MacLean, et al., 2010; Grant and Gregory, 2017, Smith et al. 2000). Students completing Baccalaureate programs in medical humanities demonstrate equivalent MCAT performance (Stratton et al., 2003) and equivalent academic, clinical and research performance in medical school, and post-medical school compared to a traditional pre-med science major (Hall, Woods and Hanson, 2014). In addition, students from a medical humanities background are more highly rated in community service on the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE) and are more likely to choose residencies in primary care or psychiatry, both of which are needed for the Nebraska workforce (Muller and Kase, 2010; Hall, Woods and Hanson, 2014).

The growth in undergraduate medical humanities programs across country reflects a trend to better prepare the next generation for employment in the health care sector by reconnecting them to the humanistic aspects of medicine to benefit patients, communities and themselves. The proposed program represents the only Baccalaureate degrees in medical humanities in the state of Nebraska. UNO has a fast-growing minor in medical humanities and the increased synergistic cooperation and interaction of UNO and UNMC faculty makes this an opportune time to move forward with a major in medical humanities.

**Table 1: Medical Humanities Minor - Enrollment Trend**

2015	3
2016	23
2017	43
2018	63

Since the creation of the medical humanities minor, the minor has grown from 3 students (in 2015) to 63 students in Fall 2018 (Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Census Data). The drastic increase in enrollments demonstrates the student demand for this program.

## **2. Program of Study**

### **2a. Overview**

The proposed Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees will consist of 30 hours of course content in Medical Humanities courses. For the B.A., students must complete 16 credit hours of college work in one foreign language, American Sign Language, or equivalent. The B.S. degree requires a 15 credit hour cognate that supports the student’s work within the major. An example of a cognate in Natural Sciences: Biology and Environmental Studies is listed below.

With the permission of the Director/Academic Advisor, B.S. or B.A. students may use up to 3 hours of coursework from the list of Complementary Courses to replace 3 hours in Blocks 1, 2, or 3, as long as they complete the other major requirements. This option allows students to explore areas of interest that overlap with Medical Humanities.

### **2b. Admission Requirements**

Admission requirements for the BA/BS in Medical Humanities are the same as admission to the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Once students are admitted to the BA/BS in Medical Humanities they will be in the College of Arts & Sciences and will be required to maintain a cumulative college GPA of 2.5/4.0 scale and grades of C or better in the Medical Humanities core courses to remain in good standing in the College of Arts & Sciences.

### **2c. Major topics**

The Major in Medical Humanities is intentionally flexible and interdisciplinary, reflecting both the needs of students and the nature of the field. The Medical Humanities major helps students increase their understanding of the nature of illness, health, wellness, healing, and medicine by exploring these topics in three blocks of classes that share a commonality of focus. To ensure cohesion, all majors take the introductory course, a Medical Humanities Commons course, which is an interdisciplinary examination of a single relevant topic (e.g. “Suffering” or “Compliance”) and a Capstone course in Medical Humanities that includes a project integrating their chosen coursework with community engagement.

**Block 1: Inclusivity & Diversity:** Courses in this block allow students to explore how race, ethnicity, gender, sex, age, and income affect the experience of health, illness, and medicine. Demographically, the population of the United States is aging and diversifying and this affects who seeks health care and how they interact with the system. Poverty has an enormous impact on the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and populations. Students pursuing careers in health care will therefore benefit from a foundational understanding of these concepts and perspectives.

**Block 2: Ethics, Religion & Culture:** Courses in this block provide students with a foundation in the values, beliefs, and concepts that define how individuals and societies experience health, illness, disease, and medicine at a social and cultural level. It prepares students to confront ethical questions of meaning and value that arise in the context of medical research and practice. Spirituality and religion for many patients, practitioners, and communities are the heart of health care. Exploring cross-cultural perspectives on medical beliefs, practices, and systems encourages students to reflect on the diverse ways humans approach, experience and solve problems of health and health care delivery.

**Block 3: Narrative Medicine, Communication & Fine Arts:** Courses in this block allow students the opportunity to explore different ways of observing, communicating and understanding health, illness and healing. Narrative medicine encourages students to write, reflect, and find meaning in their own and others experiences with health and medicine. Literature introduces students to life situations associated with illness and disability in an intimate and intuitive way. Communication skills are essential for interprofessional teams, and working with clients and patients. Music, visual art, and drama courses encourage students to express and experience the human condition in unique ways, as well as improving listening, observation and communication skills.

## **2d. Courses and credit hours required**

**Requirements (30 hours)** (Course in italics are proposed)

### **Core (12 hours)**

*MHS1000\*\**: Introduction to Medical Humanities (3)

*MHS3000*: Medical Humanities Commons (3)

*MHS4900*: Capstone in Medical Humanities (3)

Quantitative Literacy Requirement (3): MATH1530, PSCI2000, PSYC3130, SOC2130, PHIL2010

**Blocks (18 hours):** Blocks 1, 2, & 3 **MUST** include at **LEAST 12 hours** at the 3000-4000 level.

**Block 3 MUST** include at least 3 hours of CFAM coursework.

### **BLOCK 1: Inclusivity & Diversity (6 hours)**

BLST3980: Special Topics: HIV and AIDS in Africa (3)

PSYC2500: Lifespan Psychology (3)

SOC3820: Medical Sociology (3)

SOC4700/HED4700: Women's Health and Issues of Diversity (3)

SOC4800: Health & Stratification (3)

SOC4830: Sociology of Mental Illness (3)

HED3070/GERO3070: Death and Dying (3)

GERO4550/WGST4550: Health Aspects of Aging (3)

**BLOCK 2: Ethics, Religion & Culture (6 hours)**

ANTH4230: Ethnomedicines of the Americas (3)  
ANTH4240: Medical Anthropology (3)  
ANTH4920/NAMS4920: Native American Health & Wellness (3)  
GDRH3010: Folklore and Medicine (3)  
HIST4470: History of American Medicine and Public Health (3)  
PHIL2300: Human Values in Medicine (3)  
RELI303: Shamanism (3)  
PHIL3500: Myth, Medicine & Cosmology (3)  
PHIL3500: Neuroethics (3)  
RELI2500: Spirituality and Wellness (3)  
RELI3500: Topics: Religion in Public Life (3)  
RELI3500: Special Topics: Health, Religion & Human Rights (3)  
RELI3500: Special Topics: Spirituality & Madness (3)  
RELI3500: Special Topics: Compassion (3)

**BLOCK 3: Narrative Medicine, Communication & Fine Arts (6 hours) (CFAM courses underlined)**

ART2600: Survey of Comics (If MH related topic) (3)  
ART3330: Art in Public Places, Theory and Practice: Public Health Focus (3)  
CFAM1000\*: Why the Arts Matter (3)  
CMST1310\*: Perspectives in Communication Studies (3)  
CMST/SPCH4220: Health Communication (3)  
ENGL3000: Literature & Medicine: Reading & Writing about Illness and Health (3)  
ENGL4960: Bringing the War Home: American Veterans & Their Families (3)  
ENGL/WGST4960: Writing Graphic Memoirs (if MH related topic)  
ENGL4970: Writing about Sickness & Health (3)  
MUS2740: Chamber Music: Sound Health (3)  
MUS4660/8696: Health & Wellness for Musicians (3)  
RELI3500: Special Topics: First Nations, Spirit in Culture (3)  
THEA2310\*: Acting I (3)  
WRWS3500: Creative Writing in the Arts (3)

**Complementary Courses**

*(B.A. or B.S. students may use up to 3 hours of coursework from this list to replace 3 hours in Blocks 1, 2, or 3 with advisor approval)*

GERO/PSYC4460 Psych of Adult Development (3)  
HED2850 Stress Management (1)  
PSYC4440 Abnormal Psychology (3)  
PHIL2030 Introduction to Ethics (3)  
SOC4200 Sociology of the Body (3)  
WGST/HED3080 Health Concepts of Sexual Development (3)

**Cognate Courses for the BS Degree: Natural Sciences Example (15 hours)****Example of classes in Biology and Environmental Studies**

BIOL1060: Introduction to Medical Careers & Ethics (2)  
BIOL1450\*: Biology I (5)  
BIOL1750: Biology II (5)  
BIOL2060: The Art & Science of Medical Decisions (3)  
BIOL2740: Human Physiology & Anatomy I (4)

BIOL2840: Human Physiology & Anatomy II (4)  
BIOL/GERO3500: Biological Principles of Aging (3)  
ENVN4320: Ecological Sustainability and Human Health (3)

\*Meets general education requirement.

\*\*Proposed for general education requirement in humanities and fine arts.

### **3. Faculty, Staff, and other Resources**

#### **3a. Faculty and administration**

The current UNO minor in Medical Humanities curriculum is taught by faculty from four different colleges (Arts and Sciences; Communications, Fine Art, and Media; Public Affairs and Community Service; and Education). Medical Humanities has a large representation of departments and programs across campus including: Anthropology, Art History, Black Studies, Biology, Communication Studies, English, Environmental Studies, Gerontology, Goodrich Program, Health Education, Music, Philosophy, Psychology, Religious Studies, Sociology, Theater, Writer's Workshop, and Women and Gender Studies. The major program will build on this interdisciplinary foundation.

All faculty members developing approved courses for the Medical Humanities program have the documented support of their respective "home" departments and unit chairs for involvement in the program. This list is sufficient for teaching the coursework within the proposed major, as many of the courses also count towards other existing majors. Additional faculty in medical ethics and Industrial/Organizational Psychology have recently been added in the College of Arts and Sciences, and additional faculty have been requested by the School of the Arts. As enrollment increases, additional faculty, and staff may be recruited as needed. Moreover, because teaching for the program will affect a faculty member's teaching load and course offerings within the home department or unit some full-time faculty may require adjunct replacement in their home department or unit.

Faculty from UNMC with an interest in participating in the major and ability to rearrange their workload to teach undergraduates would be welcome to teach for the program. We envision developing greater interdisciplinary appeal by creating two categories of faculty participants in the Medical Humanities program: 1) Core Faculty will be individuals whose teaching, creative activity and research focus centrally in medical humanities, and 2) Faculty with interests in medical humanities as it intersects their own disciplinary pursuits would be invited to join as Affiliate Faculty. Current Core Faculty include: Michele Desmarais (Religious Studies), Paige Toller (Communication), Melissa Berke (Music), Jeremy Johnson (Art & Art History), Brigitte Ryalls (Psychology), Laura Grams (Philosophy), Paul Davis (Biology), Paul Williams (Religious Studies), Curtis Hutt (Religious Studies), Jay Irwin (Sociology), Timi Barone (Anthropology) and Steve Langan (English) and Regina Robbins (Health Promotion, UNMC).

We anticipate that one introductory-level course (MHS1000) and two additional upper-level courses (MHS3000 Medical Humanities Commons, MHS4900 Capstone in Medical Humanities) will be developed to support the degree. The introductory course would be established immediately, while the additional upper-level courses would be phased in as the Medical Humanities major matures.

These courses will be developed by existing faculty, and taught by existing faculty in the Medical Humanities program. Although no new faculty lines are needed to support the degree, it is anticipated that the degree will grow sufficiently in the coming years to support new faculty lines at some point in the future, derived from demonstrated student credit hour production and the successful graduation of majors.

### **Administration**

The proposed degree will be administratively located within the College of Arts & Sciences, as the minor currently is. The program is managed by an executive committee with a program director, similar to other successful interdisciplinary majors at UNO. A faculty member from the core faculty acts as Director of the degree program. Currently, the office of the Director of Medical Humanities is housed in the Department of English, as this is the location of his academic appointment. The Executive Committee will consist of one faculty member representative from each discipline/program/unit teaching in the Medical Humanities program and an ex-officio representative from any UNMC discipline/ program participating in the Medical Humanities program. The executive committee will act in a consultative and administrative capacity to support the work of the Director and serve as a conduit between the Medical Humanities program and their home department/programs. The Director will handle the responsibilities of advising students and managing day-to-day operations of the degree, by core faculty, and by other student advisors of the participating departments. Existing staff support will come from reassigning time in the home department of the Director of the degree program.

### **3b. Additional physical facilities need**

The interdisciplinary nature of the Medical Humanities major will minimize the need for additional physical facilities, as the participating departments and units arrange classroom space for their classes. All classrooms contain equipment and technology necessary for instruction. In addition, some of the courses are taught both in the classroom and online which allows for additional sections without requiring additional space. Currently, the interim Director and Academic Advisor for the minor in Medical Humanities are housed in departmental offices in Arts and Sciences Hall on UNO's Dodge Street Campus. The only physical facilities needed as the major program grows will be a permanent office space on the University of Nebraska at Omaha Campus to house the program and its administrative and support staff.

### **3c. Instructional equipment and informational resources**

The program will require basic office equipment and supplies necessary to run the administration of the program from campus. Promotional materials will be developed in coordination with University Communications.

## **4. Evidence of Need and Demand**

### Need

As an area of employment, health care is experiencing rapid technological, structural, and economic changes in an attempt to lower costs and improve care. For example, as future health care professionals, students are more likely to work in interprofessional teams than in the past. In addition, the delivery of culturally and structurally competent patient centered care to a sicker, aging, and diversifying population requires educational preparation. For example, the American Academy of Medical Colleges core competencies represent skills, knowledge, and abilities

required to help students prepare for this demanding environment. These core competencies include understanding social and cultural influences on health, engaging in a culturally competent way, taking ethical responsibility, as well as mastering the skills of critical thinking, teamwork, and written and oral communication.

Moreover, the competencies include a need for entering medical students to be both resilient and adaptable in stressful and ambiguous situations (AAMC Core Competencies, n.d.). However, given these and other pressures it can be challenging for health care professionals to avoid burnout and compassion fatigue. In a study comparing physicians to a general U.S. sample, physician reports of burnout increased rapidly and satisfaction with work-life balance declined between 2011 and 2014, with over half of U.S. physicians reporting at least one burnout symptom (Shanafelt, et.al, 2015). The problem of burnout among health care professionals (physicians, nurses and others) is discussed in a National Academy of Medicine report as not only a problem for individuals and organizations, but also a potential threat to the delivery of patient care (Dyrbye et al., 2017).

Providing pre-health professions students with preparation in natural sciences *as well as* arts, humanities and social sciences, provides a solid foundation for the core competencies and may help reduce the risk of burnout and compassion fatigue in the next generation of health care professionals, including but not limited to physicians. Arts, humanities and medicine are "... disciplines which deal with perennial issues in or of human experience – pain, illness, suffering and mortality. Dynamic communication between humanities, arts and medicine can help to support the development of health practitioners, rendering them more adequately equipped to respond to social and ethical issues, and able to cross cultural barriers and promote social inclusion"(Staricoff, 2006: 119).

According to a 2017 report on health humanities Baccalaureate programs, medical and health humanities, Baccalaureate students are prepared for their postgraduate professions programs in a variety of ways: They are more likely to be leaders committed to service as it "...fosters prosocial choices among future providers of care." Moreover, students educated in similar programs are "...able to work effectively in healthcare teams and with a diverse patient population. Humanistic inquiry and skill building in Baccalaureate classrooms may prepare students for the social nuances of successful care. There is a higher tendency among premedical humanities students to demonstrate: empathy, skillful communication, patient-centered attitudes, decision-making for individualized patient care, enhanced ability to relate to others." Finally, there is evidence to suggest that students with undergraduate education in medical humanities are more likely to enter occupations in primary care fields, pediatrics, and psychiatry, suggesting that this may provide a way to address staff shortages in critical areas of care (Berry, Lamb, and Jones, 2017).

This program will appeal to students interested in careers in the humanities and in the health care industry broadly, an area of the economy that consistently ranks in the top ten for projected job growth through 2020. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 10 of the top 20 fastest growing occupations in the U.S. are in the health care industry (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/fastest-growing.htm>).

The minor has already attracted pre- medical, pre-physician assistant and pre-physical therapy students who have successfully matriculated into their respective professional training programs.

According to the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions (ASAHP), the demand for allied health workers is expected to grow, with demand nearly twice as fast as the national economy, with an estimated 19.8 million jobs in this area in 2020.

Changing accreditation standards have resulted in an increasing percentage of these occupations requiring or recommending a bachelors degree, and there a projected increased need in Nebraska through 2026 (see Table 2).

<b>2: Projected national &amp; state growth in selected occupations with entry BA/BS that list compassion as important</b>						
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2016 Employment (national)</b>	<b>Projected 2026 Employment (national)</b>	<b>Percent Increase</b>	<b>2016 Employment (Nebraska)</b>	<b>Projected 2026 (Nebraska)</b>	<b>Percent increase</b>
Mental health counselor	260,200	320,500	23%	1,110	1,340	20.8%
Respiratory care therapist	130,200	160,700	23%	1,140	1,260	10.7%
Radiologic Technologist	241,700	272,000	13%	1,870	2,090	11.7%
Dietitians and medical nutritionists	68,000	77,900	15%	680	780	14.6%
Recreational Therapists	19,200	20,500	7%	240	260	9.1%

Moreover, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, all of the occupations listed in Table 2 (as well as others) have “compassion”, an area of focus in medical humanities, listed as an important quality of employment. For example, dietitians and medical nutritionists “must be caring and empathetic when helping clients address health and dietary issues and any related emotions” (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Dietitians and Nutritionists, on the Internet at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dietitians-and-nutritionists.htm> (visited *October 04, 2018*).

Students not planning to pursue postgraduate education or training for a specific health career are encouraged to consider employment in a non-profit organization focused on health issues. For example, Nebraska has local offices of many national nonprofits such as American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, March of Dimes, Susan G. Komen etc., as well as local organizations. According to the website *Independent Sector*, there were approximately twelve thousand nonprofit organizations in Nebraska at the end of 2016 (<https://independentsector.org/resource/state-profile-nebraska/>, retrieved October 1, 2018),

employing almost eighty thousand people. Students planning employment in the nonprofit sector will be strongly encouraged to consider the minor in nonprofit management to prepare them to lead and manage nonprofit organizations, including courses in fundraising, leadership, volunteer management and financial management.

### Demand

UNO launched the Medical Humanities minor in the fall semester of 2015. Since the creation of the minor, enrollment has increased from three students in 2015 to 63 students in Fall 2018. This trend demonstrates the high demand for the medical humanities field. Anecdotally, advisors and faculty report Medical Humanities minors requesting the option of a major in Medical Humanities. A survey of Medical Humanities minors in Spring 2018 asked if current students would choose a Medical Humanities major if available. Approximately 57% responded affirmatively, with another 29% indicating possible interest. Currently, 67% of Medical Humanities minors have a major in either psychology or biology programs with the balance majoring in Sociology, Chemistry, Gerontology, Public Health, Black Studies, Religious Studies, Biomechanics, and Foreign Languages. The minor clearly appeals to pre-health professions students, with approximately 60% of all minors (past and present) pursuing pre-med, pre-physician assistant, pre-nursing, and pre-pharmacy plans of study.

Given the increased demand of the minor in Medical Humanities in the last three years, we anticipate that this will be a popular major. This would reflect the experience of other major programs in Medical Humanities across the country, as mentioned below. Based on the results of the survey of current minors, and the experience at other institutions, we conservatively estimate around a 20% growth each of the first five years (years 2-5 include previous year's students):

Year 1: 20 students

Year 2: 25 students

Year 3: 32 students

Year 4: 38 students

Year 5: 30 students (Please note that in year 5 the first cohort of 20 students would have graduated)

Five to ten students each year will provide a minimum number to make the program viable. Considerably more students are expected. Given that 33% of the Medical Humanities classes are available online currently, a possible avenue of growth would be to offer the major online.

Currently, there are no majors in Medical Humanities available online in the United States. Thus the program could conceivably grow faster than the conservative projection above.

The proposed major would appeal to both students in a pre-health professions plan of study and students with a broader interest in the humanistic aspects of health care. The 30 credit hour requirement and flexibility of course choice make the major very feasible for students pursuing pre-physician assistant, pre-physical therapy, pre-dentistry and pre-med plans. These characteristics also make it attractive as a second major for students in the departments and programs that comprise the curriculum. A major in Medical Humanities would complement, rather than replace, existing paths for UNO students interested in careers and employment in health care and in the humanities, by attracting students more interested in the humanistic aspects

of health care.

In their survey of colleges and universities with Medical Humanities major, minor or certificate programs, Lamb, Berry and Jones (2017) report that these are among the most popular options for their students, and are often fastest growing programs. For example, Baylor University reports approximately 200 majors in their program. Metzl and Petty (2017) note that demand for the Medical Humanities major at Vanderbilt rose from 172 in 2008 to over 300 in 2011. In 2013, Medical Humanities was the fastest growing major and by 2015, there were more than 500 undergraduate majors on a campus of 7000 students.

The major in Medical Humanities would be the first program of its kind in not only the state of Nebraska, but also the Great Plains region. The closest Medical Humanities major programs are in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Texas. The establishment of this major could attract students to UNO from throughout the region and contribute to enrollment growth at the University as a whole.

## References

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## **5. Partnerships with Business**

The proposed major in Medical Humanities will provide opportunities for students and faculty to engage in collaborative partnerships with both business and community organizations.

Discussions about medical humanities have occurred between representatives of UNO and the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Blue Barn Theatre, Buffett Cancer Center Healing Arts Program, Cy Wakeman, Lutheran Family Services, Metro Omaha Medical Society, NOAH (North Omaha Area Health), Omaha Public Library, The Omaha Conservatory of Music, Opera Omaha, and Siena/Francis House. Additional interactions will occur between healthcare providers and health systems, such as Nebraska Methodist Health System and Nebraska Medicine, to provide a broad range of shadowing and experiential immersions. A variety of community and business leaders have also been involved in this conversation, including former Congressman Brad Ashford, Terry Ferguson, Carol Gendler, Ted Kooser, Michael Maroney, Paul Smith, and Michael Yanney.

## **6. Collaborations within the University of Nebraska**

There are numerous connections and partnerships between UNO and UNMC. We also envision collaborations with the UNO Goldstein Center for Human Rights.

From the UNO Medical Humanities point of view, the primary current relationships are with UNMC's College of Allied Health Professions, College of Dentistry, Interprofessional Academy of Educators (IAE), College of Nursing, and College of Public Health. The proposed major would complement and enhance efforts in these colleges (and others) and at the IAE by exposing students to concepts earlier in their academic careers and enabling them to engage in a more thorough way should they choose to continue their academic work and training at UNMC.

## **7. Collaborations with Higher Education Institutions and Agencies External to the University**

Many partnerships exist already between UNO and UNMC. However, medical humanities faculty have established contacts with colleagues throughout the nation. These include the ASBH (American Society for Bioethics and Humanities), Brown University, Columbia University, Maine Medical Center, Mayo Clinic, Medical College of Wisconsin, University of Iowa, and University of Oklahoma, Princeton University and Metro Community College.

## **8. Centrality to Role and Mission of the Institution**

The proposed B.A. and B.S. in Medical Humanities is central to the University of Nebraska at Omaha's role and mission, and the proposed program will help support and accomplish UNO's mission and vision as outlined in the Strategic Plan. While the proposed programs are not the first of their kind on a national level, they are most certainly on the cutting edge locally and regionally and would bring UNO strong recognition as a leader for innovation, research, and creative scholarship. The proposed program will help UNO forge new and maintain existing connections and partnerships with UNMC as well as within the broader external community. The proposed degree programs in Medical Humanities promotes the mission of the University by striving to attain several objectives in the strategic plan:

**Goal 1: Student-centeredness**

*Strategy 1.2 "Prepare students for academic success, careers, and professional responsibilities in an increasingly complex world."*

The Medical Humanities minor is one of the fastest growing programs in the College of Arts and Sciences and students currently in the program have indicated substantial interest in a major. In addition, the study of Medical Humanities at the undergraduate level provides students with a foundation that will aid them in succeeding in the increasingly complex health care sector.

**Goal 2: Academic Excellence**

*Strategy 2.1 "Provide a strong core curriculum that ensures every UNO graduate possesses foundational academic skills, experiences the breadth of liberal education, and develops an appreciation for the diversity that exists in the nation and world."*

The Medical Humanities major provides students with breadth as it incorporates the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and fine arts in its program of study. The major requires coursework on inclusivity and diversity in the context of health, illness, and health care.

*Strategy 2.4 "Identify, develop and support interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary academic priorities."*

The Medical Humanities major program is interdisciplinary in structure and scholarship. The curriculum reflects the interdisciplinary nature of this area of study, which will expose students to many viewpoints.

*Strategy 2.5 "Develop and enhance applied and experiential learning opportunities."*

The Medical Humanities major program includes a capstone course that requires students to participate in a community engagement project relevant to their interdisciplinary coursework.

**Goal 3: Community Engagement**

*Strategy 3.1 "Build new and strengthen existing connections with a broad range of community partners."*

The Medical Humanities major programs will build new connections and strengthen existing relationships between UNO humanities and social science faculty and programs to UNMC faculty and programs. The UNO-UNMC collaboration is strategic and allows both institutions to leverage each other's expertise and resources – stressing the institutional priority of Medical Humanities.

**9. Consistency with the University of Nebraska Strategic Framework**

The proposed program in Medical Humanities will promote the University of Nebraska supports multiple objectives in the Strategic Planning Framework.

**Item 2. The University of Nebraska will build and sustain undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs of high quality with an emphasis on excellent teaching.**

*b. Pursue excellence through focus on targeted programs in areas of importance to*

*Nebraska where the university can be a regional, national, and/or international leader.*

There are no major programs offered in Medical Humanities in the Great Plains. Initiating this program provides an opportunity for UNO to be a regional leader in an innovative area of study.

**Item 3. The University of Nebraska will play a critical role in building a talented competitive workforce and knowledge-based economy in Nebraska in partnership with the state, private sector and other educational institutions.**

*b. To attract talent to the state, increase the number of nonresident students who enroll at the university.*

The program would be the only one of its kind in the Great Plains region and will be attractive to students interested in future work in the health care industry.

*h. Pursue excellence in educational attainment aligned with the long-term interests of the state.*

A major in Medical Humanities supports the development of future health care workers that will be flexible and resilient in an evolving and complex area of employment.

#### **10. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication**

There are no bachelor degree programs in Medical Humanities in the State of Nebraska. Therefore, there is no duplication.

UNO offers a minor in Medical Humanities and UNL offers a minor in Humanities in Medicine. According to a 2017 survey by Hiram College Center for Literature and Medicine, the closest college or university program (public or private) with a major in Medical Humanities are Beloit College in Wisconsin, Benedictine University in Illinois and Northwestern University in Illinois. Thus, there is a clear regional niche that could be filled by the existence of a program at UNO, and such a program could attract students from contiguous states, in addition to those recruited from western Iowa and statewide in Nebraska. The letters of support (see attached) suggest that the Medical Humanities major would be welcome by UNO and UNMC faculty and programs.

#### **11. Consistency with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education**

The Medical Humanities BA and BS degree programs match the statewide goals for education in the following ways:

##### **Meeting the educational needs of students**

These degrees are student-centered as they allow students flexibility to meet their educational goals by allowing choice within structured curriculum blocks, while maintaining academic rigor in core requirements.

##### **Meeting the needs of the state**

The degrees in Medical Humanities are for students with a broad interest in future employment in the health care industry, humanities, and arts. Program graduates will have a humanistic understanding of how health and illness affects lives of patients and health care workers at an individual, cultural, social, and societal level. This will enhance the quality of health care

delivery in the state.

**Meeting needs through exemplary institutions**

The proposed program enhances the mission of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, as it is interdisciplinary in structure and innovative in focus. There are no other majors in Medical Humanities in the Great Plains region, so it represents an opportunity to lead in this area.

**Meeting educational needs through partnerships and collaborations**

In the previous sections, numerous collaborations are noted. Moreover, the proposed program represents a potential new area of collaboration between UNO and UNMC in courses and content.



**TABLE 1: PROJECTED EXPENSES - NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM  
Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Medical Humanities at UNO**

	(FY 2019-20) Year 1	(FY2020-21) Year 2	(FY 2021-22) Year 3	(FY2022-23) Year 4	(FY 2023-24) Year 5	Total Cost
<b>Personnel</b>						
Faculty <sup>1</sup>	\$3,000	\$6,000	\$9,000	\$12,000	\$15,000	\$45,000
Professional <sup>2</sup>	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$18,000
Graduate assistants						\$0
Support staff <sup>3</sup>	\$4,290	\$4,290	\$8,580	\$12,540	\$16,500	\$46,200
Subtotal	\$10,890	\$13,890	\$21,180	\$28,140	\$35,100	\$109,200
<b>Operating</b>						
General Operating	\$200	\$300	\$400	\$500	\$500	\$1,900
Equipment						
New or renovated space						
Library/Information Resources						
Other						
Subtotal	\$200	\$300	\$400	\$500	\$500	\$1,900
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$11,090	\$14,190	\$21,580	\$28,640	\$35,600	\$111,100

1 The budget reflects a need to potentially increase the number of adjuncts needed to free MH faculty members to teach needed core courses (MH1000, MH3000, MH4900) in the major. The figure of \$3000 per class is used to reflect the approximate current cost in the College of Arts & Sciences. **This expense will be covered by reallocation of funds in the colleges of Arts and Sciences and Communication, Fine Arts and Media until enrollment revenue becomes sufficient.**

2 The budget includes the standard stipend for a program director in the College of Arts & Sciences of \$3600 each of the years included. **The College of Arts and Science will cover this expense.**

3 Support staff commitment would help support the existing minor and proposed major both. The allotted staff time would increase as the program increases in enrollment. The spreadsheet assumes FTE of \$33,000: FY1: .13 FTE, FY2: .13, FY3: .26, FY4: .38FTE, FY5: .50 FTE. **This expense will be covered by the College of Arts and Sciences until enrollment revenue becomes sufficient.**

As such, I feel this major would be helpful to strengthen the talent and awareness of those working in the nonprofit sector, particularly those who know this is a career path they would like to pursue. Working in the nonprofit sector, particularly when dealing with healthcare and health-related organizations, requires much more than great business skills. It requires empathy, the drive to help others and an understanding of humanity. Educating students in all of these facets strengthens their ability to best serve others in a nonprofit role.

I endorse and welcome this new major. If there is any way I can be of help or service in any steps toward this becoming a reality, please let me know.

Sincerely,

*Michelle Grossman*

Michelle Grossman  
President & CEO



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**TABLE 2: REVENUE SOURCES FOR PROJECTED EXPENSES - NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**  
**Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Medical Humanities at UNO**

	(FY 2019-20) Year 1	(FY2020-21) Year 2	(FY 2021-22) Year 3	(FY2022-23) Year 4	(FY 2023-24) Year 5	Total
Reallocation of Existing Funds						\$0
Required New Public Funds						\$0
1. State Funds						\$0
2. Local Tax Funds (community colleges)						\$0
Tuition and Fees	\$276,675	\$345,844	\$442,680	\$553,350	\$415,013	\$2,033,561
Other Funding						\$0
1						\$0
2						\$0
3						\$0
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$276,675</b>	<b>\$345,844</b>	<b>\$442,680</b>	<b>\$553,350</b>	<b>\$415,013</b>	<b>\$2,033,561</b>

Tuition is calculated based on half of the students paying resident tuition (2018-19 resident tuition rate of \$223.25) and half paying non-resident tuition (2018-19 non-resident tuition rate of \$699.00). The calculation is based on students taking 30 SCH per year.

**SCH Production Calculation**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Cohort 1: 20 students	30	30	30	30	Graduated
Cohort 2: 5 New Students		30	30	30	30
Cohort 3: 7 New Students			30	30	30
Cohort 4: 8 New Students				30	30
Cohort 5: 10 New Students					30
<b>SCH Production Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>900</b>