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FIU Introducing Fully Online Master's Program in Health Informatics & Analytics

Since 2012, Florida International University (FIU) has offered a Master's of Science in Health Informatics and Analytics (MSHI&A). This interdisciplinary field studies and pursues effective uses of health-related data, information, and knowledge for scientific inquiry, problem-solving, and organizational decision-making, in an effort to improve both health and healthcare delivery. In October of 2017, the University will begin offering the program completely online in order to enable more students to become involved in this

growing field.

“The United States Department of Labor’s [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) projects that the field of health information will experience 22 percent job growth by 2022,” explained Dr. Richard Klein, an assistant dean with FIU’s College of Business and interim chair of the Information Systems and Business Analytics Department. “Only ‘health information technicians’ are referenced in this statistic, overlooking potential IT jobs in the healthcare sector as well as consulting and health informatics education and training opportunities.”

Advanced, graduate-level degrees in health informatics will ultimately prove extremely valuable. “Data collected by the job search site Simply Hired puts average salaries for the profession at \$69,000, though higher salaries are possible,” Dr. Klein said of the field that enables improvements in healthcare delivery, patient safety and quality of care.

While in the program, students enhance their analytical, leadership and organizational skills. The average age of an MSHI&A student is 29, and students come from various backgrounds including healthcare, nursing, health services, information technology, accounting, psychology, and biological services, among others.

The program is offered as part of FIU’s College of Business, making it the only program of its kind offered through a business school in Florida and one of only a handful of similar programs across the U.S.

“The unique aspect of FIU’s program lies in combining management and business analytics components with health informatics. We designed the program with input from some of the top healthcare professionals and CIOs in South Florida,” explained Dr. Klein, adding that the same outstanding faculty teaching the in-person program will teach the online program.


He continued, “FIU takes an interdisciplinary approach to health informatics and provides students with tools and skills to analyze data and provide solutions to improve health and

healthcare delivery. Students broaden their views and perspectives by working in teams with peers from clinical, information systems, and managerial backgrounds.”

While this coming year’s program is fully online, subsequent years will see the degree offered via in-person and online instruction. To date, FIU has graduated four successful cohorts of students, with the fifth currently completing their studies. Alumni work across South Florida at employers that include HealthSouth, the Memorial Healthcare System, Baptist Health South Florida, MEDNAX, Molina Healthcare, CareCloud, the Florida Department of Health, Hialeah Hospital, Banyan Health Systems, the Air National Guard, Harmony Healthcare, Tenet Healthcare, Nicklaus Children’s Hospital, and Wentworth Hampshire among many others.

Christina Cascante, class of 2015, now works within Baptist Health South Florida’s information technology group as a business intelligence consultant. In this capacity, she creates reports and dashboards, as well as leads and works on numerous regulatory projects such as CMS’ Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS).

“The FIU MSHI&A was challenging, but I am so thankful that I chose it,” she said. “I would not have had the opportunity to be at my current career level without it, nor do I think I would have found my passion for working with data mining and data visualization.”

 Michele Russell, class of 2016, started Russell Consulting Group shortly after graduating. She assists clients with infrastructure design, data-driven decision-making, cloud migrations, electronic medical records implementations and more. While enrolled in FIU’s program, she was the chief information officer at Health Choice Network in Doral.

“I was apprehensive about going back to school while working as a CIO for an extremely busy healthcare IT company,” Russell said. “Once I committed to the program, the excitement built. It doesn’t matter how many years of healthcare and/or information technology experience you have when you begin this

program; you will learn a great deal. As a seasoned healthcare executive, I was incredibly surprised by the extensive amount of new and enhanced information that I received.”

She added, “We need highly trained individuals to help organizations make patient-centric decisions with the expansive healthcare data available within electronic health record systems. You can only increase your collective corporate value with a degree in Healthcare Informatics and Analytics from FIU.”

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