

# Health Humanities Baccalaureate Programs

IN THE UNITED STATES

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SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

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# Why Health Humanities?

Humanities programs focusing on health and healthcare delivery in their cultural, historical, aesthetic, and political contexts complement efforts of health professions schools to recruit students who are patient-centered, ethically intelligent, skilled in communication, and competent with diverse populations.

Recent studies report benefits for students completing baccalaureate Health Humanities programs including improved performance in health professions school, in healthcare delivery, and in healthcare leadership. Health Humanities programs are also increasingly preparing students for an array of roles in government, the healthcare industry (including marketing, sales, medical research, consulting, and insurance), civic engagement, and administration in the private and public sectors.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This report covers all of the baccalaureate programs in the U.S. For the purposes of this report, we have not included post-baccalaureate programs, graduate programs, or Community College (associate degree) programs.



# Longitudinal Benefits

## OF HEALTH HUMANITIES EDUCATION

### MEDICAL EDUCATION

Exposure to Health Humanities at the baccalaureate level sets the foundation for students to “understand the role of multiple disciplines...in generating more complex knowledge of health and illness,” as well as preparing pre-health professions students to value arts and humanities content in professional education, according to a study from Canada’s first Health Humanities baccalaureate program.<sup>2</sup> Data speaking specifically to students who study Health Humanities at the baccalaureate level and matriculate to medical school suggest that the longitudinal benefits of this education include:

#### Strength of Preparation

Studies have shown that baccalaureate preparation in Health Humanities complements and even enhances medical school preparation and performance. In comparison with premedical science students, premedical humanities students demonstrate:

- Equivalent MCAT performance<sup>3</sup>
- Equal or superior academic and clinical performance during medical school or residency<sup>3, 4</sup>
- Higher likelihood of earning academic honors<sup>3</sup>
- Increased clinical research interest and performance<sup>4</sup>
- Greater understanding of structural inequality and its relationship to health disparities<sup>5, 6</sup>

#### Solving Staff Shortages

Several medical specialties are currently experiencing shortages; these specialties tend toward whole-person care. Studies suggest that premedical humanities training increases student interest in these specialties. There is a strong correlation between premedical humanities training and student choice of:

- Primary care<sup>3, 4</sup>
- Pediatrics<sup>4</sup>
- Psychiatry<sup>3</sup>

#### Interpersonal Skills

Increasingly, medical education is calling for well-rounded students 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<sup>3, 4</sup>
- Skillful communication and interpersonal skills<sup>4, 7</sup>
- Patient-centered attitudes<sup>4</sup>
- Decision-making for individualized patient care<sup>8</sup>
- Enhanced ability to relate to others<sup>3</sup>

#### Leadership and Service

In addition to enhancing patient and team relationships, premedical humanities training fosters prosocial choices among future providers of care. One study<sup>3</sup> has shown increased leadership and service among students with premedical humanities training:

- Leadership, including medical honor society membership and college commencement awards
- Service, including extracurricular involvement

### EXPANDING BENEFITS BEYOND MEDICINE

Baccalaureate education, particularly in a liberal arts model, is an ideal time for students to develop skills valuable not only to providing humanistic healthcare across a wide range of healthcare fields but also for delivering social services, pursuing advocacy in civic life and policy, and navigating their own or their loved ones’ illness experiences.<sup>1, 9</sup> One pilot study has found that baccalaureate Health Humanities education cultivates habits of mind that prepare students for critical and creative thinking, identification of internal biases, and ethical reasoning in decision-making processes—all of which are critical skills for participating in the complex system of U.S. healthcare on individual, professional, and collective levels.<sup>10</sup> Another study of a pilot survey course in medical humanities and social medicine reported positive feedback from students who were challenged to “think about wellness beyond biological function, to include...civic engagement, function within and with family units, and across stages of the life course.”<sup>9</sup>

Self-reported benefits from students include an awareness of the meaning of illness/wellness/care for individual patients from socially diverse positions; the intricate relationships among technology, meaningful care, and policy; the great need for health advocacy; and the importance and challenges of effective communication with multiple and diverse stakeholders.<sup>11</sup> Because the experience and management of health involves all citizens, health humanities education is relevant and vital to all students at the baccalaureate level.<sup>1</sup>

#### References

<sup>1</sup> Berry SL, Jones, T, Lamb, EG. Health humanities: The future of pre-health education is here. *J Med Humanit.* 2017; 38 (4): 353-360. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10912-017-9466-0>

<sup>2</sup> Costa M, Kangasjarvi E, Charise A. Beyond empathy: a qualitative exploration of arts and humanities in pre-professional (baccalaureate) health education. *Adv in Health Sci Educ.* February 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10459-020-09964-z> The program is the Health Humanities minor at University of Toronto Scarborough, launched in 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Stratton TD, Elam CL, McGrath MG. A liberal arts education as preparation for medical school: how is it valued? How do graduates perform? *Acad Med.* 2003; 78(10 suppl): S59-S61.

<sup>4</sup> Hall JN, Woods N, Hanson MD. Is social sciences and humanities (SSH) premedical education marginalized in the medical school admission process? A review and contextualization of the literature. *Acad Med.* 2014; 89 (7): 1075-1086.

<sup>5</sup> Petty J, Metzl JM, Keelys MR. Developing and evaluating an innovative structural competency curriculum for pre-health students. *J Med Humanit.* 2017; 38 (4): 459-471. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10912-017-9449-1>

<sup>6</sup> Metzl JM, Petty J, Olowojoba OV. Using a structural competency framework to teach structural racism in pre-health education. *Social Sci Med.* 2018; 199: 189-201. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.06.029>.

<sup>7</sup> Hirshfield, LE, Yudkowsky, R and Park, YS. Pre medical majors in the humanities and social sciences: impact on communication skills and specialty choice. *Med Educ.* 2019; 53: 408-416. doi:10.1111/medu.13774

<sup>8</sup> Whitcomb M.E. The general professional education of the physician. *Acad Med.* 2006; 81 (12):1015-1016.

<sup>9</sup> Anderson-Fye EP, Knopes K, Villareal H. Piloting an undergraduate survey course in medical humanities and social medicine: lessons, tradeoffs, and institutional context. *J Humanit Rehab.* (published online 30 April 2018). [journalofhumanitiesinrehabilitation.org](http://journalofhumanitiesinrehabilitation.org)

<sup>10</sup> Baker CJ, Shaw MH, Mooney CJ et al. The medical humanities effect: A pilot study of pre-health professions students at the University of Rochester. *J Med Humanit.* 2017; 38 (4): 445-457. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10912-017-9446-4>

<sup>11</sup> See the various “Perspective” and “Spotlight” pieces published in *Journal of Medical Humanities* Special Issue: “Pre-health Humanities” 38.4(Dec. 2017); for awareness of socially diverse patients, see especially the Perspective pieces by [Marcela Costa](#) and [Jaime Faulkner](#); for influence on policy work, see the Perspective by [Gilbert Ruiz](#); for technological intermediation, see the Perspective by [Adithya Balasubramanian](#); for communication skills, see the Perspective by [Elisabeth Hesse](#) or the [Spotlight](#) by Michael Price.

OVERVIEW

BENEFITS

GROWTH

PROGRAMS

# Growth

## IN BACCALAUREATE HEALTH HUMANITIES PROGRAMS

### Defining Baccalaureate Health Humanities

What counts as a baccalaureate Health Humanities Program? In collecting these data, we identified programs through searching online sources and public repositories, listserv survey responses, and direct communication with programs from 2012-2020. Programs were selected if they met the following criteria:

- Undergraduate (baccalaureate) level
- Located within the 50 U.S. states
- Minimum requirement of one humanities course with additional humanities or social science electives
- If bioethics is the required humanities course, there are additional humanities electives
- Focus on health or medicine

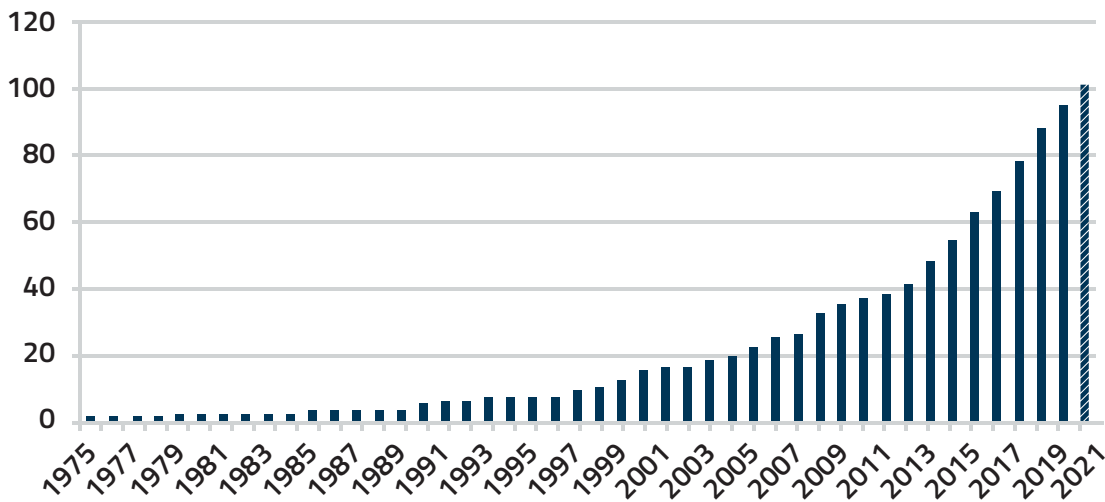
### New Reporting Code for Medical/Health Humanities

As of 2020, you can submit IPEDS program data for your degree program (BA or BS) or certificate under the new reporting code “Medical/Health Humanities” (CIP code 51.3204). Begin by asking your Institutional Research Officer how changes to CIP code reporting are made at your institution. Benefits of switching to this code include immediate visibility to pre-health prospectives when they search for baccalaureate schools offering a pre-health curriculum, and longer term benefits include acquiring demographic and graduation rate data that will support program growth nationwide. For more information, see [nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/](https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/).

### Growing Number of Programs

At a time when Liberal Arts education, and humanities programs in particular, are under fire in many public quarters, programs in the Health Humanities are experiencing dramatic growth. Since the turn of the century alone (from 2000 to March 2020) the number of Health Humanities programs has increased nearly seven fold from 15 to 102, with another 5 known programs currently in development.

### Total U.S. Baccalaureate Health Humanities Programs



102 total programs confirmed in operation by March 2020.

Projected figures for 2020-2021 are based on confirmed programs plus known programs currently in development.



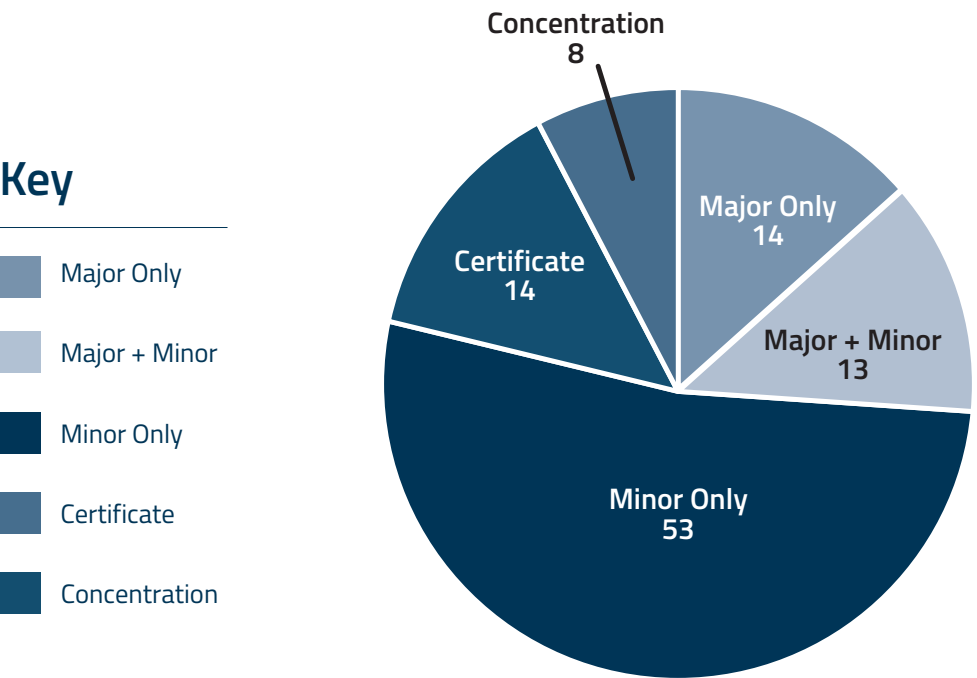
### Program Types

Approximately a quarter of baccalaureate Health Humanities programs are majors, and these majors typically take one of two approaches:

- 1) About half of these majors require at least some pre-requisite science courses alongside humanities and social science courses.
- 2) The other half do not require any hard sciences or only offer such courses as optional electives.

The minor is by far the most popular format, likely because it easily complements health profession graduate school pre-requisites in science and math. Certificate programs are growing in popularity as well, with 8 new certificate programs approved since 2017.

### U.S. Baccalaureate Health Humanities Programs by Type



#### Key

- Major Only
- Major + Minor
- Minor Only
- Certificate
- Concentration

OVERVIEW

BENEFITS

GROWTH

PROGRAMS

34 of 50 states currently house an institution with at least one baccalaureate Health Humanities program, with a greater saturation of institutions in the Eastern half of the United States. The greatest concentration of institutions is in Texas and Pennsylvania; the latter state was home to the first Department of Humanities incorporated into a College of Medicine (1967, Penn State College of Medicine).



## CURRENTLY IDENTIFIED BACCALAUREATE HEALTH HUMANITIES PROGRAMS IN THE US



Name of Institution	Program Name	Date Founded	Major	Minor	Certificate	Concentration
Albany Coll. of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (NY)	Medical Humanities	2016		X		
Appalachian State Univ. (NC)	Medical Humanities	2009		X		
Arizona State Univ. (AZ) <sup>1</sup>	Interdisciplinary Health Humanities	2018			X	
Augusta Univ. (GA)	Health Humanities	2017			X	
Baker Univ. (KS)	Health Humanities	2017	X	X		
Baylor Univ. (TX)	Medical Humanities	1999	X			
Beloit Coll. (WI)	Health and Society	2005	X	X		
Benedictine Univ. (IL)	Medical Humanities	2009	X			
Boston Coll. (MA)	Medical Humanities, Health and Culture	2013		X		
Case Western Reserve Univ. (OH)	Bioethics and Medical Humanities	2017		X		
Clark Univ. (MA)	Health, Science, and Society	2018				X
Clemson Univ. (SC)	Language and International Health	2003	X			
Coastal Carolina Univ. (SC)	Medical Humanities	2011		X		
Coll. of St. Scholastica (MN)	Health Humanities	2018	X	X		
Columbia Univ. (NY)	Medicine, Literature, and Society	2012	X			
Creighton Univ. (NE)	Science and Medicine in Society	2016		X		
Daemen Coll. (NY)	Medical Humanities	2017		X		
Davidson Coll. (NC)	Health and Human Values <sup>2</sup>	1990		X		
DePaul Univ. (IL)	Public Health Studies (in Health Sciences Major)	2012				X
	Bioethics and Society	2015		X		
Drexel Univ. (PA)	Medical Humanities	2009			X	
Eastern Illinois Univ. (IL)	Health and Medical Humanities	2017		X		
Elmhurst Coll. (IL)	Medical Humanities	2006		X		
Emory Univ. (GA)	Human Health	2014	X			
Florida Atlantic Univ., Harriet L. Wilkes Honors Coll. (FL)	Honors Medical Humanities Concentration	2013	X			
Harvard Univ. (MA)	Science and Society Track, Honors Focus in Medicine and Society (in History and Science Major)	2008				X
Haverford Coll. and Bryn Mawr Coll. (PA) <sup>3</sup>	Health Studies	2014		X		
Hiram Coll. (OH)	Biomedical Humanities	1993 <sup>4</sup>	X	X		
Hofstra Univ. (NY)	Medicine, Culture, and Society	2016		X		
Indiana Univ. (IN)	History and Philosophy of Science and Medicine <sup>5</sup>	1998			X	
Indiana Univ. Purdue Univ. Indianapolis (IN)	Medical Humanities and Health Studies	1999 <sup>6</sup>	X	X		
James Madison Univ. (VA)	Medical Humanities	2017		X		
Johns Hopkins Univ. (MD)	Medicine, Science and the Humanities	2015	X			
Lafayette Coll. (PA)	Healthcare and Society	1985		X		
Lawrence Univ. (WI)	Biomedical Ethics	1979		X		
Lehigh Univ. (PA)	Health, Medicine and Society <sup>7</sup>	2008	X	X		
MCPHS Univ. (MA)	Health Humanities <sup>8</sup>	2006	X	X		
Miami Univ. (OH)	Medical Humanities	2019		X		
Misericordia Univ. (PA)	Medical and Health Humanities	2016	X	X		
Mississippi State Univ. (MS)	Medical Humanities	2019			X	
Montclair State Univ. (NJ)	Medical Humanities	2018	X			
New York Inst. of Technology (NY)	Medical Humanities	2015		X		
Northeastern Univ. (MA)	Health, Humanities, and Society	2018		X		
Northwestern Univ. (IL)	Science in Human Culture Program	1991 <sup>9</sup>	X	X		
NOVA Southeastern Univ. (FL)	Medical Humanities	2005		X		
Ohio Northern Univ. (OH)	Medical Humanities	2015		X		
Ohio State Univ. (OH)	Medical Humanities	2015		X		
Oregon State Univ. (OR)	Medical Humanities	2010			X	
Penn State Univ. Park (PA)	Bioethics and Medical Humanities	2006		X		

Regis College (MA)	Medical Humanities (in Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities Major)	2019				X
Rice Univ. (TX)	Medical Humanities	2016		X		
Saint Leo Univ. (FL)	Medical Humanities	2019	X			
Saint Louis Univ. (MO)	Medical Humanities	2008		X		
	Bioethics and Health Studies <sup>10</sup>	2014 <sup>11</sup>	X	X		
Schreiner Univ. (TX)	Medical Humanities	2015		X		
Shenandoah Univ. (VA)	Health Humanities	2018			X	
Southern Illinois Univ. Edwardsville (IL)	Health, Society, and the Human Condition	2019		X		
Southern Methodist Univ. (TX)	Health and Society	2014	X			
Stanford Univ. (CA)	Ethics and Medical Humanities (in Human Biology Major)	2008 <sup>12</sup>				X
Syracuse Univ. (NY)	Health Humanities Integrated Learning Major	2020	X			
Texas A&M Univ., College Station (TX)	Health Humanities (in University Studies Program)	2017				X
Univ. of Alabama (AL)	Philosophy and Medicine <sup>13</sup>	2013	X	X		
Univ. of Arkansas (AR)	Medical and Health Humanities	2019		X		
Univ. of California Irvine (CA)	Medical Humanities	2016		X		
Univ. of California Riverside (CA)	Medical and Health Humanities	2020		X		
Univ. of Cincinnati (OH)	Medical Humanities <sup>14</sup>	2010			X	
	Medicine, Health and Society	2013	X			
Univ. of Colorado Denver (CO)	Health Humanities	2014		X		
Univ. of Delaware (DE)	Medical Humanities	1990		X		
Univ. of Houston Honors Coll. (TX)	Medicine and Society	2005		X		
Univ. of Iowa (IA)	Health and the Human Condition	2014		X		
Univ. of Massachusetts Boston (MA)	Science, Medicine, and Society	2013		X		
Univ. of Michigan (MI)	History of Medicine and Health	2013		X		
Univ. of Missouri, Kansas City (MO)	Healing and Humanities	2000		X		
Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln (NE)	Humanities in Medicine	2008 <sup>15</sup>		X		
Univ. of Nebraska, Omaha (NE)	Medical Humanities	2015 <sup>16</sup>	X	X		
Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (NC)	Medicine, Literature, and Culture <sup>17</sup>	2014		X		
	Science, Medicine, and Literature (in English & Comparative Literature Major)	2018				X
Univ. of North Carolina at Charlotte (NC)	Health and Medical Humanities	2020		X		
Univ. of Oklahoma Honors Coll. (OK)	Medical Humanities <sup>18</sup>	2000		X		
Univ. of Pennsylvania (PA)	Health and Societies	2000	X			
Univ. of Pittsburgh (PA)	Conceptual Foundations of Medicine	1975			X	
	Medical Humanities	2018			X	
Univ. of Richmond (VA)	Healthcare Studies <sup>19</sup>	2007	X	X		
Univ. of South Carolina (SC)	Medical Humanities	1997		X		
Univ. of St. Thomas (MN)	Science, Medicine, and Society	2017		X		
Univ. of Texas at Arlington (TX)	Medical Humanities	2018			X	
Univ. of Texas at Austin (TX)	Patients, Practitioners, and Cultures of Care	2020			X	
Univ. of Texas at Dallas (TX)	Medical and Scientific Humanities	2001		X		
Univ. of Texas at San Antonio (TX)	Medical Humanities	2015	X			
Univ. of Utah (UT)	Medical Humanities	2018		X		
Univ. of Washington (WA)	Bioethics and Humanities <sup>20</sup>	1997		X		
Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison (WI)	Health and the Humanities	2017			X	
Univ. of Wisconsin-Oshkosh (WI)	Health, Humanities, & Society	2019		X		
Vanderbilt Univ. (TN)	Medicine, Humanities, and Arts (in Medicine, Health, and Society Major/Minor)	2003				X
Virginia Commonwealth Univ. (VA)	Medical Humanities	2013		X		
Virginia Tech (VA)	Medicine and Society	2004		X		
Wake Forest Univ. (NC)	Bioethics, Humanities, and Medicine	2016		X		
Washington Univ. in St. Louis (MO)	Medical Humanities	2015		X		
West Virginia Univ. (WV)	Medical Humanities and Health Studies	2017		X		
Western Michigan Univ. (MI)	Medical Humanities	2012		X		
Wofford Coll. (SC)	Medical Humanities	2008			X	

# KNOWN PROGRAMS IN DEVELOPMENT STAGE

Name of Institution	Program Name (if known)	Date Founded	Major	Minor	Certificate	Concentration
Duke Univ. (NC)	Reimagining Medicine, Health & Disability	Dev.				
Pacific Lutheran Univ. (WA)		2021		X		
Penn State Univ. Abington (PA)	Health Humanities	2020	X			
Radford Univ. (VA)	Health Humanities	2020		X		
Westminster Coll. (PA)	Health Humanities	Dev.		X		

## References

- <sup>1</sup> This Certificate is available on both the ASU Tempe and ASU West campuses.
- <sup>2</sup> Minor named Medical Humanities until 2016.
- <sup>3</sup> This bi-college program is jointly administered by both institutions.
- <sup>4</sup> Minor started in 1993, Major in 1998.
- <sup>5</sup> Formerly "Cultures of Science and Medicine." Track 1: Life Sciences.
- <sup>6</sup> Minor started in 1999, Major in 2012.
- <sup>7</sup> A humanities course is not required, but the program offers a core course in Medical Humanities and multiple, diverse humanities electives. Major started in 2017.
- <sup>8</sup> Minor began in 2006 as "Medical Humanities," became "Health Care Humanities" in 2012, and changed to "Health Humanities" in 2017; Major is anticipated to begin in Fall 2020.
- <sup>9</sup> A Certificate started in 1991, changing into a Minor in 1995 and Adjunct Major in 2003.
- <sup>10</sup> Minor is called "Health Care Ethics." These degree programs are offered out of the Albert Gnaegi Center for Health Care Ethics, while the Medical Humanities minor is offered out of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.
- <sup>11</sup> Minor started in 2014; Major in 2019.
- <sup>12</sup> While the official track designation of "Ethics and Medical Humanities" was first formalized in 2008, students have been incorporating ethics and humanities classes into their highly individualized Areas of Concentration within the Major since the 1970s.
- <sup>13</sup> Major is a "Specialization" within the Philosophy Major.
- <sup>14</sup> Certificate named "Medical Humanities and Bioethics" until 2013. Completion of the Certificate is a requirement of the Medicine, Health and Society Major.
- <sup>15</sup> Humanities in Medicine Program began in 1996, with the Minor formalized in 2008.
- <sup>16</sup> Minor started in 2015; Major in 2019.
- <sup>17</sup> Minor offered in association with Honors Carolina. Beginning Fall 2020, program will also offer a BA/MA Dual Degree in English & Comparative Literature with a concentration in Literature, Medicine, and Culture.
- <sup>18</sup> Program also offers an 8-year BA-MD Medical Humanities Scholars Program.
- <sup>19</sup> Minor in "Medical Humanities" began in 2007, became Major and Minor in "Healthcare and Society" in 2012, and then "Healthcare Studies" in 2015.
- <sup>20</sup> Original title was "Undergraduate Minor in Medical History and Ethics"

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