

University Curriculum Committee
Report for 11/6/2014 Senate Meeting

Only one item came before the UCC this month, a proposal from Daniel Gelo, the Dean of COLFA, for a new BA in Medical Humanities. The committee reviewed the proposal and voted unanimously to recommend that the Senate accept it.

The proposed Bachelor of Arts degree in Medical Humanities is an interdisciplinary degree which allows students to combine education in the humanities and social sciences with scientific training in order to advance their career goals in the health and medical professions. It offers two concentrations, one in Health Careers and one in Pre-Medicine.

All but two of the courses, and introduction to the medical humanities, and a capstone course, required for the BA are already in the UTSA course catalog. So the costs are minimal. The BA exploits the broad variety of the existing course schedule to create a new degree that tightly integrates science, social science and the humanities in a way that is becoming increasingly important within the health professions in general and medicine in particular. Health professionals are increasingly called upon not only to be conversant with relevant bodies of scientific knowledge, but also to actuate that knowledge in a human social, cultural and ethical context.

The health professions themselves are aware of the importance of a holistic approach. The MCAT examination for instance will, from 2015, be expanded to consider behavioral and social science as well as more narrowly construed medical sciences. And a pioneering program at Mt. Sinai has channeled humanities graduates into medicine demonstrating that such graduates complete medical school at the same rate as traditional students but are more likely to produce new knowledge.