FAQs About Shasta College’s New Baccalaureate Degree

Shasta College received approval from the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office to offer a bachelor’s degree program in the rapidly growing field of Health Information Management (HIM). Here are answers to several questions prospective students may have about the program.

Q. What is Health Information Management?

A. Health information management (HIM) is the practice of acquiring, analyzing, and protecting digital and traditional medical information vital to providing quality patient care. HIM professionals are highly trained in the latest information management technology applications and understand the workflow in any healthcare provider organization from large hospital systems to the private physician practice. They are vital to the daily operations management of health information and electronic health records.

Health information management professionals work in a variety of different settings and job titles. They often serve in bridge roles, connecting clinical, operational, and administrative functions. These professionals affect the quality of patient information and patient care at every touch point in the healthcare delivery cycle. Having skilled HIM professionals on staff ensures an organization has the right information on hand when and where it is needed while maintaining the highest standards of data integrity, confidentiality, and security.

To learn more about the Health Information Management profession go to the American Health Information Management Association’s website at www.ahima.org.

Q. Why did Shasta College choose this degree?

A. Due to the federally mandated adoption of electronic health records, there has been an increased labor market demand for Health Information Management professionals. There are no 4-year public institutions in the state that currently offer this degree.

Q. When can I apply?

A. Shasta College is developing the curriculum, which will be submitted for state approval. At the same time, the HIM program is being submitted to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges through the substantive change process.

Shasta College will post the admission criteria on its website in the spring 2016 semester. Students can start applying for the program thereafter.
Q. When will classes begin?

A. In fall 2016 Shasta College intends to start offering upper division Health Information Management courses, as well as upper-division general education courses.

Q. In what manner will the baccalaureate courses be offered?

A. The courses may be offered on-line as well as face-to-face. At this time, the college plans to offer most or all upper-division courses online.

Q. Who is eligible to apply?

A. Admission will be open to students who hold a two-year Health Information Technology (HIT) degree.

Q. What colleges offer Associate Degree Health Information Technology programs?

A. Beginning spring 2016, Shasta College will start offering its own 2-year degree program in Health Information Technology. As our program develops we will be applying for CAHIIM accreditation. In addition, several other California community colleges offer 2-year degree HIT programs. Go to the California Health Information Association website at www.californiahia.org for a list of these accredited HIT programs.

Q. If I enter Shasta College’s 2-year degree HIT program will I be guaranteed a spot in the 4-year degree HIM program?

A. Students in Shasta’s new Associate Degree program may apply for admittance to the Bachelor’s Degree program as pre-majors.

Q. If I have an A.S. Degree in Office Administration-Health Information Management from Shasta College am I eligible to apply for the B.S. Degree program?

A. Although many courses that you have taken will help you prepare for an Associate Degree in Health Information Technology, you will still need to meet the course requirements of an accredited A.S. degree HIT program before you are eligible to apply for the B.S. degree HIM program.

Q. How many students will be accepted into the baccalaureate degree program?

A. The program intends to enroll 25 students in fall 2016.
Q. What is the cost of the program?

A. Students enrolled in upper-division coursework will pay $130 per unit. In total, the cost for junior and senior courses, not including books and other expenses, will be about $7,800.

Q. What is the employment outlook for Health Information Management graduates?

A. The Bureau of Labor Statistics cites health information as one of the fastest growing occupations in the U.S. On top of strong job prospects, competitive salaries also await graduates. Nationally, by five years out, graduates with a bachelor’s degree can earn upwards of an estimated $50,000 to $75,000 annually.

Q. Who can I contact for more information?

A. Periodically check Shasta College’s website, as this FAQs page will continue to be updated with new information.

You may also email Janet Daley Janus, RHIA, Interim Director of Health Information Technology and Health Information Management Programs at jjanus@shastacollege.edu.