Proposal for an Interdisciplinary Certificate Program in Health Communication

I. NEED

The Department of Communication seeks to create a new interdisciplinary certificate program in the growing area of Health Communication. The University of Utah is the primary institution for educating health providers and ancillary professionals in the state of Utah. Health communication is a crucial concern and currently a top priority for medical and health institutions and agencies, as the nature, forms, and functions of health care and health information shift dramatically in contemporary society. This proposed certificate responds to that increasing interest and demand for greater awareness and understanding of health communication. Specifically, the proposed program involves the study of how communication about health is co-created, transmitted, received, constructed, and circulated in various contexts.

Multiple units and programs across the University focus on health communication in teaching, research, and service. However, there is no formal forum for University audiences to gain and demonstrate qualifications and competencies in health communication. Accordingly, faculty in the Department of Communication propose this certificate program to meet the needs of students, providers, and professionals across the institution and improve the overall quality of health communication in the state of Utah. Graduates of the University of Utah face increasing competition for desirable jobs post-graduation. Accordingly, there is a clear need for the University of Utah to provide our undergraduate students with opportunities to gain and demonstrate expertise in specialized areas. The proposed Interdisciplinary Certificate in Health Communication helps meet that need.

Many major research and medical institutions in the United States provide certificate programs in health communication. In fall 2010, the College of Humanities identified eight certificate or "concentration" programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels in major United States universities. These programs are housed in departments of communication (e.g., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Kentucky) as well as in schools of public health or medicine (e.g., Johns Hopkins University, Harvard University). The trend across the country has been to create interdisciplinary programs that involve coursework and collaborations across related disciplines (e.g., communication, informatics, public health, psychology). The proposed Interdisciplinary Certificate in Health Communication at the University of Utah would reflect this trend and capitalize on existing faculty strengths and course offerings across institutional programs, in addition to adding new classes to meet emerging needs in health communication education.

Some universities have added majors, minors, and master's degree programs in health communication (e.g., San Diego State University, University of Southern California). Due to the large demand such programs would place on existing faculty resources and curriculum structures, this type of program change is not optimum for the University of Utah at this time. An interdisciplinary certificate program provides flexibility for current and prospective students in any major to take advantage of the opportunity to gain focused competencies in health communication while earning a degree in their home program. At the same time, a certificate program requires little to no additional faculty resources or changes in curriculum structures for

involved programs. Accordingly, the proposed Interdisciplinary Certificate in Health Communication provides the greatest benefit for institutional constituencies with the smallest investments by institutional programs.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The Interdisciplinary Certificate in Health Communication provides a formal recognition of concentrated coursework and competency in health communication. The three-tier structure of the certificate provides foundational coursework for students to understand theories and processes of the broad area of health communication as well as more focused course choices within several departments: Communication, Family & Consumer Sciences, Family & Preventative Medicine, Health Promotion & Education, Political Science, Parks, Recreation, & Tourism, and Sociology (see course list below).

Upon completion, certificate earners will have a broad understanding of approaches to health communication as well as more practical knowledge and competencies that reflect the interdisciplinary character of the certificate. For example, the flexible three-tier structure of the certificate allows students to develop competencies in one or more of the following health communication sub-areas: provider-patient interaction, health campaigns, strategic health communication, health policy communication, and rhetoric of health, among others.

III. IMPACT ON EXISTING PROGRAMS

The certificate program comprises existing and new courses. As a new program offering, it is anticipated that participation will be low the first year and grow as students, faculty, and administrators across the institution become familiar with the opportunity. Because of the large pool of acceptable courses in Tiers 2 and 3 of the certificate, there is likely to be a small positive impact on course enrollments for courses included. The small impact will be the modest number of additional students taking any given course for certificate credit. The positive impact will be the presence of students from diverse majors in these advanced classes, fostering a lively classroom dynamic of trans-disciplinary interest in health communication. Tier 1 and 2 courses are housed in the Department of Communication. The Department of Communication faculty voted to support this proposal, recognizing its value for current and future students.

Outside of the Department of Communication, the other involved program likely to be most impacted is the Department of Health Promotion & Education. Faculty in that program have been included in discussions about this proposed certificate and have expressed support of it (see attached endorsement letter). This certificate is a way to forge productive pedagogical and research connections between the two departments, which already share a faculty member who has a joint appointment in both departments. Other departments with courses listed as electives in Tier 3 will be minimally impacted with potential larger enrollments in selected courses. Endorsement letters from all involved departments are attached.

IV. COURSES

The certificate will consist of 18 units divided into 3 tiers, as follows:

Tier 1 (6 credits):
Required:
COMM 5115/6115 – Foundations of Health Communication

Choose ONE of the following courses:
COMM 5116/6116 – Health, Communication, and Culture
COMM 5117/6117 – Health Campaigns & Media

Tier 2 (6 credits): *Choose TWO of the following courses:*
COMM 5116/6116 – Health, Communication, and Culture
COMM 5117/6117 – Health Campaigns & Media
COMM 5815/6815 – Special Topics in Health Communication
COMM 5490/6490 – Communication and Social Justice
COMM 5140/6140 – Communication and Aging
COMM 5200/6200 – Persuasion
COMM 5350/6350 – Ethical Practices and Communication
COMM 5170/6170 – Issues in Organizational Communication
COMM 5110/6110 – Interpersonal Communication
COMM 5590/6590 – Integrated Marketing Communication
COMM 5640/6640 – Communication, Technology, and Culture
COMM/HEDU/CNU 5118/6118 – Health Literacy

Tier 3 (6 credits): *Choose TWO of the following. ONE MUST be a HEDU course:*
HEDU 5060 – International Health Promotion
HEDU 5100 – Health Care in the United States
HEDU 5300 – Diversity and Health
HEDU 5350 – Eating Disorder: Prevention and Treatment
HEDU 6000 – Foundations and Theory of Health Promotion
HEDU 6010 – Theoretical Foundations of Health Promotion and Education
HEDU 6070 – Health Education and Technology
HEDU 6250 – Health Theories in Individual Behavior Change
HEDU 6260 – Health Theories in Group Behavior Change
HEDU 6060 – Health Instruction and Communication
HEDU 6030 – Complementary Medicine in Health
HEDU 6660 – Health Service Administration Seminar
HEDU 6080 – Strategic Planning and Social Marketing in Health Promotion
ECON 6190 – Health Economics
SOC 5657 – World Population Policies and Problems
SOC 5720 – Medical Sociology
SOC 4674/6674 – Global Health
FPMD 4500 – Public Health: A Global Perspective
FPMD 5005 – Introduction to the Medical Profession

FPMD 5520 – Public Health Perspective on Surgery in the Global Context
FPMD 5530 – Global Health
FPMD 5540 – Refugees in Utah: A Public Health Issue
PRT 5325 – Disabilities, Adaptation, and Accessibility in Therapeutic Recreation
FCS 5390 – Gender and Minorities Across the Lifespan (also as ETHNC 5290 & GNDR 5390)
FCS 5430 – Families, Consumers, and Health (also HEDU 5370)
FCS 5630 – Healthy Communities
GERON 5370/6370 – Health and Optimal Aging
GERON 5220 – Caregiving and Aging Families
PHIL 5510/6510 - Applied Ethics
PHIL 5520/6520 - Advanced Bioethics
POLS 5321/6321 – Health Policy
POLS 5570 – Management of Nonprofit Organizations
WRTG 5010/6010 – Medical and Health Science Discourses

The list of course electives in Tier 3 is based on student interest, availability to non-majors, and a review by the Health Communication Curriculum Committee. It is open to adjustment now and in the future. The Advisory Committee for the certificate program will annually assess additions and deletions for this list based on program review, feedback from relevant departments, and student input. This is discussed in more detail in the subsequent section.

V. ASSESSMENT

The 3-tier course structure is designed to meet the educational objectives stated above. The required foundational courses of Tier 1 provide students with a broad knowledge of health communication theories, contexts, and processes. The electives in Tier 2 allow students to gain additional competencies in chosen communication foci. The electives in Tier 3 provide the interdisciplinary contexts, knowledge, and competencies for students to further demonstrate mastery in the health communication area. All courses will include normative assessment of student performance through readings, assignments, and activities that are commensurate with an undergraduate educational experience.

In addition to the annual program review by the Department of Communication Curriculum Committee, the Advisory Committee of the Interdisciplinary Certificate in Health Communication will review courses and the program through enrollments, exit interviews, instructor feedback, and completion rates.

VI. STUDENT ADVISEMENT

The Department of Communication has two full-time undergraduate program advisors to support student advisement for the certificate program. They will work with the Certificate Coordinator and any additional administrative personnel for program administration and advisement.

Degree-seeking matriculated students may take courses to count toward earning the Interdisciplinary Certificate in Health Communication. The certificate will be awarded upon completion of degree.

VII. COORDINATOR

Associate Professor Mark Bergstrom of the Department of Communication will serve as Coordinator of the certificate program.

VIII. ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee will consist of three members from the Department of Communication and two members from involved programs. Initial members include:

Dr. Mark Bergstrom, Associate Professor, Communication; Assoc. Dean, College of Humanities
Dr. Helene Shugart, Professor, Communication
Dr. Jakob Jensen, Assistant Professor, Communication
Marty C. Malheiro, Clinical Instructor, Pharmacotherapy, Utah Poison Control Center
Les Chatelain – Interim Chair, Health Promotion & Education

IX. BUDGET

It is not expected that the certificate program will incur enough costs to warrant a budget. Fulfillment of certificate requirements can be managed by current faculty and administrative staff in the Department of Communication. Cost of printing certificates will be minimal and absorbed in the department budget.

X. LIBRARY RESOURCES

Letters of support are included as Appendices.

APPENDIX A – ECCLES HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY LETTER OF SUPPORT

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
SPENCER S. ECCLES
HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY

January 6, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

We appreciate the opportunity to express strong support for the proposed interdisciplinary certificate programs (undergraduate and graduate) in Health Communication by the Department of Communication. In particular, we encourage the development of interprofessional education and research programs, like this one, which create and build on the formation and enhancement of cross-campus synergies.

The Spencer S. Eccles Health Sciences Library is fully committed to supporting this type of healthcare professional education focusing on the development of the skills and expertise required to assure highly effective integrated interprofessional teams. Toward that end, Eccles Library has recently established an Interprofessional Education Librarian position to support and foster the development of interprofessional efforts among all the health sciences programs.

The Eccles Library expects to be able to provide required information resources in partnership with those offered by the Marriott Library. Of particular importance for this and other interprofessional programs is access to a wide variety of electronic information resources. Our University libraries and the Utah Academic Library Consortium (UALC) work together to stretch our collection dollars in order to obtain access to a full range of electronic journals and databases. Eccles Library, in particular, provides access, training, and assistance on searching PubMed; environmental health; and CINAHL: The Cumulative Index to Nursing and Health Literature; and a wide range of other health resources including those geared to the lay person (MedlinePlus). We also use an interlibrary loan service for students and faculty through which access is provided to the collections of a nationwide network of health science libraries, including the National Library of Medicine.

In summary, there are significant benefits to be gained from the proposed certificate programs; the Spencer S. Eccles Health Sciences Library fully supports them.

Sincerely yours,

Jean P. Shipman

Jean P. Shipman, MSLS, AHIP, FMLA
Director & University Librarian

The University of Utah
Spencer S. Eccles
Health Sciences Library
10 N 1900 E
Salt Lake City, Utah 84112
Phone (801) 581-8771
Fax (801) 581-5410

APPENDIX B – MARRIOTT LIBRARY LETTER OF SUPPORT

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

J. Willard Marriott Library
295 South 1500 East Salt Lake City, Utah 84112-0860 801-585-9521

January 13, 2012

To whom it may concern:

The University of Utah Libraries appreciate your request to comment on our ability to support students and faculty for the new proposed Interdisciplinary Certificate in Health Communication (both undergraduate and graduate). The libraries are committed to supporting the university and its faculty as they develop programs needed by our students.

As the curriculum will comprise largely of existing courses, current collections should be sufficient. A collection of this size and depth satisfies most undergraduate and graduate needs. Marriott has an approval plan which automatically provides suitable major scholarly books in these areas from most major American publishers. For the past ten years, the Marriott Library has been actively purchasing materials to support research in health communication including books, journals, electronic databases, and DVDs. Resources that will be useful to faculty, researchers, and graduate students in health communication include Web of Science, Journal Citation Reports (JCR), Health and Psychosocial Instruments (HAPI), PsycINFO, ComAbstracts plus ComIndex, Communication and Mass Media Complete, Dissertations and Theses Full-Text, WorldCat, and the American Psychological Association E-book collection. We have focused on covering areas such as research methods and design, evidence-based practice, health care disparities, medical ethics and bioethics, health policy, gerontology, medical sociology, communication theory and research, health promotion, health behavior, disordered eating, therapeutic recreation, medical humanities, and access to health care for the poor and underserved.

We encourage faculty to work with subject librarians to build up specific sub-disciplines where our collection needs supplementing. Despite budget constraints, we are usually able to order any books necessary to directly support classes. We modify our journal subscriptions to reflect current teaching and research. As the scholarly communication landscape evolves, new options may exist beyond traditional print book purchases and conventional subscriptions. We would like to work with faculty to evaluate the most workable.

Student difficulties in locating materials often stem not from collection weaknesses, but from the complexities of using a large research library. We offer class presentations and one-to-one consultations with library specialists who will help students find the most relevant works and suggest the most appropriate search strategies. A team of librarians, computer professionals, and library staff provide research assistance, technology assistance, as well as teach classes on library resources, software programs, information literacy, and semester-length courses. The Library has seating for 3,000 users including classrooms, group study rooms, group study spaces, and carrels. The entire library has wireless access and has supported over 900 wireless devices. In addition, there are over 500 computers available for researchers.

We look forward to working with the faculty and students in this new program.

Yours truly,

Rick Anderson
Associate Dean
Scholarly Resources and Collections

Catherine Soehner
Associate Dean
Research and Learning Services

APPENDIX C – ENDORSEMENT LETTER FROM GERONTOLOGY
(ALL OTHER COLLEGE/DEPARTMENT LETTERS IN SEPARATE FILE)

The University of Utah
College of Nursing
Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program

January 31, 2012

Heather Canary, PhD
Department of Communication
University of Utah

Dear Dr. Canary:

I am writing to offer my enthusiastic support for the proposed undergraduate and graduate Interdisciplinary Certificate in Health Communication. This clearly a needed program and would make a nice blend with the credentials we offer in Gerontology (both certificate and MS degree). We recently instituted a track in Healthy Aging within our MS program and this Interdisciplinary Certificate would constitute a potential array of electives to round out a student's program of study in that area of concentration. I am also pleased that the course I teach, Gerontology 5370/6370, is listed as an elective within this proposed certificate and these students will be very welcome in this class at both graduate and undergraduate levels.

I look forward to the inauguration of this program and I wish you success.

Best wishes,

Michael Caserta, PhD
Robert L. & Joyce T. Rice Presidential Endowed Chair in Healthy Aging
Professor – Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program