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MEMORANDUM

 **ATTENTION** Senate **DATE** December 6, 2023
FROM Dilson Rassier, Provost and Vice-President Academic, and Chair, SCUP **PAGES** 1
RE: Notice of Intent for the Medical Humanities and Social Sciences Minor (SCUP 23-43)

At its meeting on December 6, 2023, SCUP reviewed and approved the Notice of Intent for the Medical Humanities and Social Sciences Minor (MHSS) within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. It is attached for the information of Senate.

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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	Senate Committee on University Priorities	DATE	November 3, 2023
FROM	Kris Magnusson, Chair Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies	PAGES	1/1
RE:	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (SCUS 23-88)		

Action undertaken by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies at its meeting of November 2, 2023, gives rise to the following recommendation:

Motion

That SCUP approves the Notice of Intent for the Medical Humanities and Social Science Minor (MHSS) within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

The relevant documentation for review by SCUP is attached.



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

Medical Humanities and Social Sciences (MHSS) Minor

Notice of Intent

August 30, 2023

Faculty of Arts and Social Science

1 Credential to be awarded

Minor in Medical Humanities and Social Sciences.

2 Location

Burnaby, with occasional courses in Surrey or Vancouver. Administrative home will be on Burnaby campus, as the majority of courses offered are on this campus.

3 Department(s), School(s), Faculty(ies) offering program

Interdisciplinary program in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, with participation from 14 departments and programs.

4 Anticipated program start date

Fall 2025.

5 Description of proposal program

5.1 Aims, goals and/or objectives

Health research spans many disciplines, methodologies, and conceptual perspectives. The Medical Humanities and Social Sciences (MHSS) interdisciplinary minor draws on that broad scope of health research and is designed to give students the communication, problem-based learning, and critical-thinking skills required to be successful in a wide range of care-, health-, and medical-related professions.

It offers students, in various disciplines across the university, to learn that health and wellbeing is not just the absence of disease but is also determined by the social and structural environment over the course of one's life. FASS is proposing offering three mandatory interdisciplinary courses as part of the completion of the minor to support the aims of a team-based and community approach to health care, as proposed for the curriculum in the SFU Medical School, and which is common in a range of care-, health-, and medical-related professions.

The mandatory interdisciplinary courses provide students with opportunities to draw together disciplinary subject matter from the electives and apply it to practical application assignments. FASS offers a robust selection of courses across the liberal arts, social sciences, and interdisciplinary studies, which will be central to the MHSS minor. The diversity of electives, from fourteen different departments, offers students a range of options to develop their understanding of how systemic oppressions, class, racial background, socio-

economic status, mental health, gender expression, and sexuality play a role in how care is given and received.

Focused study on health, medicine, and wellbeing from humanities and social sciences perspectives is necessary to ensure that medical practitioners can respond ethically, compassionately, and thoughtfully to their patients. The MHSS minor will prepare students applying to medical school, or further training, undergraduate, or graduate work in other health fields such as nursing, counselling, physiotherapy, optometry, psychiatry, or other health professional programs.

5.2 Mandate and strategic plan

The minor aligns with two priority areas of SFU's [Strategic Research Plan](#) : 1) health and wellbeing, and 2) strengthening democracy, justice, equity and education. These priorities will be centered in research and teaching. The program also contributes to FASS's academic plan, which highlights the linkages between student learning pathways and careers; the development of high quality and innovative academic programming; and interdisciplinary research and teaching across the social sciences and humanities to build principles of equity, diversity, inclusion as well as reconciliation and decolonization. In short, our goal is to support “socially accountable” education in the health professions by examining the social determinants as well as environmental, educational, economic, and governmental systems that impact the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

5.3 Target audience

The target audience includes domestic and international students interested in pursuing careers in health and wellbeing. It can be paired with and is complementary to all programs within FASS and numerous programs across SFU, such as Behavioural Neuroscience (Arts/Science), Biological Sciences (Sci), Kinesiology (Sci), Biomedical Physiology (Science), and Health Sciences.

5.4 Content and summary of requirements for graduation

Lower Division requirements:

- 1 required MHSS course (3 units) delivered by faculty from contributing departments

- 2 required foundational courses (6-7 units) offered by 10 participating departments.

Upper Division requirements:

- 3 required MHSS courses (7 units) delivered by faculty from contributing departments
- 4 courses (12-16 units) from 14 participating departments. Courses will be delivered by faculty in the following departments, followed by the faculty members' area of teaching and research:
 - Cognitive Science: human-computer interaction; consciousness; philosophy of science, mind, and consciousness; theoretical neuroscience; science of learning and attention;
 - Economics: health economics; pollution and climate change; gender and STEM outcomes; parental leave and children's well-being; health care costing;
 - Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies: science and technology studies; disability studies; comics and medicine; genetics and race; bioethics; global transgender health; tuberculosis care; sex work and sexual health; cultural anthropology;
 - Gerontology: long-term care; active and healthy aging; dementia care and communities; mental health and isolation; elder abuse; ambulatory assessment; technology and aging; data and health care planning; life course trends;
 - Global Asia: imperialism and pandemics; race and health;
 - Global Humanities: ecology; health and medicine in European literature; critical thinking and dialogue; trauma and memory; humanism;
 - History: gender and reproductive law; history of psychiatry in Japan; sex work; sexuality and race; settler colonialism;
 - Indigenous Studies: federal and provincial health care policy; Indigenous wellbeing; Indigenous ethnoecology and knowledge production; community-engaged research; decolonization; intergenerational trauma;
 - International Studies: HIV/AIDS and poverty in Africa; infant and child mortality in Brazil; social movements and health; development and inequality; sanitation and health in India; health governance;
 - Labour Studies: migration and internationally trained physicians; health and migrant workers; community health care workers; eldercare in the transpacific labour market; migrant live-in caregivers; unfree labour;

- Philosophy: philosophy of science; cognitive underpinnings of language and communication; history of ethics; moral philosophy; moral and legal philosophy; Asian philosophy; critical thinking;
- Public Policy: vulnerable youth substance use; health policy and substance abuse; health policy and infectious disease interventions; opioid/overdose crisis; intersectional health policy; GBA+(Gender-based Analysis Plus); gender inequities in health and medicine; sex work; women's health; end of life caregiving; theory and practice of public policy; drug decriminalization; health promotion and aging; culturally sensitive health care promotion; caregiving and gender;
- Sociology and Anthropology: global food security; decolonizing western science research; medicine and international development; public knowledge of HIV/AIDS; biomedical technology; global science and sexuality; global medical practitioners; transgender youth; intersex children; Indigenous governance; therapeutic cultural formation;
- World Languages and Literatures: cross-cultural understanding and training; inter-cultural competence; learning technology.

5.5 Delivery methods

The program will be a range of face-to-face, blended, and online course offerings.

5.6 Linkages between program outcomes and curriculum design

The program will deliver a coherent credential by bringing together interdisciplinary courses focusing on critical approaches to health and wellbeing from the perspective of the humanities and social sciences. The required curriculum (core courses and electives) is based on already existing courses drawn from a range of critical perspectives on health, medicine and wellness. Graduates of the program will learn to:

- Understand the social, political, economic, and policy contexts of health and healing in historical and contemporary societies;
- Understand how health and wellbeing have been practiced in British Columbia;
- Understand how patients and health practitioners have been trained and mobilized at local and global levels either to eradicate diseases or to address crises;
- Draw on the arts and humanities to understand the relationship between health and culture to develop clinical and critical thinking skills of observation, analysis, communication, and self-reflection;

- Critically examine the ethical and bioethical frameworks in health policy and health care;
- Practice how to problem solve and present ideas within a collaborative and team-work approach.

5.7 Distinctive characteristics

This program is unique to Simon Fraser University and is different from existing Health related programs at SFU and other provincial post-secondary institutions.

According to the Canadian Association for Health Humanities there are no medical humanities or medical humanities and social sciences credentials in British Columbia. Outside of British Columbia, a number of institutions, including the University of Calgary, University of Manitoba, the University of Northern British-Columbia, and the University of Toronto-Scarborough offer research clusters in humanities, social sciences, and health. Numerous medical-doctoral institutions offer medical humanities clusters for medical students, including the University of British Columbia, in recognition that clinicians benefit from creative and critical approaches to understanding how individuals and communities have understood, interpreted, represented, and experienced health, medicine, wellness, and body over time and place. York University delivers an interdisciplinary Bachelor of Arts in Health and Society BA, UBC-Okanagan offers a Bachelor of Health and Exercise Science, which focuses on interdisciplinary approaches to movement and health, and Dalhousie University offers an undergraduate certificate in Medical Humanities.

This program will complement but not replicate existing degree options (BA and BSC) in Health Science at SFU. It will not overlap with the BA in Health Sciences, which requires courses in Biology, epidemiological research, ecological determinants of health, and statistics, and which requires only one social science course (first-year sociology or anthropology). This program does not require similar courses and draws on already existing courses in the humanities and social sciences. A small number of interdisciplinary MHSS courses will be team-taught by CFL in order to bring together existing expertise in cultural representations of health, medicine, illness and wellbeing, mental health and wellbeing, and historical perspectives of medicine, illness, and health. Courses are delivered by faculty members with expertise in cultural anthropology, sexuality and gender studies, cultural studies, history, criminology, gerontology, psychology, literature, and performance studies.

5.8 Anticipated completion time

Two to four years to complete the minor.

5.9 Enrolment plan for the length of the program

Short term goal of 100 students declared by end of the first full year of the program (2025-2026) and 200 declared students by end of the third year of the program (2028-2029). At end of Year 3, the program will be evaluated to see if additional enrolment capacity is sustainable.

5.10 Student evaluation

Students will be graded and will be required to take one Pass/Fail skills-based course—MHSS Professional Development course.

5.11 Faculty appointments

There is no need for additional faculty appointments given existing strengths in the Faculty and several new faculty positions in health-related fields that are currently in process. The program will have a small budget that will allow for occasional courses taught by experts (Visiting Faculty). The curriculum is almost fully delivered by Continuing Faculty and will not rely on Sessional Instructors.

5.12 Faculty members

There are over 30 continuing faculty members across 14 different Departments and Programs in FASS. Teaching in MHSS will not impact their home departments in a significant way. MHSS specific courses will be team taught and electives are drawn from existing FASS courses. Because this is an interdisciplinary program, undergraduate AFTEs will flow to the home department, which does not impact teaching load or AFTEs of participating departments. Home departments housing the program director will receive backfill as necessary (the equivalent of funding for two SI courses per year).

5.13 Program assessment

No external accreditation. The usual external review process will apply.

5.14 Related programs

There are no major competitors to this program in British Columbia. At public institutions, there are no competitors in British Columbia, and only

one in Ontario (York University). Most health-related programs at colleges are focused on skills and professional training (dental, practical nursing, dental assistant, etc.). There are no medical humanities or medical arts and social sciences programs in British Columbia, either in private or public institutions.

5.15 Evidence of student interest

The program will appeal to undergraduate students considering a career in the health and caring professions, including but not limited to the new medical school at SFU, announced in Fall 2022 by the provincial government, with the first enrolments anticipated to start in Fall 2026. Current enrolment data indicates strong demand for health-related curriculum and programs in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Approximately seventy-two existing, permanent courses in FASS are related to aging, gender, sexuality, culture, biology, mental health, and neuroscience. The majority of the courses are taught by continuing faculty. In a sample one-year period (2021-22), information from SIMS indicates that approximately 5,300 students were enrolled in courses related specifically to health in the departments of Criminology, Cognitive Science, Economics, Gerontology, Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, Labour Studies, Indigenous Studies, Philosophy, Psychology, and Sociology and Anthropology. The departments with the heaviest investment in health-related curriculum (as measured by course topic and continuing faculty appointments) are Cognitive Science, Gerontology, Psychology, Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, and Sociology and Anthropology. Enrolment in these departments is anticipated to stay the same or grow in the future.

5.16 Evidence of labour market demand

There is a current shortage in the healthcare fields in BC. Not only is there an acute shortage of general practitioners in British Columbia, there is also demand for physician's assistants, patient care navigators, nurse practitioners, policy experts, and allied health professionals. The scope of practice for pharmacists is widening, and nutritionist, physiotherapists, massage therapists, and occupational therapists among others are all increasingly represented in interdisciplinary health care teams. Recent estimates in British Columbia place employment in the health care sector at an all-time high of 11% of the workforce, and the "outlook for employment is good, supported by rising demand" due to population increases, an aging population, and ongoing shortages in staffing shortages in the province and across the country (See "British Columbia Sector Profile: Health Care," at <https://www.on.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/job-market-reports/british->

[columbia/sectoral-profile-health-care\)](#)

The Medical Humanities and Social Sciences minor will offer critical interdisciplinary perspectives on health, medicine, and wellbeing, as well as the collaborative and team-based problem-solving skills crucial to those seeking further training and employment in the health sector.

5.17 Resources

This program will not require significant new resources. Over 30 faculty members offer courses related to the minor. For the first three years, dedicated advising will be provided by Faculty level advisors; should the program be successful, by the end of Year 3 the Faculty will provide an additional .5 FTE for an additional advisor. The director of the program will receive one course release. This program will not replace or eliminate other programs in the Faculty; it is designed to complement other programs within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and across multiple Faculties at SFU.

5.18 Budget

This is a regular fee program.

6 Contacts

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