

Expanding Genetic Counseling Curriculum Beyond the Science: Training for Business and Beyond

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Abstract:

Genetic counselors have historically worked in clinical hospital settings but recent professional status surveys report that 20-25% of genetic counselors are working in industry settings and/or jobs that are not direct patient care². Expansion into industry creates opportunities and challenges for genetic counseling graduate training programs, tasked with providing training that is reflective of the current professional work force. The Master's in Business Science (MBS) program (sciencemeetsbusiness.rutgers.edu/), a program designed to train students with both science and business career aspirations, has a precedence for interdisciplinary partnerships, offering a variety of concentrations and certificate programs for Master's students. The goal of this project is to engage in a joint venture between the Rutgers Genetic Counseling Master's Program (GCMP, gcmp.rutgers.edu) and MBS to develop a MBS certificate program for interested GCMP students. This project will identify existing courses that would be relevant for genetic counseling students and develop GC/MBS certificate goals, objectives, and requirements. Expected outcomes include exposure and acquisition of business skills that could be applied in both hospital and non-hospital settings. Incorporation of an optional business certificate may ultimately diversify the types of jobs Rutgers GC students enter upon graduation and beyond. This unique offering would lead to the Rutgers GCMP distinguishing itself from other competing graduate programs and likely attract strong caliber students who ultimately aspire to work in industry roles.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Current GCMP students
- Applicants to the GCMP
- GCMP leadership and faculty
- GCMP Advisory Board members
- MBS leadership and faculty
- Genetic counseling colleagues in industry roles
- Other competing Genetic Counseling Master's Programs

Key Steps/Activities:

1. Identify **requirements for a certificate** (determination of credits, didactic work, field work experience, standards for successful completion, evaluative methods, and identifying faculty mentors)
2. **Survey current and prospective students** regarding interest in this option
3. **Survey other stakeholders**, including genetic professionals' availability to serve as mentors and provide possible internship training sites
4. Explore **procedures** in School of Graduate Studies to officially incorporate/pilot certificate option
5. Submit **program expansion plans** to the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC)
6. **Advertise unique training option** at various recruitment events and on GCMP social media

Effectiveness Measures:

- Basic Activity Measures
- Student Evaluations
- Employment Trends
- Recruitment Trends
- Faculty Evaluations

Communication/Engagement:

- Current GCMP students
- GCMP applicants
- GCMP faculty and Advisory Board
- Industry Partners

Proposed Timeline:

Summer 2022

- Design program
- Survey stakeholders
- Submit plans to accrediting board

Fall 2022

- Finalize program
- Pilot with 2nd yr students
- Promote communication

Spring 2023

- Incorporate into recruitment
- Enroll current students
- Complete effectiveness measures

Current Status/Future Directions:

The GCMP has received support from Dept of Genetics and Rutgers MBS program. Beginning tasks including review of potential coursework and outlining program specifics have been initiated. Preliminary surveys of stakeholders will occur throughout the Summer. A successful collaboration between MBS and the GCMP would not only strengthen the relationship between these two programs, but likely serve as a precedence for the GCMP to partner with other Rutgers programs and schools to build a variety of concentrations that future GC students could pursue; preparing them for the expanding profession of genetic counseling.