Advanced Degrees vs. Practical Experience - What is Best For Me?

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Patricia MacTaggart, CAHIMS, MBA
Program Manager VHA and Program Director/Teaching Instructor George Washington University MHIA@GWU

James Lincoln
IS Operational Consultant, Baylor Scott & White Health

HIMSS 21

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Welcome

Patricia MacTaggart
Program Manager VHA
Program Director / Teaching Instructor
MHIA@GWU

James Lincoln
IS Operational Consultant
Baylor Scott & White Health
Conflict of Interest

Patricia MacTaggart, CAHIMS, MBA

Has no real or apparent conflicts of interest to report

James Lincoln

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Agenda

- Advanced degrees vs. practical experience - considerations
- Example of career growth without advanced degrees
- Leveraging your advanced degree after school
- Skills and degrees in demand by hiring organizations
Learning Objectives

- Discover the two paths for growing one’s career
- Identify which advanced degrees and certifications are in highest demand by hiring organizations
- Illustrate what is required to move up in your career without having advanced degrees
How do you convince an employer you would be an asset to the organization in this digital/virtual based ecosystem?

My Journey → Relevant Today Or Not

- The leadership potential
- Cultural sensitivity
- Health care and health care technology knowledge
- Vocational skills
Who are the potential staff leads, managers & leaders within and external to the organization?

1. MPH with Health Informatics Concentration
2. MHA
3. MHIA
4. MBA with Health Informatics Concentration
How are they prepared for their future and the organization’s today and tomorrow demands?

Classroom = Meeting

Program = Work Environment

Students = New Hires
# Competencies Cross Walked to HIMSS Certification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>University Specific Competencies</th>
<th>CAHIMS™ Certification</th>
<th>One Full-Year Health Informatics Class Illustration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communications</strong></td>
<td>1. Verbal and non-verbal communication techniques.</td>
<td>Not directly addressed</td>
<td>Weekly 2-hour engagements with guest lectures from government and private industry leaders to discuss specific topics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                                        | 2. Clearly written business communications in multiple formats.                                 | Not directly addressed | Students attend external industry events and write-up two of the presentations:  
|                                        | 3. Ability to organize and deliver a professional presentation using the appropriate media.     | Not directly addressed | • National - e-Health Initiative  
|                                        |                                                                                                 |                        | • International - HIMSS-EUROPE  
|                                        |                                                                                                 |                        | HIMSS TIGER International Presentation  
|                                        |                                                                                                 |                        | • Small group midterm presentation competition: Top two teams presented internationally through HIMSS TIGER (Topics: Isolation as a Health Care Issue; G-5 and Health Care) |
| **Group Dynamics**                      | Set of teams building functions to facilitate effective group behavior to accomplish group projects. | Not directly addressed | HIMSS-NCA “Local” participation as a class in one networking and educational event, including engaging with the HIMSS-NCA mentorship and scholarship committee. |
| **Change, Innovation and Decision Making** | Planning and implementing health IT change and possesses the ability to utilize decision making processes that leads to the selection of the most optimal course of action from a group of alternatives for health care and health IT. | Healthcare Information and Systems Management - Identify and differentiate fundamental concepts of systems development; fundamental IT project management methodologies, and concepts of process improvement | Student groups select a health care system, identified the technologies, business operational issues, strategic clinical and organizational benefits, impact on consumer and providers, performance results and security. |
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<td>Testing and Evaluation</td>
<td>Concept covered within other topics but not explicitly covered</td>
<td>Testing and Evaluation: Identify and differentiate accepted testing methodologies; internal controls to protect resources and ensure availability and integrity during testing; verify deliverables against contractual terms or design specifications, and gather and compile data to support that expected outcomes have been realized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Principles</td>
<td>Basic concepts of health law and health IT compliance.</td>
<td>Healthcare Information and Systems Management: understand the basic elements of common business documents such as RFPs, RFIs, proposals, SLAs, change requests, NDAs, etc.</td>
<td>Assigned student groups commissioned to draft an actual RFP for vendors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Ability to employ a systems perspective</td>
<td>Assess the organizational environment; gather and compile metrics; key performance indicators; comply with legal and regulatory standard; ethical business principles; business communications; awareness of emerging industry trends; strategies to mitigate risk; ethical working relationships; data for decision makers organizational change mgmt., and individual and team roles, responsibilities and job descriptions</td>
<td>Engage with national leaders on current topic opportunities and potential barriers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
<td>Effectively utilizes the methods of strategic planning and management</td>
<td>A.2. Understand components of an IT strategic plan (e.g., process maturity and growth, gap analysis, quality improvement, organizational alignment, roles and responsibilities, performance measurement)</td>
<td>Each student is expected to take one health-IT “tool” and explain what it is and/or how it can be used to address a health care issue.</td>
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<td>Project Mgmt.</td>
<td>Ability to plan, organize, and manage resources to bring about the successful completion of specific health IT.</td>
<td>C. Selection, Implementation, Support and Maintenance: facilitate solution selection activities; understand characteristics of various training and support methods; understand the interrelationships between scope, schedule, budget, and quality for solution implementations; maintain healthcare information systems, and gather, input and help analyze data for problems and trends</td>
<td>Student groups commissioned to draft an RFP for vendors to provide a technology solution, project management, technical assistance, etc. The students present as if they are at a bidder’s conference to a group of external consultants and respond to questions from “potential bidders”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Analysis and Quality Mgmt.</td>
<td>Use quantitative tools and methods to analyze and evaluate date for decision-making and CPI.</td>
<td>Identify basic clinical metrics frequently represented in informatics; identify and support opportunities to optimize clinical effectiveness and efficiencies; understand various data visualization techniques; understand basic data management concepts; maintain clinical content &amp; decision-support; describe business and clinical processes utilizing standard visualization tools, and conduct basic data analysis and interpretation</td>
<td>Incorporated into projects and guest lecturers on HL7 standards ICD-10, coding and “data visualization”. Separate Courses: Research Analytics and Predictive Modeling Analytics (required for MHI and MPH-Health Informatics Concentration and elective for MHA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulations</td>
<td>Understand and apply healthcare regulations related to health IT</td>
<td>Identify and differentiate roles of gov., reg., professional &amp; accreditation agencies and develop the documentation of compliance with applicable standards</td>
<td>Incorporated into weekly classes (Discussed previously).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare issues</td>
<td>Assess the local, regional and national healthcare issues and trends related to health IT</td>
<td>Recognize basic characteristics, interrelationships and services of different types of healthcare organizations; i.e. Identify and differentiate among major clinical and business departments and functions, and differentiate basic roles of healthcare information and management systems professionals</td>
<td>To gain a global perspective, the class participated in the HIMSS EURO virtual conference for a minimum of two hours. Each student wrote an analysis of at least one webinar presentation.</td>
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<td>Information Mgmt.</td>
<td>Can effectively use information management and technology principles, methods and techniques for collecting, analyzing and delivering information to support business processes and decision-making</td>
<td>Recognize trends in healthcare technology; differentiate characteristics of applications; recognize basic characteristics of the information and communication technologies that support the healthcare environment; identify basic clinical vocabulary/terms frequently represented in healthcare informatics; identify basic healthcare IT vocabulary/terms frequently represented in healthcare informatics; identify functional requirements of software, hardware and network solutions; identify basic business continuity planning concepts; collect and compile information to assist in evaluation of existing &amp; emerging technologies; describe the organizational policies and procedures to ensure confidentiality, privacy, security, availability, and integrity of data; use specific procedures to identify, escalate, and mitigate potential privacy/security risks and breaches; administer user access controls according to established policies and procedures; audit physical, technical, and administrative controls to ensure safeguards are in place to protect assets; identify and differentiate organizational responsible for managing vulnerabilities, and maintain data management controls.</td>
<td>Students take a take home test on health care terms, health informatics terms and health care legal terms and define, identify who and how used and impact.</td>
</tr>
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Lifelong Learning

- Formal Education
  - Informal Training
  - HIMSS
  - E-Health Initiative
  - Other
- Certifications
- Internal Training
- Experience
You know what you know
You don’t know what you don’t know

The only thing constant about healthcare and health IT is change

• Scope of Healthcare
• The Delivery of Healthcare
• Technology to Support Healthcare
James Lincoln
IS Operational Consultant, Baylor Scott & White Health
Considerations Before Pursuing an Advanced Degree

- **High Financial Cost**: Cost of tuition, living expenses, etc. can lead to high levels of debt

- **Not Necessary for Career Goals**: Your long-term career goals may not require an advanced degree

- **Opportunity Cost of Experience**: Full-time education takes away from valuable time in the workforce gaining hands-on experience

- **Not Prepared to Leverage the Degree**: Pursuing a degree too early in your career may lead to a lack of opportunities post-graduation
Alternatives to an Advanced Degree

1. Experience & Performance
   Advancing in your career will always be dependent on the experience you have and the value that you bring to a company – regardless of whether you have an advanced degree.

2. Up-Skill via Online Education
   Free MOOCs offer opportunities to dive into learning new skills – Coursera, edX, Udemy, Pluralsight, Degreed, etc.

3. Low-Cost Online Programs
   If you feel like you absolutely need an advanced degree, explore online, part-time programs that allow you to continue working.
My Experience Without an Advanced Degree

- Graduated in 2019; BS in Psychology
- Started a company
- Took a job at Baylor Scott & White Health (Epic Analyst)
- Retained by BSWH amidst a large-scale managed services initiative
- Promoted to a new position 15 months after starting
  - Responsible system-wide for Oncology & Transplant service lines
  - Managing 34 applications - $1M+ annual budget
  - Focused on system-wide strategy and delivery
**Tips for Advancing without an Advanced Degree**

- Be hyper-focused on the right experience
- Build relationships with people around you
- Have an ownership mentality – deliver high-quality work
- Always strive to add value to your organization:
  - Why am I here and what am I trying to accomplish?
  - How can I lift and strengthen the people around me?
  - How can I add value?
Questions?
Thank you!

• Patricia MacTaggart
  • pmactagg@gwu.edu

• James Lincoln
  • james.lincoln@bswhealth.org