

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY NEWS

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FSU celebrates new pathway into health professions

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➤ Nande DeGraff, Isabella Canut and Salma Elsheikh – students in the new Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences B.S. Degree Program — enjoy the program's kickoff celebration Friday, Oct. 14. (College of Medicine photo)

Florida State University officially launched an innovative new pathway into health care careers by honoring the program's first students at an Oct. 14 celebration at the College of Medicine.

The Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences B.S. Degree Program — the first of its kind in the nation — provides students interested in health care with numerous advantages toward achieving that goal.

“One of the things we’ve been trying to do here at Florida State is break down the barriers between colleges and give our students opportunities to study all kinds of fields to prepare them for the kinds of careers they’ll be engaging when they graduate,” said Sally McRorie, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs.

Myra Hurt, senior associate dean at the College of Medicine, conceived the idea for the IMS degree in 2012 and lobbied deans around the campus to help make it to come to fruition. When McRorie was named provost in 2015, she promised Hurt they would make it happen. Just months later, the program welcomed its first group of students.

Seven FSU colleges were involved in creating the new degree track, which provides students with more time to explore opportunities and a more effective way to choose a career in health care.

For a combination of reasons, thousands of students nationwide start college thinking about health care, but the would-be nurses, physicians, physician assistants, pharmacists, medical social workers, patient advocates, social scientists, medical informaticists and more wind up in other careers.

“We’re going to have a curriculum that helps students make decisions — not push them toward decisions — but helps them make informed decisions which is a really big part of life itself,” Hurt said.

The IMS program gives students more options toward landing a health care job by offering a flexible track. Students can choose from three majors: Pre-Professional, Patient Care in the Community, or Health Policy and Technology. Those majors allow students to take more electives, get real-world experience and explore their options for a career in health care.

“Clearly, the future of medical care is all about interdisciplinary care or team-based care, and what better way to learn about that is to do it as an undergraduate,” said John P. Fogarty, dean of the College of Medicine.

The timing for creating the IMS program is good. FSU is focused on boosting its total number of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) graduates; cutting the time to graduation; and increasing the number of graduates getting jobs with good salaries. The IMS program addresses each of those concerns.

“This is preparing our students for real success,” McRorie said, “not with just the courses, but also the internships, the externships, the seminars —all of these different experiences including the advising. We’re going to have some very special students coming out of this program.”

IMS is a unique collaboration of seven FSU colleges: Arts and Sciences, Communication and Information, Human Sciences, Medicine, Nursing, Social Sciences and Public Policy and Social Work.

Freshman Emilie Miller is one of 115 students in the inaugural class enrolled in the program.

“I found about the IMS program, and I felt so relieved and excited because other majors are so big that it’s harder to be personal and one-on-one,” said freshman IMS major Emilie Miller. “In the IMS major, because it’s smaller, it’s easier to meet with the dean or professors. That’s very reassuring.”



(<https://news.fsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/IMS-celebration-myra-hurt-101416.jpg>)

Myra Hurt, senior associate dean at the College of Medicine



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Freshman IMS major Emilie Miller



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The IMS kickoff celebration at the College of Medicine.