

Spring 2008

## Academic Calendar

**May 12**—AOE Summer Symposium early registration deadline

**May 16**—Last day to submit [educator survey](#)

**June 20**—Approval Committee for Certificate Programs quarterly meeting

**June 30**—Free Application for Federal Student Aid loan deadline

**July 11**—Faculty deadline to submit applications for fall term stipends

**July 12-13**—Faculty Development Institute, Louisville, KY

**July 14-16**—Assembly on Education Summer Symposium, Louisville, KY

## Welcome To *Academic Advisor*

Welcome to AHIMA's quarterly education newsletter, *Academic Advisor*. The goal of this newsletter is to help HIM educators prepare the HIM professionals of tomorrow, build better curriculum, and mentor others.

If there is an educator or adjunct faculty member you feel should be receiving this newsletter, please send an e-mail to [EducAccred@ahima.org](mailto:EducAccred@ahima.org) with Academic Advisor in the subject line. We would also like to hear your feedback on our second issue. Look for the next issue of *Academic Advisor* this summer.

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## Student Recruitment—Creating the 2008 Fall Term Class

It is time to seriously think about recruiting the incoming class for the next school year. Is student recruitment done by others, or does your institution expect you to do it? We hope to get some solid answers to that question in the educator survey being conducted this week (see calendar section).

**July 1-30**—Virtual lab subscriptions due for 2008/2009 school cycle

**August 31**—Student FORE scholarship winners announced

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### Academic Advisor Trivia Corner

1. What percentage of students in accredited HIM programs are over the age of 23?

2. True or False: In HIM programs, men make up 9% of the HIM student population.

3. True or False: Anyone can make an entry in Wikipedia.

4. FERPA is:  
a. The South American equivalent of a Sherpa  
b. A non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of ferrets  
c. A new national agency involved in healthcare IT  
d. A set of compliance guidelines for educators

There are many tools and resources to help you recruit:

- Link the student recruitment Web site, [www.healthinformationcareers.com](http://www.healthinformationcareers.com), to your program page. This covers all academic levels of HIM programs and can be a good "first look" source to direct student questions.

- If your program is located in the School of Allied Health or you have a nursing program, contact the deans of those disciplines and ask if you can send program materials to those students who are not selected for placement into their first choice. Student surveys conducted by AHIMA indicate these students make excellent HIM students and are happy with their new major but did not know about it ahead of time.

- Contact the president and director of education at your CSA. Ask them to conduct student recruitment efforts on behalf of your program. Each year, AHIMA recognizes CSAs with student recruitment awards.

- Hold a contest with prizes to alumni of your program who refer new students; word of mouth referrals are a powerful method of recruitment.

- Get a vendor booth at your state conference and advertise your program to attendees—online offerings, progression programs, and specialty tracks (like cancer registry) are desirable. If you cannot afford the booth fee, go in with other programs in the state and have a single "educational opportunities" booth—a one stop shop where members interested in advancing their careers can speak with representatives from multiple programs at one time.

If you are interested in doing more recruiting of the high school population, you might find these articles by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* to be particularly well-timed. According to the report, over the next seven years, southern states will see a large increase in number of graduating high school students (approximately 25 percent) while the northeast will see a drop in high school graduates from 1-10 percent.

For HIM programs operating in the northeast, a push toward online training and recruiting out of state may be successful strategies to keep program enrollments high. See a breakout by state over a ten-year period at "[The Next Generation of High-School Graduates: Who and Where They Are From.](#)"

## Answers

1. 85%
2. True
3. True. This can be a learning moment; the instructor creates an entry in Wikipedia that is false, and a student then goes in and corrects the entry to make it valid. This helps to demonstrate the issue of validation of information found on the Web.
4. D. FERPA is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, which outlines release and confidentiality issues for student records.

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## Quarterly Quote

"Children enter school as question marks and leave as periods."  
Neil Postman

[Submit your favorite quote for future issues.](#)

Although high school students are traditionally recruited by four-year institutions, there is a growing trend of two-year institutions becoming active in their community to recruit this population. ["New Data Predict Major Shifts in Student Population, Requiring Colleges to Change Strategies"](#) predicts a large growth in minority students with corresponding increases in first-generation students. These students will put additional demands on educators in the areas of student advisement, financial aid, and instruction in fundamental courses to help students become better prepared to complete college-level coursework.

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## COMET Faculty Mentor Program Travels Ahead

In 2006, AHIMA launched a formal mentoring process to help new educators. The process began with the Faculty Mentor Community of Practice and recently expanded to include services to bring the faculty mentoring process to the forefront by actively seeking mentors and identifying faculty who would like to be matched with an experienced educator. A call to identify mentors resulted in 62 educators expressing interest in pairing with a variety of programs based on their experiences and interests.

### What's in a Name?

With the identification of a core group of experienced educators, it was time to give this project a name and start the business of matching mentors with new educators. COMET, or "count on me every time," is composed of volunteer educators selected to help new educators successfully navigate the challenges of program management and teaching in the classroom and online.

### Call for Participation

We are asking the mentors to complete a profile to help us better match mentor to new educator. The profile form is available on the Faculty Mentor CoP by logging on at [www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org). Please download a copy and e-mail the completed profile to [info@healthinformationcareers.com](mailto:info@healthinformationcareers.com). This profile will identify your area of expertise and communication preferences while providing new educators a sense of who you are, enabling them to better select a mentor meeting their needs.

Mentor profiles will be available on the Faculty Mentor CoP. New

educators should review the profiles and contact AHIMA's education department with their first and second choice. We will contact the mentors and confirm the match. Mentors actively working with new educators will be honored at the AOE Summer Symposium in Louisville, KY, on July 16.

For more information on the COMET program or to submit a request for a mentor, contact Patt Peterson, RHIA, director of education of AHIMA, at (312) 233-1132 or [patt.peterson@ahima.org](mailto:patt.peterson@ahima.org).

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### Comparing Salaries by Setting

AHIMA recently launched a comprehensive educator survey which closes soon. We hope the results of this survey will provide us with detailed data regarding a variety of key issues, including salaries for HIM educators. While we are waiting for the salary results for our discipline, here is a quick look at the average salary for full-time faculty teaching in public institutions. The survey reflects more than 1,300 public institutions and captures the salary rates for 2007.

Faculty rank	Master's degree granting institution	Baccalaureate degree granting institution	Two-year institution
Associate Professor	\$68,034	\$65,431	\$58,708
Assistant Professor	\$59,540	\$54,844	\$51,329
Instructor	\$41,794	\$44,349	\$44,174

For access to the complete survey, a subscription to *The Chronicle of Higher Education* is required. Subscribers can refer to "[What Professors Earn](#)" from the issue dated April 18.

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**Spring Cleaning—Get the Webs Out!**

since you worked on the design, then it is probably time to update the look and content. Is the site easy to navigate? What about the appearance—does it invite students to become part of an exciting e-HIM future or does it describe the profession using outdated terms like "medical records," "record keeping," and "RRA"?

Please be advised that CAHIIM is reviewing program Web sites to check content for accuracy. Using current terminology when describing the program's accreditation is a requirement of the standards, so update your site today if needed. Content accreditation language can be found [here](#).

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### **The AHIMA Model Curriculum as a Planning Guide**

Applying best practices of the model curriculum to your program is a requirement of CAHIIM and a good strategy for explaining the required professional courses to your students.

When the model curriculum, with its design of curriculum competencies (domains, sub-domains, and tasks), is matched to each course in the program, it provides students with the reason why a class must be taken and serves as a guide to achievement at the completion of the HIM program. The knowledge clusters and learning levels make up the course learning objectives students are expected to achieve at the conclusion of a course.

In this regard, it can be seen as an advising tool adding transparency to help explain the reasoning behind required courses and what guides the sequencing of courses—taking the mystery out of course selection and graduation planning.

The model curriculum, with its competencies, detailed knowledge clusters, and learning levels supplies our students with a unifying narrative about studying HIM. It provides what Marty Sharpe, PhD, a member of the CAHIIM Commissioners, calls "habits of mind." In this case, it is the thoughtful building of skills and knowledge in HIM. This approach to acquiring unique knowledge forms the HIM perspective that guides a student in understanding how our discipline interfaces with other allied health professions.

Requiring relevant competencies to be a component of the syllabus provides students with a guide as to how each class

addresses a particular sub-domain and helps them to appreciate the journey they are taking. The curriculum competencies exist to ensure a smooth transition from novice to new member in the community of health information practitioners with whom they will share a distinct body of knowledge.

To see a copy of the model curriculum, curriculum competencies with domains and sub-domains, and knowledge clusters with learning levels, please visit:

### **Baccalaureate**

[Model Curriculum](#)

[Competencies](#)

[Knowledge Cluster](#)

### **Associate**

[Model Curriculum](#)

[Competencies](#)

[Knowledge Cluster](#)

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## **Notes from the Education Strategy Committee**



by Don Kellogg, ESC Chair

This is my third year on the HIM Education Strategy Committee (ESC), and while I thought the committee's plate was full last year with Vision 2016, we certainly are busy this year! In future issues of *Academic Advisor*, I will talk in detail about issues the committee has been charged with by AHIMA's Board of Directors. However, now there is an urgent matter in which the ESC is seeking feedback from you, the HIM educator.

As you may know, the Council on Certification (COC) has brought forward two new pathways to sit for the RHIA credentialing examination. The first pathway is for the candidate to have a non-HIM bachelor's degree and a minimum of "five years of full-time management level work experience in the HIM field, or, as a full-time educator in a college or university either currently accredited by CAHIIM or in candidate status." The second pathway is to have a master's degree in an HIM-related curriculum or in education. This candidate would also be required to have "two years of full-

time management level work experience in the HIM field, or, as a full-time educator in a college or university either currently accredited by CAHIIM or in candidate status." For both pathways, the candidates would have to submit two references from RHIA's who would review and endorse the candidate's work experience. [See the full proposal by the COC.](#)

AHIMA's Board asked the ESC to respond on how this proposal would affect HIM education. This is where you come in. The ESC is asking you, as an educator, to give us feedback to aid the committee in our formal response to the Board. I know many of you have definite opinions, however, providing us with facts and numbers to support your opinion would be greatly appreciated. Please take a few moments to share your thoughts by e-mailing the committee at [info@healthinformationcareers.com](mailto:info@healthinformationcareers.com).

Thank you in advance for your help. The committee and I appreciate your input, so if you see me at AOE in Louisville this summer, please take a moment to say hello. AOE is a wonderful networking opportunity and a great way for you to personally make your opinions known to the committee.

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### **Master's Degree Standards Now Available for Review**

CAHIIM's "2008 Standards and Interpretations for Accreditation of Health Information Management (HIM) Programs—Master's Degree Level" is now available for your review. This draft document outlines the standards for the master's degree, including definition of a HIM master's degree, faculty qualifications, and program resources required. The standards are open for public comment by e-mailing [Claire.dixon-lee@ahima.org](mailto:Claire.dixon-lee@ahima.org) by **May 19**. [View the standards.](#)

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### **Hey, I Know Her, and Her!**

If you were watching Fox TV during prime time on April 10 you may have seen a familiar face to HIM educators. **Marsha Dolan**,

MBA, RHIA, program director of HIT at Missouri Western State University, and co-chair of AHIMA's PHR Practice Council, was interviewed about consumer use of personal health records.

If you have not visited the recently revamped [www.myPHR.com](http://www.myPHR.com) you are in for a treat; there are a variety of video clips with individuals talking about the value of PHRs to the public. You will see another Missouri educator and co-chair of the PHR Practice Council here, **Julie Wolter**, MA, RHIA, of St. Louis University, as she talks about her PHR story.

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### Academic Advisor Q&A

**Question:** The AOE CoP has more than 800 entries of community resources. How do I find the instructor materials for the textbook I am using?

**Answer:** Remember, only textbooks published by AHIMA will include instructor materials on the CoP. Books by other publishers have their own dedicated Web site for instructor materials; you should contact your local publisher's sales rep for information about these. To access AHIMA instructor materials, you can download the information from the Community Resources in the AOE CoP, or e-mail AHIMA and ask that specific materials to be sent to you.

To use the CoP, sign into the AOE CoP at [www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org), go to the Community Resources section, click "See All Resources," then click "Categories." This puts the entries into alphabetical sequence. Scroll down until you get to the "I" entries. Look for Instructor Materials: (name of book), and find your book. Here you will find PowerPoint lecture slides, instructor guides, and answer keys for each book.

To get materials by e-mail from AHIMA, visit the AHIMA bookstore at <http://imis.ahima.org/orders/>. The individual book page in the bookstore lists the available instructor materials for that book. Determine what you want sent to you and e-mail [info@ahima.org](mailto:info@ahima.org) to request instructor materials. Please include your name, the

an e-mail with the instructor materials attached. There may be many attachments, so please provide an e-mail address with a large size limit.

**Question:** Our seniors are asking for any hints to help them prepare for their RHIT exam. Do you have any advice?

**Answer:** Some programs put together a one or two-day "boot camp" to help new graduates prepare for their RHIT exams. If you don't have the resources to offer this type of program, find out which schools are offering the prep course online. There are several programs in the past that have offered this service to students other than their own. Please post a request in the discussion thread of the Associate Degree CoP to ask who provides this service for the summer. Also, encourage students to visit these RHIT exam preparation links:

[www.ahima.org/certification/examprep/rhit/RHITResource.asp](http://www.ahima.org/certification/examprep/rhit/RHITResource.asp)  
(for books used on the exam)

[www.ahima.org/certification/examprep/rhit/](http://www.ahima.org/certification/examprep/rhit/)  
(for students wishing to prepare themselves for the exam)

**Question:** Why are there two sets of competencies? Which one do I use?

**Answer:** There are two sets of competencies you may have seen. The curriculum competencies are generated from the work of the HIM Education Strategy Committee and the Certification Job Analysis Task Forces that combined, demonstrate the expectations of the profession for graduates from each academic level.

The reason you see two sets of competencies is because of the distinction between academic learning and certification examination testing. The certification exam competencies are a **subset** of the academic curriculum competencies that are required in structuring an accredited program in HIM. The certification exam competencies are created as a result of a job analysis survey questionnaire sent to all AHIMA members holding that professional credential (RHIT or RHIA) which validates the competencies (tasks) and knowledge reflected by at least 50% of HIM practitioners holding that credential at the time of the survey.

Since many curriculum competencies do not lend themselves to

test questions, to future practice needs as we transition to the electronic health record, or are not practiced by the majority of respondents to the job analysis survey, we need to build an academic program on a more comprehensive set of competencies (the academic curriculum competencies). Since educators should not teach only to the exam, but teach to adequately prepare students for practice today and the transition to the future, we use the **full set of curriculum competencies** for academic program structure and textbooks, which will also include the subset of certification exam competencies.

For example, on the RHIT certification exam, there are just a few questions on the exam about the electronic health record beyond very basic principles, because when the last RHIT job analysis was conducted in 2005 only a few job analysis respondents indicated any involvement with such in their work. However, practice changes dynamically and educators need to prepare students to enter a work force which reflects emerging knowledge and skills as well as traditional skills.

A new RHIA job analysis survey is being conducted this year, with a new RHIT job analysis survey scheduled for 2009.

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*AHIMA Academic Advisor* is published four times a year by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), 233 N. Michigan Ave., 21st Floor, Chicago, IL 60601-5800.

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