To: Academic Policies Committee, UW-Eau Claire  
From: Reiko Shinno, Professor, Department of History, UW-Eau Claire  
Re: Health Humanities Certificate Proposal  
Date: November 16, 2021  

Dear Academic Policies Committee:

I am writing to express my legal, budgetary, and academic concerns regarding the proposal to create an interdisciplinary certificate on health humanities, as the former chair of the Faculty Complaint, Grievance, and Termination Review Committee (FCGTRC), the founding chair of Transnational Asian Studies, a History professor, and a medical historian.

In particular, I am concerned about the certificate’s “Humanities Core,” which requires students to take 6 credits out of the following courses: ENGL 315 (Visual Rhetoric of Science, Technology, and Culture, 3 credits), HIST 348 (History of Public Health in the United States), HIST 349 (The Global History of Disease, 3 credits), LAS 324 (Latinx Health and Migration to the U.S., 3 credits), and PHIL 306 (Ethics of Health Care, 3 credits). MyBlugld Camps and Course Inventory Management (CIM) system show as below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Instructor's Rank</th>
<th>Course History</th>
<th>Summer 2021</th>
<th>Fall 2021</th>
<th>Winter 2021-22</th>
<th>Spring 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 315</td>
<td>IAS &amp; Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Updated December 2020</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1 section 24 students</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1 section 24 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 348</td>
<td>Professor in Public Health &amp; Environmental Studies</td>
<td>Approved July 2021</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 349</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>Proposal Submitted in Oct 2021</td>
<td>--</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAS 324</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Approved December 2020</td>
<td>Cancelled due to low enrollment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 306</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Updated December 2018</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*HIST 349 (Global History of Disease) is offered as HIST 319 (Studies in Comparative, Transnational, and Pacific World History) in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, but the senior lecturer is on “no intent to renew” contract. Dr. Rice is also listed as a potential instructor in the course proposal, but she has never offered this course.

**Legal Concerns:**

I am concerned that “Humanities Core” appear overly reliant on assistant professors’ courses offered only in summer and winterim. This point has to do with the fact that I have handled several difficult cases of tenure/promotion denials, non-renewal of reappointments for assistant professors, and the rating of “does not meet the expectation” at the time of post-tenure
review. Whether or not the appellant’s teaching and/or service load was adequate has been an important point of debate when a personnel decision against him/her is made based on the lack, or paucity, of publication. Note the Departmental Evaluation Plans are normally written under an assumption that professors carry regular teaching loads in the fall and spring semesters. They may choose to teach summer and winterim courses as long as they are certain that they would not impact their abilities to meet the research expectation of the department. In other words, if a program like Health Humanities Certificate expects/requires them to offer summer or winterim regularly and takes away research and writing from the professors, I believe it would become extremely hard for the university to argue that the professors’ teaching load has been adequate, compared to other professors in the same department.

**Budgetary Concerns:**

I am concerned about the certificate’s possible overreliance on HIST 349, taught by an instructional academic staff, because it could take away the department’s and the university’s limited resources to support programs and initiatives outside of the health humanities. As the chair of Transnational Asian Studies Committee and a person of Asian ancestry, I am concerned that the certificate may impact on the department’s ability to continue offering courses on Asian American history, currently taught by another IAS, who has a strong record of working with Hmong students. Also, Dr. Rice has mentioned the need for more 300-level History courses to meet the needs of the History students. The History Department has not had in-depth conversations about how to take an intricate balance within its limited budget.

**Academic Concerns**

Finally, as a medical historian, having published *The Politics of Chinese Medicine Under Mongol Rule* (Routledge, 2016), I am concerned that ENGL 315 is so central in the “Humanities Core.” The course description of this umbrella course says nothing about health. The sample syllabus submitted to CIM for the course update in AY 2020-21 assigns students to work on information campaign, emoji, and remix (see attached).

The Health Humanities Consortium defines health humanities as “the study of the intersection of health and humanistic disciplines (such as philosophy, religion, literature), fine arts, as well as social science research that gives insight to the human condition (such as history, anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies).” ([https://healthhumanitiesconsortium.com/about/](https://healthhumanitiesconsortium.com/about/)) In other words, this definition requires health humanities to be about health but does not require the program to have a course on visual materials (see attached).

**Concluding Remarks**

To be certain, I think Dr. Rice’s effort to create a certificate on health humanities is wonderful, but for the reasons I have discussed, I do not think the proposal should be approved as it is. To say the least, the Academic Policies Committee may wish to consult the administration to check the legal implications before it votes on her proposal. For information, I have already given her several alternative sets of requirements (see attached). I truly believe that the certificate can be created, if adjusted properly.

Thank you for your attention.