Humanizing Health:
A Guide to the Health Humanities

The HMS Program is growing the number of health humanities courses it offers. But what are the health humanities? In this cover story we hear from an HMS graduate student research affiliate and an undergraduate major about this growing field.

While most of us know when we are doing research or taking classes which fit under the umbrella of health humanities, the borders of this field are often hard to define. As an interdisciplinary field which borrows and blends methods from a range of disciplines, it evades simple categorization. Not helping matters are the number of other similar, interconnected terms for related interdisciplinary study; clearly differentiating health humanities from medical humanities and bioethics, for example, is deceptively difficult. However, the better we understand the features and goals of health humanities, the better we can understand its myriad possibilities for our own studies.
Understanding how health humanities differs from related fields, all of which also play a key role in Lehigh’s HMS department, can help us understand the specific focus and value of each field.

- **Medical humanities** emerged before the concept of health humanities, around the mid-20th century. This interdisciplinary field focuses on the application of humanistic, social science, and arts methodologies to the study of healthcare practices, including discussions about patient care, illness, and medical technology. Medical humanities is focused specifically on healthcare, is usually concentrated on integrating these perspectives into the education of doctors, and often occurs in medical schools.

- **Bioethics** is commonly taught in medical and health humanities programs, but is also a more specific field in its own right. It focuses on the integration of philosophy, religion and divinity studies, law, and other related disciplines to consider the ethics of healthcare and biomedical advancements broadly defined. It is related to but not the same as medical ethics, which considers more specifically the ethics at play in medical encounters.

- **Health humanities** is the broadest of the disciplines discussed here, and it is a more recent development which emerged out of the medical humanities. While retaining medical humanities’ interdisciplinary focus, health humanities represents the expansion of the medical humanities to include larger questions about health, illness, and disease which look beyond the medical encounter. This expanded scope means that health humanities can grapple with the economic, structural, and social aspects of health which impact our lives every day, as opposed to the more specific focus of medical humanities on healthcare as a practice. This broader discussion also means that health humanities is in many ways more inclusive, flourishing outside medical schools and focusing not just on informing doctors, but also engaging with other stakeholders including nurses, public health officials, policymakers, patients, patient families, and public conceptions of health.

Why does understanding these distinctions matter? Due to its shared history with medical humanities and the blurry distinctions which surround all the fields mentioned here, health humanities has often been misrepresented. For the scientifically-minded, the broad and inclusive scope can be interpreted as vague, and as a lack of academic or scientific rigor. In reality, the broad scope of health humanities is its greatest strength. Interdisciplinary inquiries
fostered in health humanities can utilize methods from across different disciplines to have the nuanced conversations necessary for understanding our complex relationship with health. Similarly, health humanities has often been misunderstood as a field which simply aims to teach empathy to medical professionals using humanities methodologies, for example by teaching doctors to care more about patient experience by presenting them with patient narratives. While this is an aspect of what health humanities can do, this is a hangover from the early days of medical humanities. It is only one simplistic explanation of what humanistic methodologies can contribute to discussions about health and medicine. Studying literature and film, for example, can do far more than teach a doctor to see a patient’s point of view; it can uncover cultural anxieties and expectations about health, illustrate current injustices in healthcare, metaphorically explore complicated issues in a compelling way, and provide complex ethical assessments.

Destiny West, a senior pursuing a dual degree in Biology and HMS, notes that these qualities of the health humanities have tangible benefits for undergraduates. She says, “I would recommend health humanities classes to all undergraduates, no matter their major. The health humanities enables undergraduates to build their knowledge about their health, community health, and global health. Ultimately, the health of all individuals is a right and educating oneself about health will better the world as a whole.” She goes on to say that her “biggest takeaway from studying health humanities is learning the role that justice/equity play in health. In order to provide the best care/positively impact health, being empathetic and forming relationships with individuals that foster inclusivity and equality is the only way to bring about change within societal policy and structure, creating healthier environments for all individuals.”

The benefits of a comprehensive health humanities approach now become clearer. We do not only experience health when we experience medicine, and health humanities is a field which encourages discussions about our health on both individual and global scales. Humanities, social science, and arts methodologies are not simply illustrators of patient emotion, but nuanced ways to approach discussions about health experience, norms, and injustices. Armed with these interdisciplinary tools students of the health humanities are well prepared to foster the kind of just social change Destiny talks about.

- Gill Andrews, HMS Graduate Research Affiliate
Learning More about Public Health

Lehigh’s American Public Health Association (APHA) campus liaisons work to educate Lehigh about public health issues. Here is what they have to share about public health events in the near future.

Public health is a crucial field of study that embodies the promotion of health practices while also taking measures to prevent the occurrence and spread of diseases amongst individuals, communities, and societies. The American Public Health Association focuses on these practices in hopes to improve overall well-being and prolong human life. Every year the APHA holds an annual meeting and expo in various cities across the country. This year, APHA’s Annual Meeting and Expo will be held in Philadelphia from November 2nd to the 6th, focusing on the theme “Creating the Healthiest Nation: For science. For action. For health.”

Research and advocacy are critical factors for developing healthcare to improve the lives of individuals around the world. APHA brings together thousands of public health students, professionals, and organizations who are passionate about making a difference in public health on both the local and global level. APHA fosters a collaborative environment that allows individuals to learn and develop ideas pertaining to the world of public health while also allowing passionate individuals to network and connect with like-minded people who are invested in public health. Some of these people have done research, and others are hoping to learn from research. This annual meeting gives these individuals the opportunity to share science and take action in order to improve health in the United States. This year, there are going to be 13,000 students and professionals in attendance. We, as Lehigh University’s APHA Campus Liaisons, are excited to interact and network with others who have similar passions to us, and bring the new things we learn to Lehigh’s campus. If you are interested in reading more about APHA’s Annual Meeting and Expo, or attending, go to https://www.apha.org/events-and-meetings or contact one of the campus liaisons or Dr. Marsh.

- Ashley Pen and Karli Manko

Your APHA campus liaisons are Holly Guinan, Karli Manko, Katie Murabito, Charlotte Murphy, & Ashley Pen.

Thanks to Karli for all of her hard work as a campus liaison. Congratulations on graduating this December!
From the Director’s Desk

I hope your semester and this new fall weather is treating you well. The cover story for this newsletter was all about the Health Humanities. At Lehigh, students in many of the colleges are required to take some type of Humanities coursework for their college distribution requirements. For example, in the College of Arts and Sciences, students need to take 8 credits of Humanities-designated (HU) courses as part of their plan to graduate. In the HMS Program, we offer a large array of Humanities options for students. From our “Medical Humanities” course; to cross-listed courses in WGSS, Religion Studies, Philosophy, English, History, and Modern Languages; to a new cross-listed course with the Theatre Department, HMS provides a host of options for experiencing Humanities coursework. Next semester we even will have a class called “Social Immunity” that blends natural science and humanities approaches to understanding the immune system and its representation in popular culture. In all of these courses students will learn how to critically think about health in new and important ways. There are so many options out there, so explore!

All of this talk of classes reminds me, registration is approaching! Make sure to check out the list of spring courses found later in this newsletter. If you have questions about what classes you should be taking next, email me for a meeting (jesseece.marsh@lehigh.edu), or talk to your HMS advisor. In thinking about what courses to take, I encourage you to stretch your comfort zone. Take something because it is interesting to you. Don’t worry if you have never taken a course in that department or program before, take it and expand your mind. After all, that is what college is for!!

If you are not already an HMS student, now is a great time to declare an HMS major or minor to get priority in the registration process. To fill out major forms, you can email me for an appointment. To declare the minor, you can go directly to the Office of Interdisciplinary Programs (incasip@lehigh.edu) to fill out declaration forms. Also, for graduate students out there whose research is related to health, email me about how you can become an HMS graduate research affiliate. And most importantly, have a great rest of your semester!

Jessecae Marsh

Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of HMS

HMS Program Faculty

Kelly Austin | Associate Professor of Sociology | Director of Global Studies
Sirry Alang | Assistant Professor of Sociology & Health, Medicine, and Society
Christopher Burke | Director of Community Health Research Group | Associate Professor of Psychology
Dena Davis | Presidential Endowed Chair in Health, Humanities, and Social Sciences | Professor of Religion Studies

Elizabeth Dolan | Professor of English | Deputy Provost for Graduate Education
Linda Lowe-Krentz | Professor and Chair of Biological Sciences
Jessecae Marsh | Director of Health, Medicine, and Society Program | Associate Professor of Psychology
Lucy Napper | Assistant Professor of Psychology & Health, Medicine, and Society
Lorenzo Servitje | Assistant Professor of English & Health, Medicine, and Society
Advocating for the Health of the Community

Junior Laurel Stanley is participating in an internship through Lehigh Valley Health Network. Here is the story of what her HMS internship means to her.

Hi Everyone! My name is Laurel Stanley and I am a Junior studying Psychology and Health Medicine and Society. Hands on and experiential learning have always been important to me and I decided this semester I wanted to apply all that I have learned in the classroom to a part-time internship. Utilizing the HMS internship webpage, I came across the listing for the Health Advocacy Program. The goal of the Health Advocacy Program is to connect patients with social services and resources that address their non-medical needs. The program attempts to minimize social and economic disparities for the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged. Working alongside physicians, social workers, community health workers and legal services, HAP is revolutionary program that utilizes college students to help improve the quality of life for low income individuals and improve their health outcomes. I was drawn to the program because of its emphasis on direct patient care. In training, I was taught to be a liaison within the Community Health Department that helps connect clients to resources based on their presented needs. I assist clients filling out housing applications, compile lists of local food and clothing banks, and connect people to legal services when their rights are infringed on. What is so unique about HAP is we not only provide clients with resources but consistently follow-up to make sure their need is actually being met. It is so rewarding to be actively addressing the social determinants of health that are so fundamental to HMS curriculum. This internship has strengthened my interpersonal skills and has pushed me out of my comfort zone. If you have any questions about my experience, feel free to shoot me an email!

Found an internship like Laurel did that gets you involved with health? Students can take HMS 293-010, the Design your Own Internship course, to get course credit for a health-involved internship. HMS 293 is available for a variable number of credits, with students working 3-4 hours per week at the internship site for every credit hour taken. Contact Dr. Marsh (jessecae.marsh@lehigh.edu) for more details and to receive an application for HMS 293.
Recent Faculty Publications


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**Health Fact Corner**

Did you know: there have been no new antibiotic classes since 1987? The threat of antibiotic resistance has been characterized as a looming apocalypse, some projections suggest that by 2050 over 10 million will die of antibiotic resistance complications every year—eclipsing cancer’s mortality rates. The reasons for the dearth in the antibiotic pipeline are complex, not solely a matter of lack of technological progression: antibiotic resistance is the product of a complex entanglement of cultural, economic, and medio-scientific histories that involve the military, the pharmaceutical industry, the agriculture industry, the doctor-patient relationship, and the metaphorical understanding of the relationships between humans and microbes. Learn more in HMS 170, “Medical Humanities”.

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**LEHIGH UNIVERSITY**
Inside a Career in Health

What is it like to work in the health care industry? Here is a take from Dr. Nicole Defenbaugh, a Clinical Communication Specialist and Medical Educator.

**What does a day on the job look like for you?**

My job varies greatly depending on the day. There are three primary branches of my work: undergraduate (UME) and graduate medical education (GME) in communication, faculty development, and qualitative research primarily narrative medicine and autoethnography. Since interpersonal communication skills (ICS) and professionalism are two of the primary milestones used to assess learner competence, I develop and present topics such as cultural awareness, teamwork, wellness, nonverbal communication, and conflict management, to name a few. I might present nonverbal communication for Emergency Medicine at 8am and present chronic condition management for Internal Medicine at noon. For faculty development, I teach a myriad of topics (e.g., feedback and empathic listening), co-facilitate retreats, assist with programmatic evaluations, and more. One of my favorite activities, however, is conducting one-on-one direct observations of clinical faculty in their inpatient and ambulatory sites. In my role, I provide feedback related to learner-, team-, and patient-centered approaches to care. Finally, I work with learners and faculty interested in reflective practices and research related to narrative. I facilitate writing workshops and conduct analyses with clinicians interested in presenting or publishing personal narratives. For example, I recently co-authored the first narrative article published as "original research" in the *Annals of Family Medicine* with a former resident.

**What surprises you most about your job?**

That I'm the first and only communication specialist at my healthcare system—which is relatively the same for other healthcare systems across the U.S.—despite the importance placed on effective communication in healthcare. I am pleasantly surprised by my clinical colleagues' desire to learn more about effective communication skills in various contexts. I try to teach communication as a skill that requires practice and development. I engage clinicians in conversations, role-play, and reflective writing to strengthen their skills, attitude, and knowledge. I truly enjoy working with learners and continue to be amazed at their level of enthusiasm, dedication, and vulnerability when engaging new activities.

**What is the most important thing you think people should know about health?**

I feel we should all be aware of how our health identities are socially constructed. As a Clinical Communication Specialist, one of the first lessons I teach is implicit bias in relation to self-

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**Biography:** Nicole Defenbaugh (PhD) is a Clinical Communication Specialist and Medical Educator at St. Luke's University Health Network (SLUHN). Before joining SLUHN, she was the Director of Education for the Department of Family Medicine and Director of Advance Care Planning for the Department of Community Health at Lehigh Valley Health Network. She was also an Associate Professor for the University of South Florida – Morsani College of Medicine. Prior to working in healthcare, Dr. Defenbaugh was a professor in academia for 13 years. Her research areas include chronic illness identity, narrative medicine, and autoethnography with an emphasis on patient-clinician relationships. In 2017, Dr. Defenbaugh co-authored the first autoethnographic article published as original research in the *Annals of Family Medicine* and has a single-authored book entitled, *Dirty Tale: A Narrative Journey of the IBD Body*. Dr. Defenbaugh also has over 20 publications in both academic and medical journals and has been recognized with over a dozen teaching, service, and research awards including the Norman K. Denzin Qualitative Research Award and Ellis-Bochner Autoethnography & Personal Narrative Research Award. She has published in the *Annals of Family Medicine*, *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, *Qualitative Inquiry*, *Health Communication*, and *International Review of Qualitative Research*, to name a few. Dr. Defenbaugh has an upcoming book chapter in the *International Handbook of Organizational Autoethnography* next spring.
and cultural-awareness. Teaching effective communication skills in clinical care begins with an awareness of how our attitudes affect our behaviors. This is especially important for clinicians when working with patients—although it’s applicable for everyone in healthcare. Healthcare is also about recognizing our mutual humanness and being empathic toward one another. When we treat others with compassion and kindness, we develop a truly healthy and caring healthcare system.

**Spring 2020 Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Instructor(s)</th>
<th>Days/Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HMS/BIOS 095</td>
<td>Social Immunity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Professors Swann &amp; Greene</td>
<td>T/R 1:35 - 2:50 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMS/ES/POLS 110</td>
<td>Environmental Planning for Healthy Cities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professor Beck-Pooley</td>
<td>M/W 9:20 - 10:35 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS/PSYC 138</td>
<td>Abnormal Psychology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professor Lomauro</td>
<td>M/W 7:15 - 8:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS/COMM 197</td>
<td>Health Communication</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professors Friedman &amp; De Maio</td>
<td>T/R 10:45 - 12:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMS 170</td>
<td>Medical Humanities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professor Servitje</td>
<td>T/R 9:20 - 10:35 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS 180</td>
<td>Introduction to Public Health</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professor Reed</td>
<td>M/W 7:55 - 9:10 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS/REL/PHIL/JST 195</td>
<td>Judaism, Medicine, and Bioethics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professors Davis &amp; Lachter</td>
<td>M/W 10:45 - 12:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMS/THEA 297</td>
<td>Performance of Health</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professor Defenbaugh</td>
<td>M 7:15 - 9:55 p.m.</td>
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<td>HMS/MLL/ASIA/HIST 298</td>
<td>Traditional Chinese Medicine: Historical Perspectives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professor Cook</td>
<td>M/W 1:35 - 2:50 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS/ENGL 315</td>
<td>How Literature Made Medicine Modern</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professor Servitje</td>
<td>T/R 1:35 - 2:50 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS/ES/POLS 320</td>
<td>Food Justice in Urban Environments</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professor Beck-Pooley</td>
<td>M/W 1:35 - 2:50 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS/JOUR/ES/STS 323</td>
<td>Health and Environmental Controversies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professor Freidman</td>
<td>T/R 1:35 - 2:50 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS/POLS 354</td>
<td>U.S. Health Care Politics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professor Olson</td>
<td>T/R 9:20 - 10:35 a.m.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Additional Coursework Requiring Director or Instructor Permission for Registration</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS 221</td>
<td>Peer Health Adviser Training</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professor Papaz</td>
<td>T/R 2:35 - 3:50 p.m.</td>
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<td>HMS 291</td>
<td>Independent Study</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Available with multiple faculty</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS 292</td>
<td>Supervised Research</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>Available with multiple faculty</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMS 293-10</td>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>Professor Marsh</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMS 294</td>
<td>Health Equity Internship</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>Professors Coyle and Reed</td>
<td>F 12:10 - 1:00 p.m.</td>
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LEHIGH UNIVERSITY
New Courses for Spring 2020!

**Performance of Health**  
**HMS / THEATRE 297**

This applied course explores the role of embodiment in healthcare while critiquing cultural and systemic practices that place bodies at risk. Students will explore the use of the body to convey meaning and deepen their understanding of physical, emotional, cultural and health issues in aesthetic texts. The course will develop interpersonal, nonverbal, and empathic skills involved in clinical care to further understand patients' and clinicians' lived experiences through their everyday performance of health. Students will examine aesthetic texts such as patient and clinician narratives that they will perform. Students will also perform a narrative they collected or from their own lived experiences. The course includes embodied activities for students to engage in artistic expressions of health, illness, and systems of care.

**Social Immunity**  
**HMS / BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES 095**

Pairs basic biology with a diverse range of readings in sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies as well as literature, documentary film, and social media, to examine the role of the immune system in disease and society. Will focus especially on how biology creates structures of sociocultural understanding and control and how social factors simultaneously influence biological processes.
Opportunities for Students

Internship and Research opportunity focused on Public Health in Rural Uganda

Hey Students! Looking for an international experience for summer 2020 that has a public health component? Consider interning or conducting research for Pathways Development Initiative (PDI) in Bududa, Uganda this summer! Interns and researchers work on a variety of capacities related to health, including public health education, HIV outreach, addressing vulnerabilities to malaria, working to improve sanitation and clean water access, landslide relief and prevention efforts, and much more. To find out more information and apply for placement in the summer Uganda program, please contact Professor Kelly Austin at kellyaustin@lehigh.edu by December 1, 2019.

Apply to be a H.E.A.R.T.S.Link Volunteer! Applications due March 18th, 2020.

Health, Education, Advocacy, & Resources at Temple & St. Luke’s is a student-run free clinic dedicated to serving the uninsured and underinsured population of Bethlehem. As a HEARTSLink Volunteer, you will work with patients and their families to address barriers to care and make a real change in healthcare delivery in our community. For more information, call: 484-526-6569 or Email: michelle.wagner@sluhn.org

Applications for the 2020 GLOBAL SOCIAL IMPACT FELLOWSHIP (GSIF) and LEHIGH VALLEY SOCIAL IMPACT FELLOWSHIP (LVSIF), brought to you by the Office of Creative Inquiry & Mountaintop Initiative, are now open!

GSIFs and LVSIFs:
• are undergrads and graduate students from all majors
• focus on addressing sustainable development challenges in low-resource countries and communities
• advance Inquiry to Impact (I2I) projects in the Spring and Fall semesters (total 6+ credits)
• engage in faculty-guided international or local fieldwork in the Summer
• have the opportunity to be a Mountaintop Fellow for the summer program

Social Impact Fellows:
• build sustainable enterprises;
• publish works in peer-reviewed journals;
• integrate insights into national policies;
• champion social movements that influence the lives of millions of people.

Applications due November 10th, by 11:59 PM EDT. For more information and to apply, go to:
go.lehigh.edu/GSIF
go.lehigh.edu/LVSIF
creativeinquiry.lehigh.edu
Apply for the HMS Health Equity Internship!

Applications for Spring 2020 HMS Health Equity Internship are currently being accepted.

Students will work with a combination of staff and faculty from the Hispanic Center, St. Luke’s, and Lehigh University to assist in developing programs at the Hispanic Center LV, the Center for Integrative Health, and with other community agencies to promote health equity and reduce health disparities for the South Bethlehem community. Students may participate in activities related to data collection, program management, marketing of community/public health initiatives, outreach, and grant writing. Specific programs students work with include: healthy food options for the food bank, promoting health and well-being for older individuals who attend the senior center, diabetes prevention and management, and community empowerment initiatives job readiness programs.

To learn more information and download an application, go to: https://hms.cas2.lehigh.edu/content/internships-and-volunteer-opportunities-students

The deadline for applications for a Spring 2020 internship is October 28th.

Applicants will be notified if they were accepted via email at the end of November. Students will need to obtain proper clearances for the internship prior to January 15th, 2020.

Students will earn HMS credit for this internship based on the hours worked. Additionally, there is a weekly required meeting with Dr. Coyle and Dr. Reed for this internship every Friday during the Spring semester from 12:10-1pm. Contact Dr. Rajika Reed if you have any questions at Rajika.Reed@sluhn.org.

Undergrads, need money to travel to a conference?

Are you attending or presenting at a conference this year related to health? The HMS Program offers student travel grants to help fund your trip. The HMS Student Travel Grant is available to any HMS minor or major who has either 1) already booked travel for a conference, or 2) has an acceptance to present at a conference. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and awards will be given on a merit basis as funds are available. For more information and to download an application, visit: hms.cas2.lehigh.edu/content/student-grants

Thank you for reading the HMS Messenger, the official newsletter of the Health, Medicine, and Society Program of Lehigh University. To see your content in the HMS Messenger email jessecae.marsh@lehigh.edu.