

This proposal seeks to advance the implementation of the IAIMS Strategic Plan previously developed by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) through an Operational Phase grant that emphasizes two of the plan's goals in particular: integrate information resources in support of UMDNJ's endeavors, and garner the University's research, educational and scholarly resources to increase efficiency and enhance effectiveness. These two foci were selected as most essential to the attainment of UMDNJ's IAIMS vision of "The Virtual University of the Health Sciences." With five geographically-dispersed campuses, eight schools including three medical schools, a dental school - the state's only such resources - and schools of nursing, public health, health related professions and graduate biomedical sciences, its own teaching hospital in Newark and a statewide system of behavioral health care, UMDNJ faces unique challenges in optimizing potential synergies. As elucidated in our IAIMS Strategic Plan, Information Technology can be an invaluable resource in this regard. In recent years, and, in particular, since its initial IAIMS Operational Phase application in 2000, UMDNJ has augmented this resource through significant information technology infrastructure investments in the Department of Information Systems and Technology and the University Libraries, a commitment that will continue throughout the IAIMS Operational Phase. The Operational Phase includes a series of projects related to the integration goal that span the educational, clinical and research missions. With regard to the coordination goal, encouraged by receipt of a state grant to significantly develop UMDNJ's education and research programs in bioinformatics, in March 2001, the Board of Trustees created a statewide Informatics Institute, deeming it a major initiative agreed to be an important area of emphasis for UMDNJ. The mission of the Institute is to foster the coordinated development of academic degree and certificate programs in informatics disciplines, and to promote informatics research. Its key role will be a virtual one - to facilitate the sharing of knowledge among centers of excellence within the University to build competence in bioinformatics and health informatics in teaching, research and patient care. An acting director has been named and implementation of this Institute, which will become the permanent home for the IAIMS Operational Phase project at UMDNJ, is well underway. The IAIMS Operational Phase will be directed by a leadership team consisting of the Principal Investigator, the University's Senior Academic Officer, to whom the Informatics Institute also reports, and co-directors with responsibility for the execution of the various project goals. An ongoing evaluation of project impact throughout the grant period will provide data for continuous improvement as well as a more formal assessment of outcomes annually and upon project completion. In large part, UMDNJ and other extramural funds will support the Operational Phase, with the requested IAIMS funding directed primarily to educational initiatives, Institute development and core project staff.