

# **UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND**

## **The Graduate School**

### **Curricular Report from the Graduate Council to the Faculty Senate**

#### **Report No 2001-2002-4A**

#### **Post-baccalaureate Certificate program in Thanatology**

**As approved by the Faculty Senate on January 24, 2002**

**At Meeting No. 370, held on 23 March, 2001, the Graduate Council approved the following proposal that is now submitted to the Faculty Senate.**

### **SECTION I**

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

##### **ABSTRACT**

**The Graduate Council approved a proposal from the College of Nursing for a Post-baccalaureate Certificate program in Thanatology. The interdisciplinary program would involve not only the College of Nursing, but also the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Human Sciences and Services. Because no new resources would be required for the implementation of the proposal, and because the proposal was deemed to be of significant merit, it is forwarded at the Class A\* level.**

##### **BACKGROUND**

**Care of the dying and bereaved will be the focus of the Post-baccalaureate Certificate Program in Thanatology. The program is based on a holistic approach that examines issues of the quality of life of clients and their families. Physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the dying will be addressed; and ethical, legal, political, cultural and socioeconomic factors also will be incorporated. Approaches for meeting these needs will be based on theories, research, and professional experience.**

**The proposal was reviewed under the process established by the Faculty Senate in which the Graduate Council serves as the Coordinating and Review Committee. Announcements of the receipt of the proposal were sent to the President and Joint Educational Policy Committee, the Provost and the Council of Deans, the Budget Office, and Department Chairs and Directors. Recommendations were sought from each of these, and the comments received are appended. Comments and recommendations have been kept on file in the Graduate School.**

**The proposal received the support of the Joint Educational Policy Committee, the Council of Deans, and the Budget Office, which noted that the certificate program would require no new resources and that it demonstrated a collaboration among the three participating colleges that utilizes existing faculty and courses.**

**\*Approved at Class C level**

## **SECTION II**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Graduate Council approved the proposal for the Post-baccalaureate Certificate program in Thanatology, at its meeting number 370 on 23 March, 2001, and forwards it to the Faculty Senate at the Class A\* level.**

**\*Approved at Class C level**

#### **Proposal for Post Baccalaureate Certificate in Thanatology**

##### **1. Names of colleges and departments involved:**

**College of Arts and Sciences**

**Department of Philosophy**

**Department of Political Science**

**Department of Psychology**

**College of Human Science and Services**

**Department of Human Development and Family Studies**

**Program in Gerontology**

**College of Nursing**

**2. Title of proposed program: Interdisciplinary Certificate Program in Thanatology**

**3. Intended date of program implementation: May, 2001**

**4. Anticipated date for granting of first certificate: December, 2002**

**5. Intended location of program: Kingston and Providence campuses**

**6. Description of the program:**

**a. Focus of the program**

Care of the dying and the bereaved will be the focus of this program in thanatology. It is based on the belief that a holistic approach is essential for quality of life of clients and their families. Physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the dying will be addressed. Ethical, legal, political, cultural, and socioeconomic factors also will be incorporated. Approaches for meeting these needs will be based on theories, research, and professional experience.

**b. Need**

This program will meet growing needs in the workforce for personnel who are educationally prepared to work with the dying and their families. Issues related to mortality across the lifespan are receiving increased interest within our society. Patients and their families are demanding better care through the dying process and assistance with moral/ethical issues. Professionals for whom this program will have relevance include nurses, social workers, counselors, psychologists, hospice workers, clergy and lay ministers, teachers, emergency medical workers, fire fighters, funeral home directors, program developers, and policy makers.

### **c. Courses**

**Participants will be required to complete 15 credits of thanatology courses. All students must take the three-credit course, Contemporary Thanatology (NUR523) unless they can demonstrate their knowledge of the content in this course through a portfolio that will be evaluated by a faculty committee. The remaining 12 credits may be selected from the following courses:**

**HDF421 Death, Dying and Bereavement**

**HDF471X Responding to Grief**

**NUR524 Exploring Loss through Creative Arts**

**NUR525 Spirituality of Loss and Death for Health Professionals**

**NUR526 Loss Across the Lifespan**

**NUR529 Special Topics in Thanatology**

**PHL401 Death and the Meaning of Life**

**PSC440 The Politics of Being Mortal**

**PSY554Q Psychology of Traumatic Stress**

**Indep. Study Use department code for independent study**

### **d. Potential benefits**

**The courses will augment existing professional programs in that electives from the thanatology program may be applied toward professional degree programs. Additionally, these courses will help prepare students for international certification through the Association of Death Educators and Counselors. The courses should also provide opportunities for self-growth and for learning ways of relating more effectively to co-workers who have lost loved ones.**

### **e. Admission criteria**

**Participants will be required to have a baccalaureate degree for admission into the certificate program. Permission to enroll in a course may be granted to those not enrolled in the certificate program and to senior level students by the course instructors.**

**f. Completion requirements**

**Students will be required to successfully complete the selected courses (15 credits) with an average grade of "B" or above in five or less years.**

**g. Faculty**

**Faculty teaching in the program will have graduate faculty status or a masters degree with extensive experience in the field of thanatology. Adjunct faculty will have a masters degree or above and experience in the field of thanatology. The following faculty members currently teach the listed courses:**

**Human Development and Family Studies: Gene Knott Nursing: Pat Burbank, Carolyn Hames, Ginette Ferszt, and Jean Miller; Adjunct faculty in nursing: Annette Pleau, Lori Shulkin Lowinger, Rose R. Pavlow, Marcia Spindell, and Naida Weisberg Philosophy: Lynn Pasquerella Political Science: Al Killilea Psychology/Counseling Center: James Campbell**

**h. Delivery format**

**The required course, Contemporary Thanatology (NUR523), will be offered through a seminar format while a Web-based course is being developed. The content for this course requires a large amount of reading which lends itself to a Web-based course with focused questions about the readings. Since all students will be required to take this course, use of the web should facilitate entry into the field and practical access. The elective courses will be delivered through a traditional format using a variety of teaching-learning methods, but will be evaluated for a blend of traditional and non-traditional methods. Most courses will be offered after 4 p.m. to accommodate working students. Some courses will be offered on weekends and in concentrated summer sessions.**

**i. Student progress**

**Advising prior to admission will be done by faculty teaching thanatology courses from the various departments. The professor occupying the Weyker Endowed Chair in Thanatology, with assistance from the Thanatology Committee, will oversee and monitor student progress. Students who do not maintain a "B" average will be counseled out of the program.**

**j. Administration of the program**

**The certificate program will be administered in the College of Nursing, since the Weyker Endowment in Thanatology is housed in this college and will fund the program. The person occupying the Weyker Endowed Chair will coordinate the program with guidance from the Thanatology Committee. The occupant of the Weyker Endowed Chair reports to the Director of the Graduate Program in Nursing and to the Dean of the College of Nursing. Annual reports are made to the Rhode Island Foundation where the endowment rests. Funds for running the program, including the partial salary of the endowed chair, come from the Weyker Endowment in Thanatology. Consequently, there should not be budget implications for the College of Nursing.**

**k. Evaluation**

**i. Input:**

**Student characteristics at admission**

**Faculty and support staff characteristics**

**Curriculum--reflects course objectives, literature and workplace needs**

**Educational environment**

**Library resources--number of journals and books**

**Instructional resources--quality/number of audiovisual resources**

**Clinical resources--available sites for independent studies**

**ii. Processes:**

**Teaching effectiveness--Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs)**

**Faculty performance--self evaluations and peer reviews**

**Faculty development--continuing education; attendance at meetings**

**Student development--self evaluations**

**Educational environment--informal evaluations by students and faculty**

**Course effectiveness--informal evaluations by thanatology committee**

**Academic policies and procedures--ease of process; reports of problems**

**iii. Outcomes:**

**Student progression and achievement--number of students who complete**

**the courses and the program; number of students who pass the exam for**

**international certification**

**Relevance and program satisfaction--exit interviews**

**Scholarship--student and faculty publications**

**Service--community service contributions of students and faculty**

**Impact on professional and health care community--follow-up surveys to**

**institutions where students are employed**

**7. Time frame:**

**December-March, 2001: Approve program**

**March-May, 2001: Advertise program and courses**

**Advise students**

**Admit students to program**

**May and beyond: Offer courses and evaluate program**

**Thanatology Course Plan\***

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>FALL</b>	<b>SPRING</b>	<b>SUMMER I</b>	<b>SUMMER II</b>
<b>2000-2001</b>	HPR351 HDF471 NUR489X PSC440	HDF421	NUR523	NUR529
<b>2001-2002</b>	NUR527 HPR351 HPR 119	NUR525 NUR523 HDF	NUR524 NUR526 PSY554Q	NUR526 NUR527
<b>2002-2003</b>	NUR527 HDF	NUR523 PSY554Q	NUR525 NUR523	NUR529

**Course codes:**

**HPR 119** Loss and Grief in Children and Adolescents  
**HPR351** Honors Seminar in Interdisciplinary Studies: Impact of Death on Behavior  
**HDF421** Death, Dying and Bereavement  
**HDF471X** Responding to Grief  
**NUR360** Impact of Death on Behavior  
**NUR524** Exploring Loss through Creative Arts



**NUR525 Spirituality of Loss and Death for Health Professionals**  
**NUR526 Loss Across the Lifespan**  
**NUR527 Palliative Care (forthcoming)**  
**NUR529 Special Topics in Thanatology**  
**PHL401 Death and the Meaning of Life**  
**PHP Palliative Care: Pharmacotherapeutics**  
**PSC440 The Politics of Being Mortal**  
**PSY554Q Psychology of Traumatic Stress**

**\*Additional courses will be added to the schedule from the above list.**