

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

The Graduate School

Curricular Report from the Graduate Council to the Faculty Senate

Report No. 2003-2004-6A

Proposal for a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program in Gerontology and Geriatrics

At Meeting No. 394 held on 26 March, 2004, the Graduate Council approved the following proposal that is now submitted to the Faculty Senate.

SECTION I

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ABSTRACT

The Graduate Council approved an interdisciplinary proposal from the College of Human Sciences and Services for a 15 credit Post-baccalaureate Certificate program in Gerontology and Geriatrics. The program is designed to address what is seen as an urgent need to train health care and human service professionals in gerontology and geriatrics. The program will be made up entirely of existing courses was deemed to be of significant merit.

BACKGROUND

It is stated in the proposal that:

Several recent studies by the federal government and private foundations have highlighted the critical need to provide training in gerontology and geriatrics to health care and human service professionals to more effectively meet the multifaceted needs of this population. This program will provide an important step beyond continuing education opportunities for professionals who already possess a bachelor's or advanced degree, and may lead to further graduate training in an appropriate health or human service discipline at URI. This type of program is consistent with the University's mission to provide support for new and emerging workforce skill needs and for continuous learning in key professional areas.

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 Provost and the Council of Deans, the Budget Office, and Department Chairs and Directors. Recommendations were sought from each of these. College Deans and Department Chairs from those areas contributing to the program have signed a statement of support. The Budget Office reviewed the proposal with the understanding that no additional budgetary resources would be required for its implementation. The Council of Deans unanimously supported the program. Comments remain on file in the Graduate School.

SECTION II

RECOMMENDATION

The Graduate Council approved the proposal for the Post-baccalaureate Certificate Program at its meeting number 394, on 26 March, 2004, and forwards it to the Faculty Senate at the Class C level.

Proposal for an Interdisciplinary Graduate Certificate in
Gerontology and Geriatrics

1. Name of Department: Program in Gerontology
2. Title of Proposed Program: Graduate Certificate in Gerontology and Geriatrics
3. Intended Date of Implementation: September, 2004
4. Anticipated Date of First Certificate: December, 2006
5. Location of Program: Kingston
6. Program Description:

(a) *Rationale.* The unprecedented aging of the US population has created an urgent need to train health care and human service professionals in the fields of gerontology and geriatrics. Since 1996 the URI Program in Gerontology has housed the Rhode

Island Geriatric Education Center (RIGEC), funded by the US Bureau of Health Professions, Health Resources and Services Administration, with a federal mandate to provide continuing education for health care providers who work with older adults across the state.

This program has led to a demand for a more advanced credential from the University for program completers who already have a baccalaureate or advanced degree. In addition, the current federal grant states that RIGEC will offer such a Certificate both for professionals considering advanced study and for faculty in health care and human service programs across the region who wish to be trained in the field of gerontology and geriatrics.

(b) Workforce or Professional Development Need. Most currently practicing professionals have no training in working with older adults, and several recent studies by the federal government and private foundations have highlighted the critical need to provide training in gerontology and geriatrics to health care and human service professionals to more effectively meet the multifaceted needs of this population. This program will provide an important step beyond continuing education opportunities for professionals who already possess a bachelor's or advanced degree, and may lead to further graduate training in an appropriate health or human service discipline at URI.

Additionally, we hope this credential will attract faculty in health professions across southern New England who are interested in career change or redirection opportunities in the field of aging. This type of program is consistent with the University's mission to provide support for new and emerging workforce skill needs and for continuous learning in key professional fields.

(c) *Existing Graduate Curriculum.* RIGEC already draws from faculty associated with the URI Colleges of Human Science and Services, Nursing, and Pharmacy, and existing courses (as outlined below) will be included in the list from which students may choose for their Graduate Certificate requirements.

(d) *Other Potential Benefits.* This Certificate will enhance and expand the options available to professionals for further education in gerontology and geriatrics beyond current opportunities. It will provide an attractive, initial alternative for those not yet ready to commit to a Master's program, or an additional credential for those who already have an advanced degree in a health and human service profession. The Certificate will also increase the level of knowledge and skills of professionals practicing in this field, thereby improving the quality of care and the quality of life of our state's older residents.

(e) *Admission Requirements.* Applications to the program will require the completion of an application form. Standardized tests, such as GRE or MAT, and letters of recommendation will not be required.

(f) *Completion Requirements.* A minimum of five (5) courses (15 credits), chosen from the list below, will be required. HSS 530 (Multidisciplinary Health Seminars for the Elderly) and HDF 514 (Seminar in Older Adulthood) are the two required core courses; other courses must be chosen from one or more other departments or colleges. Students may not take more than six (6) credits of Special Problems/Directed Study/Advanced Study courses toward the requirements for the Certificate.

It is recommended that all courses be taken within a three-year period, and it is required that the Certificate be completed within a five-year period. A GPA of at least 3.0 is required. No

transfer credits from other institutions will be accepted for fulfilling the Certificate requirements.

(g) *Faculty.* Faculty associated with RIGEC and the Program in Gerontology will be the core faculty associated with this Certificate:

Gerontology/Human
Development:

Phillip G. Clark, ScD	Professor and Director, Program in Gerontology
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Sandra Saunders, MS, MPH	Associate Professor of Human Development
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Nursing:

Patricia Burbank, DNSc, RN	Professor of Nursing
Cindy Padula, PhD, RN	Associate Professor of Nursing

Pharmacy:

Anne Hume, Pharm.D	Professor of Pharmacy Practice
Norma Owens, Pharm.D	Professor of Pharmacy Practice

Physical Therapy and Exercise
Science:

Peter Blanpied, PhD, RPT	Associate Professor of Physical Therapy
Deborah Riebe, PhD, FACSM	Professor of Pharmacy Practice

Nutrition and Food
Science:

Geoffrey Greene, PhD, RD	Professor of Nutrition and Food Science
Deborah Riebe, PhD, FACSM	Associate Professor of Nutrition and Food Science

Communicative

Disorders:

John Preece, PhD Associate Professor of Communicative
Disorders

(h) *Delivery Format.* Initially traditional, although the Program in Gerontology plans to explore the development of distance education methods in the future.

(i) *Monitoring of Student Progress.* Students will complete a program of study in consultation with the Director of the Program in Gerontology. The Director will monitor the student's progress toward the completion of that program and advise the student accordingly.

(j) *Program Administration.* The Director of the URI Program in Gerontology will administer this Certificate program as part of his normal administrative duties. An interdisciplinary faculty committee will be established to oversee and provide direction to the program.

(k) *Assessment and Evaluation of Program Outcomes.* Program outcomes will be evaluated on the basis of application and completion rates, as well as on the extent to which completers apply for further graduate study at URI. In addition, structured exit interviews will be administered to determine student satisfaction with the program and the achievement of individual learning objectives. Follow-up surveys of students will assess program success in achieving relevant program outcomes.

(l) *Time Frame of Program Initiation.* Fall Semester, 2004.

Graduate Certificate in Gerontology and Geriatrics

Course List

Required Foundation Courses:

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Human Science and Services

HSS 530 Multidisciplinary Health Seminars for the Elderly

HDF 514 Seminar in Older Adulthood

Suggested Course Options*:

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Communicative Disorders

CMD 598 Special Problems

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Human Development and Family Studies

HDF 431 Family and the Elderly

HDF 440 Environmental Context of Aging

HDF 597/98 Advanced Study

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Nursing

NUR 555 Advanced Gerontological Nursing I

NUR 557 Advanced Gerontological Nursing II

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Nutrition and Food Science

NFS 506 Community Nutrition

NFS 591/92 Special Problems

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Pharmacy

PHP 440 Pharmaceutical Care for Special Populations

PHP 542 Evaluation of Controversies in Drug Literature

PHP 593 Advanced Elective Experiential Rotation in Geriatrics

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Physical Therapy

PHT 513 Directed Study

PHT 580 Pediatric and Geriatric Physical Therapy

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Exercise Science

PEX 564 Physiology of Aging

PEX 591 Special Problems