

FACULTY AGENDA ITEM NO 15-08

Date: 10/31/2014

Submitted by: Deborah Altus, Ph.D., Professor, Human Services Department, x1951

SUBJECT: Gerontology Minor

DESCRIPTION: The proposed Gerontology Minor is a program of study devoted to the examination of aging from an interdisciplinary perspective. Courses will examine the theoretical, biological, psychological, societal, political, legal, and medical aspects of aging. The minor is 18 hours, with a 9 hour core and 9 hours of electives. The required core consists of: HS 378 (Theories on Aging), PY 212 (Psychology of Adulthood and Aging), and BI 260 (Biology of Aging). These courses will provide a solid foundation for the minor, giving students an understanding of bio/psycho/social correlates of the aging process. Students will select 9 hours of electives from a list of 22 courses currently offered by CAS, SAS and Nursing. These electives will allow students to explore particular interests within Gerontology, such as public policy, health care, elder law, mental health, communications, disability, and wellness. Six hours must be upper-division. The minor will be coordinated by Dr. Deborah Altus in the Human Services Department.

RATIONALE: As our population ages, we need a workforce that is knowledgeable about issues related to aging. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, careers related to caring for older adults are projected to grow by as much as 22 percent across the next decade -- much faster than the average for all occupations. The Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) points out that "by the middle of the 21st century, one in five Americans will be over 65, and there will be 15 to 18 million persons over the age of 85. These growth trends will result in a demand for professionals with knowledge and expertise in aging. Expanded career opportunities in gerontology and geriatrics are forecast in many disciplines and professions." AGHE also adds that "the teaching of Gerontology in higher education is in a period of unprecedented growth." There are at least 113 colleges and universities across the United States that provide undergraduate and/or graduate degrees and certificates in Gerontology. In comparison, Washburn University's opportunities in Gerontology have been relatively slim. Currently, only those students majoring in Human Services may obtain an area of concentration in Gerontology. Students in other majors may obtain courses here and there in Gerontology, but not in an organized fashion that will lead to a certificate, minor or degree. The proposed minor will allow students in *any* major to take an organized sequence of courses that leads to a useful outcome – a minor. This minor will appear on their transcripts and can be put on their resumes. It will prepare them to meet the increasing workforce needs of our aging society or to pursue graduate study in Gerontology or a related field.

Financial Implications: None.

Proposed Effective Date: Fall 2015

Request for Action:

Approved by: Human Services Department: 9/09/2014
SAS Curriculum and Policy Committee: 9/16/2014
SAS Faculty Council: 9/19/2014
Interdisciplinary Studies Committee: 10/31/2014

AAC: November 10, 2014

Faculty Senate:

General Faculty: December 1, 2014

Attachments Yes No