ITEM

Item Name: Online Undergraduate Certificate in Gerontology

THAT

Montana State University - Bozeman seeks approval to create a undergraduate online certificate program in gerontology pursuant to Montana Board of Regents policy.

EXPLANATION

The purpose of this online certificate in gerontology is to provide courses specifically focused in aging to increase skills that will directly assist students and professionals in working with older adults and their families. With an increase in life expectancy and the number of baby boomers turning 65, the needs of this aging population are great. The number of individuals over the age of 65 continues to increase. Approximately 13.3% of the total U.S. population is aged 65 and older and in Montana, 15.2% of the population is aged 65 and older (Census Quick Facts, 2011). Moreover, it is estimated that by 2030, nearly 26% of Montana’s population will be 65 or older, ranking Montana 5th in the nation (Census Bureau, 2005). An online certificate in gerontology will meet the educational needs to prepare Montana residents for the increasing population of adults over the age of 65.

An online certificate in gerontology would reach new and existing students and is closely related to the mission of HHD to enrich human well-being through teaching, research and outreach. Providing further education related to aging, will enrich the well-being of MSU students and Montana residents. This certificate program is also in alignment with the strategic plan for MSU. A certificate in gerontology will prepare students to graduate equipped for careers and further education. According to the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (n.d.) career opportunities in aging are quickly expanding, and has multidisciplinary opportunities in a variety of fields. Providing an online certificate in gerontology will allow students to enhance their programs of study through specialization in aging, which will assist them in securing employment working with the aging population after graduation. Also, a certificate program would allow health professionals (for example, Certified Nursing Assistants, Professional Caregivers and Hospice workers) the opportunity to gain further education specific to aging as a means to enhance career development.

Program Oversight

A program director will be responsible for the coordination and oversight of the online gerontology certificate program. The program director will fulfill the following duties: review of admission applications, student advising, allocation of instructors, oversight of instructors and curriculum content, and review of certificate completion requirements. Dawn S. Tarabochia, PhD, CHES will be the program director for the online gerontology certificate program. Dr. Tarabochia earned her PhD from the University of Utah in Health Education and Health Promotion in 2008. She also completed a Graduate Certificate in Aging from the University of Utah Interdisciplinary Gerontology Program in 2004.
Gerontology Certificate Program Requirements

Admission Process

Students will need to apply to the certificate program. The application process will require a student transcript, student GPA, and a written essay. Admission to the undergraduate gerontology certificate program will be determined by a selection committee. The selection committee will include the program director and two additional members. These additional members may be faculty with the online undergraduate gerontology certificate program, faculty or staff in the department of Health and Human Development and/or the program manager at Extended University. Any student from any academic program at MSU-Bozeman will be eligible to apply to the certificate program. Additionally, applicants who are recommended for admission to the Certificate Program, but who are not current, degree seeking Montana State University students will need to apply to the Montana State University Admissions Office for non-degree status and pay the application fee.

Program Requirements

Upon entry into the certificate program, students will need to complete all three required courses. Additionally, students will need to complete two additional elective courses for a total of 15 credits. Students must complete all coursework with a C or better in order to be awarded a certificate in gerontology. Required and elective courses are described below.

Courses & Course Descriptions

Required Courses

Adult Development and Aging (existing course)

FCS 261 3 credits

This course will focus on the adult stages of the lifespan and families with adult children; issues include intergenerational relationships; gender differences in individual, family, and career development; and the demographic and economic consequences of an aging population.

Physical Activity, Nutrition & Health in Aging

CHTH 245 3 credits

As an introductory course, students will examine research associated with physical activity, nutrition, and health related needs of older adults. Students will gain knowledge and skills on how to safely and effectively meet the needs of older adults as it relates to physical activity, nutrition, and health. Health disparities of the aged will also be explored.
Practicum in Gerontology

CHTH 495 3 credits

Supervised experience in programs for older adults. Students will be required to spend 135 hours in an approved environment for older adults. This may include retirement communities, assisted living facilities, rehabilitation programs, senior living communities, and an array of federal, state and local agencies and non-profit organizations dedicated to older adults.

Elective Courses

Economics & Public Policies in Aging

CHTH 325 3 credits

Students will explore various issues associated with economic impact U.S. policies, health and long-term care insurance, Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid, family financial impacts, and estate planning. Economics associated with rural health and Native American populations will also be addressed.

Caregiving & Aging Families

CHTH 405 3 credits

Students will examine research findings and written materials to understand formal and informal caregiving trends within the United States. Students will also be provided practical information regarding issues and challenges associated with families’ response to the needs, emotions and stressors associated with caregiving. Native American and rural populations will be discussed.

Mental Health & Social Issues in Aging

CHTH 430 3 credits

Students will explore various issues associated with aging, mental health issues and social factors that impact health. This course will incorporate advocacy and service learning. Native American and rural populations will be explored.

Principles of Well-being in Aging

FCS 461 3 credits

Students will explore well-being models and aging issues. Specifically, the HHD well-being model will be used to introduce students to a variety of issues associated with aging and the five dimensions of well-being. Issues associated with prevention and treatment will be addressed.

ATTACHMENTS
Please see Level I request form