Proposal for a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology

Submitted

by the

Interdisciplinary Graduate (Minor) Gerontology Program
West Lafayette Campus
Application for a Graduate Level, Academic Credit, New Certificate Program at Purdue University

The Interdisciplinary Graduate Gerontology Program of Purdue University

December 21, 2001

The Application

**Graduate Certificate in Gerontology**
The Interdisciplinary Graduate Gerontology Program at Purdue University is a unique university program, which is at a propitious moment in its short history. It has a record of success in furthering aging research at Purdue, educating graduate students from diverse disciplines and is now reaching out to serve adults in its community. To that end, we apply for a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology to further enhance our educational objectives, while simultaneously providing an important educational service to community professionals seeking advanced training in gerontology and aging-related topics.

**Background for the Proposal**

**Gerontology Education at Purdue**
The Interdisciplinary Graduate Gerontology Program of Purdue University (IGGP) began in 1996. The Program has had funding through the Purdue Academic Reinvestment Program (ARP) and was recently awarded a 2001 ARP Grant under the title: Interdisciplinary Gerontology Program, Phase III. The mission of the IGGP is to, “Promote interdisciplinary research and education on aging at Purdue University that improves the quality of human life. We seek to generate, integrate, disseminate and apply gerontological knowledge that addresses complex life course topics.” As the proportion of older adults throughout the world continues to increase, there is an unprecedented need for research, services, professionals, and innovative products to address this remarkable population shift.

Purdue University has a rich history of research, teaching and service in the area of aging and gerontology. Selected faculty members at Purdue have been studying aspects of the aging process and its implications for decades. Indeed, over 60 faculty members from 24 departments either teach courses or conduct research on aging. The Interdisciplinary
Graduate Gerontology Program was developed to engage faculty and students from diverse programs of research and study in an effort to better understand the aging process and enhance the well-being of older adults. The IGGP has three principal objectives. The Program provides a forum and resources for faculty to share ideas and collaborate on research projects. Second, the IGGP provides a unique interdisciplinary educational experience in gerontology for graduate students enrolled in the Gerontology Minor. Finally, the IGGP links faculty and students with older adults in clinical and community-based settings so that realistic tests of innovative ideas can be judged by those who will likely benefit most by their use.

**Current Status of the Program**

With regard to the first objective, the IGGP has been extraordinarily successful in securing extramural funding acquiring more than ten times the amount of the Academic reinvestment Award. In the past year alone there were 24 IGGP faculty associates with extramural funding of aging-related research. With respect to the educational mission of the IGGP, the Graduate Minor is unique among universities that offer graduate education in gerontology. Graduate students complete 15 hours of coursework from offerings provided by selected members of the Faculty Associates of the IGGP on the Purdue campus. The major fields of the graduate students represent a broad range of disciplines: audiology, psychology, sociology, health promotion, family therapy, pharmacy practice, educational counseling, educational technology, and veterinary medicine. By their involvement in the Gerontology Minor, graduate students have the unique opportunity to synthesize the aging-related perspectives of the diverse faculty they will meet in their coursework and apply this knowledge to their own disciplines.

The final objective of the IGGP is continuing to evolve as graduate students, Faculty Associates and administrators of the IGGP seek community field settings for research, education and service opportunities. It is in pursuit of this objective that those administering the IGGP came to realize a unique opportunity to provide an educational experience for the many community practitioners currently involved in service to older adults. Like the graduate students from diverse disciplines previously described, community practitioners typically have undergraduate or graduate degrees only tangentially related to gerontology, yet they are often called upon to plan, implement and evaluate complicated programs designed to serve an increasingly older population.

**I. Admission Requirements**

A. This proposal is for a “graduate certificate program” as defined by the Graduate School. It is a practitioner-oriented, post-baccalaureate program of study that is less than a master’s degree and requires a baccalaureate degree for admission. This certificate requires all of its credits to be taken at the 500-level or higher.
1. Applicants are required to show evidence of completion of a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution.
2. Applicants must show evidence of a minimum GPA of 3.0/4.0 with the possibility of conditional admission for those who do not meet this requirement.
3. Applicants whose native language is not English, must earn a minimum TOEFL score of 550. Exceptions would be allowed and alternative criteria are possible.

B. Students currently admitted to a degree program may pursue the Interdisciplinary Graduate Minor (15 credit hours) which is offered by the IGGP. The proposed application for a Certificate in Gerontology is designed for practitioners who are not currently enrolled in a graduate degree program. Applicants currently admitted to, or enrolled in, a graduate degree program are not eligible for the Graduate Certificate.

II. Completion Requirement

A. 1. Consistent with the requirements of the Graduate School, the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology requires a minimum of 10 credit hours taken for a letter grade.
2. Applicants are advised that no more than 12 credit hours earned in nondegree status, including credit hours earned toward completion of a single certificate or more than one certificate, may be applied toward a graduate degree. Students enrolled in graduate degree programs who previously completed the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology are advised that the transfer of credit toward the requirements for the Graduate Minor in Gerontology may be considered.
3. Courses certified as undergraduate excess may be used to satisfy requirements for the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology depending on the nature of the course content, evidence of satisfactory student performance, and level of the course taken (500 level or greater).

B. 1. The Graduate Certificate in Gerontology requires a minimum of 10 credit hours from a list of approved courses at the 500 level or greater. Two courses are required of all students: CDFS 565 (current designator): Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Aging, 3 credits and VCS 602 (current designator): Biology of Aging, 1 or 3 credits.
2. A minimum of 10 credit hours must be taken for a letter grade. Additional courses beyond the minimum may be taken on a Pass/fail basis.
3. The Graduate Certificate in Gerontology requires that the 10 required credits be earned with a minimum grade of “B” or better. All students are required to take two courses: CDFS 565 (current designator): Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Aging and VCS 602 (current designator): Biology of Aging. There are no other specific or unique course requirements required for the certificate.

4. a) The minimum overall GPA for courses used to satisfy requirements for the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology is 3.0/4.0.
   b) The minimum grade for any course applied toward the certificate is “B.”

5. Credits may not be transferred from another institution.

6. No credits from undergraduate courses may be used toward the Graduate Certificate.

7. The maximum time allowed for completion of the certificate is 3 years from the time of entry into the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology Program.

8. Courses taken for completion of the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology may not be applied toward any other certificate.

9. Credit hours from approved courses taken prior to admission to the Graduate Certificate Program may be counted toward completion of the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology. No more than 6 credits of previously completed courses may be applied to the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology.

III. Administration

A. Administration of the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology proceeds in a manner consistent with the procedures specified by the Graduate School.

1. The admission process parallels that for degree-seeking students at the graduate level. Applicants are reviewed by a subcommittee (Educational Policy Committee) of the Gerontology Steering Committee, which is made up of volunteers from the Gerontology Faculty Associates.

2. The Office of the Registrar establishes a special admission status for Graduate Gerontology Certificate students.

3. When students complete the requirements for the certificate, the Educational Policy Committee of the IGGP gives notice to the Graduate School. The Graduate School subsequently notifies the Registrar.

4. a) Transcripting is consistent with other Purdue University Graduate Certificate Programs.
   b) Each certificate earned is posted separately upon completion of requirements.
   c) Graduate Certificate will be recorded in this manner:

   GRADUATE CERTIFICATE
   FIELD OF STUDY: Gerontology
   SPECIALIZATION: Interdisciplinary Studies on Aging
5. The certificate will be printed by the Graduate School.
6. The Interdisciplinary Graduate Gerontology Program and the Graduate School will award the certificate jointly. The certificate will bear the signature of the Director of the IGGP and the dean of the Graduate School.
7. Certificates will be awarded at normal times when Purdue degrees are conferred.
8. The IGGP submits an annual report to the Graduate Council which specifies: a) the number of students admitted to the certificate program, b) the date each student is admitted, c) data regarding any other certificate programs or degree programs each student may also be pursuing, d) number of credits each student has completed toward fulfillment of certificate requirements, e) the number of certificates awarded annually.

B. The Educational Policy Committee

1. The Educational Policy Committee reviews the progress of all Graduate Gerontology Certificate students each semester during the academic year. The Associate Director submits the names of students to the Educational Policy Committee to assess student progress and the evaluation of all requirements. Determination of suitability for award of the certificate is the responsibility of the Gerontology Educational Policy Committee. When the Committee endorses action, the Associate Director for Graduate and Community Education will provide the Graduate School with all data pertaining to the Gerontology Certificate and its students specified in A. (8) above.
2. Earned Certificates are given to the Director of the IGGP who ensures that each is delivered to the appropriate student.

IV. Summary of the Proposal for a New Certificate Program

a) Title of the proposed certificate: Graduate Certificate in Gerontology.
b) The purpose of the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology is to provide community professionals who serve older adults the opportunity to enhance their knowledge base in those areas related to the study of aging. It is possible that students enrolled in
the certificate program will find it advantageous to further their graduate education by applying for admission to a Masters or Doctoral program. As previously stated in section II, B (1) the certificate proposed herein is specifically designed for practitioners not currently enrolled in a degree program at Purdue University, although the possibility that excellent certificate students may be recruited into existing graduate programs is deemed a further advantage of the certificate option. The Faculty Associates of the IGGP of Purdue University recognize that the challenges confronting an aging society require complex solutions requiring an interdisciplinary approach. At the present time there are no graduate programs in gerontology available to potential certificate applicants who reside in the Central Indiana area. The interdisciplinary approach offers a unique opportunity for community professionals and is entirely consistent with the engagement priorities of Purdue University. In order to expand the potential outreach of the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology, the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service has been approached. If approved, selected courses could be offered via distance education technology and received, monitored and promoted by Cooperative Extension Learning Centers throughout the state of Indiana. No additional faculty members are requested to implement the proposed certificate program.

c) The proposed date of initiation of the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology is August, 2002.

d) As previously described the proposed certificate is a “graduate certificate” requiring all coursework at the 500-level or above.

1. Program Approval.

a) As previously described, the Interdisciplinary Graduate Gerontology Program is truly an interdisciplinary effort, funded by recurring Academic Reinvestment Funds and comprised of faculty from numerous departments and Schools. There is no “home” department or School and therefore no specific academic head of a graduate program or dean that will offer the certificate. The Graduate Certificate in Gerontology is proposed as a truly interdisciplinary educational program jointly administered by the IGGP and the Graduate School. It is anticipated that in the absence of a “School of Interdisciplinary Studies” at Purdue University, the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology may be the first of several that will emanate from a coalition of faculty members across several Schools. The IGGP proposes that this
The certificate application is entirely consistent with an innovative educational option typical of Purdue University, interdisciplinary in its approach and substantive in its fulfillment of the University’s engagement mission.

b) It is understood by the IGGP that an appropriate “area committee” will be appointed to review the application for the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of gerontological research, education, and engagement at Purdue University, and the relative success of this approach as evidenced by the continued progress of the IGGP, it is requested that the Graduate School appoint an interdisciplinary “area committee” to review the merits of this application.

c) It is understood that the dean of the Graduate School will inform the Director of the IGGP regarding the decision of the Graduate Council.

Applicants for the Proposed Certificate and Administrators of the Interdisciplinary Graduate Gerontology Program at Purdue University.

Gerald Hyner, Associate Director for Graduate and Community Education and Professor of Health

David Waters, Associate Director for Biological and Medical Sciences and Professor of Veterinary Clinical Sciences

Janet Wilmoth, Associate Director for Social and Behavioral Sciences and Associate Professor of Sociology

Ken Ferraro, Director of the Gerontology Program and Professor of Sociology
Purdue Gerontology Program

Application for a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology

To: Jon Story, Associate Dean, Graduate School

From: Deans of Participating Units of the Interdisciplinary Graduate Gerontology Program

Date: April 16, 2002

Regarding: Application for a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology

We have reviewed the application for a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology submitted by the Purdue Gerontology Program and with our signatures we hereby endorse the attached application.

Deans of Participating Schools:

[Signatures]

Dean Harry Morrison
School of Science

Dean Alan Rebar
School of Veterinary Medicine

Dean Margaret Rowe School of Liberal Arts

Dean Dennis Savaiano
School of Consumer and Family Sciences
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