Program: Gerontology Bachelors of Science

Number of students enrolled in the program in Fall, 2011: CMS data show 69 students enrolled (as of December 15, 2011- up from 39 Fall 2010).

Faculty member completing template: Cheryl Osborne     Date: 2.3.12

Period of reference in the template: 2006-07 to present

1. Please describe your program’s learning-outcomes trajectory since 2006-07: Has there been a transformation of organizational culture regarding the establishment of learning outcomes and the capacity to assess progress toward their achievement? If so, during which academic year would you say the transformation became noticeable? What lies ahead; what is the next likely step in developing a learning-outcomes organizational culture within the program?

Since the inception of the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Major in 1990, the Program’s organizational culture has always embraced using learning outcomes to measure student learning. Throughout this time, but especially during the past five years, faculty members have increasingly used both direct and indirect methods to assess, redefine, modify, and align terminal Learning Outcomes (LO). Specific elements of these Program LO are explicated further in course and class learning outcomes for all major core courses and most of the interdisciplinary core courses (alignment for all courses was reviewed and appropriate changes made along with identified High Impact Learning Practices as noted in the 2010 Program Review, p.18). Assessment of the Communication LO - both written and/or presentation - represented here as LO#4 – (Appendix A) is completed yearly in major core courses, and with the assistance of interdisciplinary faculty members, is beginning to be included in required interdisciplinary core courses. Additionally, overall Program LO assessment and evaluation continues to be measured each semester in the Internship Capstone course by faculty, intern supervisor, and student. The current Assessment Plan calls for review of Program LO #2 beginning Spring 2012. It is also planned that random Capstone Course Portfolio reviews will include more specific documentation of the University Learning Goals within evaluation of LO #2.

2. Please list in prioritized order (or indicate no prioritization regarding) up to four desired learning outcomes (“takeaways” concerning such elements of curriculum as perspectives, specific content knowledge, skill sets, confidence levels) for students completing the program. For each stated outcome, please provide the reason that it was designated as desired by the faculty associated with the program.

In Summary, the broad “takeaways” are 1.) current evidence-based research knowledge, 2.) applied critical thinking, 3.) awareness and appreciation of others and community (beyond themselves) that is professionally demonstrated in all human interactions, and 4.) effective oral, written, and interpersonal communication.
The following 4 outcomes combine the 6 realigned Gerontology Program Learning Outcomes adopted in Spring 2010 as a result of the Program Review process (Appendix B). As they all inter-relate, they were not prioritized.

a.) Demonstrate understanding of fundamental interdisciplinary evidence-based knowledge, theories, skills, values, and current trends as a basis for competent gerontological practice. Students must be able to transfer and apply what they learn into practice in order to implement the necessary interventions they will use when they encounter the complex issues/challenges faced by elders/their families in a variety of situations/settings.

b.) Demonstrate critical thinking when analyzing diverse and complex aging issues and outcomes for elders, families, and society from an interdisciplinary perspective that is grounded in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Working with elders/their families is multidimensional, complex, and ever changing therefore current knowledge-based critical thinking is fundamental when assessing and intervening in the myriad of interdisciplinary situations faced by gerontologists in their professional roles.

c.) Demonstrate social and cultural awareness, sensitivity, respect, and support of multiple perspectives when interacting with others along with exhibiting personal and social responsibility, and ethical and professional behavior in all settings. These attributes, in part, define an educated, engaged, and contributing individual as well as underpin all successful human interactions. Additionally, employers require these attributes in their employees.

d.) Exhibit effective use of basic communication (written, oral and interpersonal) skills and information technology needed in a global information society. Gerontologists must have all three communication skill sets in order to successfully complete their professional career tasks and remain employed.

3. For undergraduate programs only, in what ways are the set of desired learning outcomes described above aligned with the University’s Baccalaureate Learning Goals? Please be as specific as possible.

The 2010 Program Review, documented alignment of the Interdisciplinary Gerontology Program Learning Outcomes (LO) with the University’s Baccalaureate LO (based on the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) Essential Learning Outcomes). Both Program and University LO are further defined in gerontology courses by course/class objectives and measured by success on exams, multiple written assignments, and individual and group presentations. The most inclusive measure of success is completed in the Internship capstone courses through the use of a Portfolio. This requires students to present their negotiated individual learning contract, resume, all course assignments, and all written evaluations (self, field supervisor, and agency); documenting the level of accomplishment of the course and Program LO (Appendix C). Current and previous major core course assignments are also included for comparison. Course faculty evaluate Portfolios and a faculty evaluations are written, shared with the student, and placed in the student’s file. Random samples of Portfolios are analyzed for Program Assessment once per year.

Alignment of the (combined) Program Learning Outcomes and the University LO are for depicted below. Overall outcome headings are used to describe outcome alignment as noted on
Program Learning Outcomes | University Baccalaureate LO
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a.) Demonstrate understanding of fundamental interdisciplinary evidence-based knowledge, theories, skills, values, and current trends as a basis for competent gerontological practice. | Competence in the Disciplines Knowledge of Human Cultures & the Physical & Natural World Integrative Learning (Interdisciplinary, Service Learning, Capstone course)
b.) Demonstrate critical thinking when analyzing diverse and complex aging issues and outcomes for elders, families, and society from an interdisciplinary perspective that is grounded in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. | Competence in the Disciplines Knowledge of Human Cultures & the Physical & Natural World Intellectual & Practical Skills Integrative Learning (Interdisciplinary, Service Learning, Capstone course)
c.) Demonstrate social and cultural awareness, sensitivity, respect, and support of multiple perspectives when interacting with others along with exhibiting personal and social responsibility, and ethical and professional behavior in all settings. | Competence in the Disciplines Knowledge of Human Cultures & the Physical & Natural World Intellectual & Practical Skills Personal & Social Awareness Integrative Learning (Interdisciplinary, Service Learning, Capstone course)
d.) Exhibit effective use of basic communication (written, oral and interpersonal) skills and information technology needed in a global information society. | Intellectual & Practical Skills Personal & Social Awareness Integrative Learning (Interdisciplinary, Service Learning, Capstone course)

4. For each desired outcome indicated in item 2 above, please (describe the following):
   a. Describe the method(s) by which its ongoing pursuit is monitored and measured.
   b. Include a description of the sample of students (e.g., random sample of transfer students declaring the major; graduating seniors) from whom data were/will be collected and the frequency and schedule with which the data in question were/will be collected.
   c. Describe and append a sample (or samples) of the “instrument” (e.g., survey or test), “artifact” (e.g., writing sample and evaluative protocol, performance review sheet), or other device used to assess the status of the learning outcomes desired by the program.
   d. Explain how the program faculty analyzed and evaluated (will analyze and evaluate) the data to reach conclusions about each desired student learning outcome.

Demonstrate understanding of fundamental interdisciplinary evidence-based knowledge, theories, skills, values, and current trends as a basis for competent gerontological practice.

a.) Method(s) by which the ongoing pursuit is monitored and measured.
   Ongoing monitoring and measurement of this Learning Outcome is accomplished by evaluating the Course objectives (derived from the Program’s LO); using Grading rubrics for
Research papers, Reflective Papers, Critical Thinking Assignments and Service Learning Journals; faculty evaluation of all required aspects of the Capstone Portfolio; LO focused questions on Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys.

b.) Sample
All students’ assignments from each Major core course are analyzed related to the specific Program LOs at the end of the semester the course is offered (once/year). All student, supervisor, and faculty evaluations along with student paper comparisons from various courses presented in the Capstone Portfolio are randomly analyzed each Spring for all LO. Data analysis from Learning Outcomes (#12, 13, 16, & 23) from the Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys, are completed once/year.

c.) Describe and append a sample (or samples) of the “instrument”
Appended instruments used to measure this LO include: individual (sample) course grading rubrics (Appendix D) the Capstone Portfolio Student Self Evaluation form (Appendix C); the Portfolio Checklist (Appendix E); the “Purpose and Organization” portion of the Written/Presentation Communication Rubric (Appendix F); the Alumni Survey (Appendix G). Others used but not included in this report are Supervisor and Faculty evaluations of Internship student’s experiences.

d.) Explain how the program faculty analyzed and evaluated (will analyze and evaluate) the data to reach conclusions about each desired student learning outcome.
Course faculty members analyze course data related to Program LO once/year when courses are offered and make recommendations (Appendix A). Data are discussed during faculty meetings and any identified changes are agreed on and implemented when the course is offered the next year. Also included and discussed yearly are data from the Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys.

Demonstrate critical thinking when analyzing diverse and complex aging issues and outcomes for elders, families, and society from an interdisciplinary perspective that is grounded in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

a) Method(s) by which the ongoing pursuit is monitored and measured.
Ongoing monitoring and measurement of this Outcome is accomplished by evaluating the Course objectives (derived from the Program’s LO); using Grading rubrics for Research papers, Reflective Papers, Critical Thinking Assignments and Service Learning Journals; faculty evaluation of all required aspects of the Capstone Portfolio; LO focused questions on Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys. More specific Program LO measurement of this objective will be completed Spring 2012.

b) Sample
All students’ assignments from each Major core course are analyzed related to the specific Program LOs at the end of the semester the course is offered (once/year). Data collection on this LO will be added Fall 2012. All student, supervisor, and faculty evaluations along with student paper comparisons from various courses presented in the Capstone Portfolio are randomly analyzed each Spring for all LO. Data analysis from Learning Outcomes (#17, 18, 19 & 25) from the Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys, are completed once/year.
c) Describe and append a sample (or samples) of the “instrument”
Appended instruments used to currently measure this LO include: individual (sample) course grading rubrics (Appendix D) the Capstone Portfolio comparison of a variety of earlier course papers (no rubric yet); the Portfolio Checklist (Appendix E); the “Purpose and Organization” portion of the Written/Presentation Communication Rubric (Appendix F); the Alumni Survey (Appendix G). Supervisor evaluations of Internship student’s experiences are also used but not included in this report.

d.) Explain how the program faculty analyzed and evaluated (will analyze and evaluate) the data to reach conclusions about each desired student learning outcome.
Course faculty members analyze course data related to Program LO once/year when courses are offered and make recommendations (Appendix A). Data are discussed during faculty meetings and any identified changes are agreed on and implemented when the course is offered the next year. Also included and discussed yearly are data from the Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys. To more systematically measure this LO, Program faculty will adopt a Program Critical Thinking Rubric in Spring 2012 and begin its use in selected courses in Fall 2012.

Demonstrate social and cultural awareness, sensitivity, respect, and support of multiple perspectives when interacting with others along with exhibiting personal and social responsibility, and ethical and professional behavior in all settings.

a) Method(s) by which its ongoing pursuit is monitored and measured.
Ongoing monitoring and measurement of this Outcome, is accomplished by evaluating the Course objectives (derived from the Program’s LO); using Grading rubrics for Research papers, Reflective Papers, Critical Thinking Assignments and Service Learning Journals; faculty evaluation of all required aspects of the Capstone Portfolio; LO focused questions on Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys.

b) Sample
All students’ assignments from each Major core course are analyzed related to the specific Program LOs at the end of the semester the course is offered (once/year). All student, supervisor, and faculty evaluations along with student paper comparisons from various courses presented in the Capstone Portfolio are randomly analyzed each Spring for all LO. Data analysis from Learning Outcomes (#20, 21, & 22) from the Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys, are completed once/year.

c) Describe and append a sample (or samples) of the “instrument
Appended instruments used to currently measure this LO include: individual (sample) course grading rubrics (Appendix D) the Capstone Portfolio comparison of a variety of earlier course papers (no rubric yet); the Portfolio Checklist (Appendix E); the “Purpose and Organization” portion of the Written/Presentation Communication Rubric (Appendix F); the Alumni Survey (Appendix G). Supervisor evaluations of Internship student’s experiences are also used but not included in this report.

d.) Explain how the program faculty analyzed and evaluated (will analyze and evaluate) the data to reach conclusions about each desired student learning outcome.
Course faculty members analyze course data related to Program LO once/year when courses are offered and make recommendations (Appendix A). Data are discussed during faculty meetings and any identified changes are agreed on and implemented when the course is offered the next year. Also included and discussed yearly are data from the Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys. To more systematically measure this LO, Program faculty are exploring standardized methods to measure this LO outcome for future assessment.

Exhibit effective use of basic communication (written, oral and interpersonal) skills and information technology needed in a global information society.

a) **Method(s) by which its ongoing pursuit is monitored and measured.**

Ongoing monitoring and measurement of this Outcome, is accomplished by using the following: Program approved Written/Presentation Communication Rubric in all Major Core courses; evaluating the Course objectives (derived from the Program’s LO); using Grading rubrics for Research papers, Reflective Papers, Critical Thinking Assignments and Service Learning Journals; faculty evaluation of all required aspects of the Capstone Portfolio; LO focused questions on Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys.

b.) **Sample**

All students’ assignments from each Major core course are analyzed related to the specific Program LOs at the end of the semester the course is offered (once/year) using the Program approved Written/Presentation Communication Rubric. All student, supervisor, and faculty evaluations along with student paper comparisons from various courses presented in the Capstone Portfolio are randomly analyzed each Spring for all LO. Data analysis from Learning Outcomes (#14, 15, & 24) from the Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys, are completed once/year.

c.) **Describe and append a sample (or samples) of the “instrument”**

The majority of assessment data for measuring this Learning Outcome are drawn from the Written/Presentation Communication Rubric (Appendix F) and the Alumni Survey (Appendix G). As with all other LO, other measures are used and include: individual (sample) course grading rubrics (Appendix D) the Capstone Portfolio comparison of a variety of earlier course papers (no rubric yet); the Portfolio Checklist (Appendix E); and Internship Supervisor evaluations of Internship student’s abilities are also used but not included in this report.

d.) **Explain how the program faculty analyzed and evaluated (will analyze and evaluate) the data to reach conclusions about each desired student learning outcome.**

As for all Program Outcomes, course faculty members analyze course data related to Program LO once/year when courses are offered and make recommendations (Appendix A). Data are discussed during faculty meetings and any identified changes are agreed on and implemented when the course is offered the next year. Also included and discussed yearly are data from the Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys.

5. Regarding each outcome and method discussed in items 2 and 4 above, please provide examples of how findings from the learning outcomes process have been utilized to address decisions to revise or maintain elements of the curriculum (including decisions to alter the
program’s desired outcomes). If such decision-making has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur.

Although Assessment and modification are ongoing, the 2012 Gerontology Program Review provided added opportunity to assess, evaluate, discuss, modify and affirm the Program’s strengths, areas for growth, future direction, and to plan for future demographic, student and faculty/staff, and university needs. As noted earlier the previous Learning Outcomes were condensed to six based on assessment data from students, faculty and SSIS administrator, Community Advisory Council input, and current curricular trends at the state and national levels. This analysis afforded realignment of Program LO with University, LEAP, and National AGHE Core competencies. This has positioned us to deliver a current, easy to understand curriculum that meets current/future academic standards and produces an extremely marketable individual for today’s aging society. Changes are evident in course syllabi, and in the Program Review document.

a.) **Demonstrate understanding of fundamental interdisciplinary evidence-based knowledge, theories, skills, values, and current trends as a basis for competent gerontological practice.**

   Changed some textbooks to ones that more clearly reflect current trends in elder health, illness and societal changes; incorporated even more exposure to a variety of interdisciplinary theories/skills throughout class content, assignments and internships; modified assignments to keep pace with changing evidence-based (EB) research such as increasing content on changing housing opportunities and elder health and transportation needs using regional data (Area 4 Agency on Aging) and national research (AOA, NCOA, etc).

b.) **Demonstrate critical thinking when analyzing diverse and complex aging issues and outcomes for elders, families, and society from an interdisciplinary perspective that is grounded in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities.**

   Modified assignments include more critical thinking/problem solving components; used more case studies; required more focus on EB application in Service Learning and Internship practice and Journals. Program Rubric will be formulated Spring 2012.

c.) **Demonstrate social and cultural awareness, sensitivity, respect, and support of multiple perspectives when interacting with others along with exhibiting personal and social responsibility, and ethical and professional behavior in all settings.**

   Included specific course objectives to assure components of this LO were addressed. Added topic related discussion in all classes to connect these personal and professional components; added even more variety in practice sites; and included objectives in courses to better measure these attributes.

d.) **Exhibit effective use of basic communication (written, oral and interpersonal) skills and information technology needed in a global information society.**

   Rubrics were formulated, tested, and used for all Major core course written and presentation assignments and have been used for the past two years (Appendix F). This has helped students to understand the assignment components as well as give direction for grading within the course, and has facilitated more consistent Program data gathering, analysis, and change related to communication.
6. **Has the program systematically sought data from alumni to measure the longer-term effects of accomplishment of the program’s learning outcomes? If so, please describe the approach to this information-gathering and the ways in which the information will be applied to the program’s curriculum. If such activity has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur.**

One of the activities completed for the Program’s 2010 Program Review (p. 16) was to review and update the Alumni and Graduating Senior Surveys and collect data from both groups to analyze the effectiveness of Program Outcome efforts to date and to guide future decisions. The Alumni Survey was reviewed and updated (Appendix G). Data from the undergraduate Alumni Survey (n=16) reflected very positive responses to all questions except from one alumna (Appendix K in 2010 Review document). Alumni students’ responses showed they were either satisfied or very satisfied (81-94%) regarding the overall program. Answers to specific questions regarding how well the curriculum provided opportunities to develop skills that were reflective of Program Learning Outcomes were also examples of Program success: 82-95% of students responded to these questions as adequately to exceptionally well! Faculty members were generally encouraged by these results, determining that these responses acknowledged the continued work done to provide students with a well-rounded, evidence-based applied curriculum that they used as they advanced their professional skills in the workforce. These data were incorporated into faculty/curriculum and Community Advisory Council meeting discussions in Spring 2010 and Fall 2011. More written assignments, community practice experiences, and direct and indirect evaluation during internships were incorporated into Major core courses. To assist students and faculty, Grading Rubrics continued to be refined and used for assessment and analysis of these assignments and Program Evaluation. The Graduating Senior Surveys were collected Spring 10 (n=4) and Fall 11(n=3) and will be analyzed Summer 2012.

7. **Does the program pursue learning outcomes identified by an accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization as important? Does the set of outcomes pursued by your program exceed those identified as important by your accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization?**

The national discipline-related professional organization governing Gerontology is the Association of Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE). Their published curricular guidelines were used in the original development of all the Gerontology programs/degrees. Since then, these standards, and more recently the nationally revised professional Gerontology Core Competencies (Appendix H), have been incorporated into all major core class course objectives (included in all course Syllabi) and used to redesign, implement, and evaluate the currency and applicability of Program LO. This is vital to our Program as it provides national curricular standardization to assure ongoing currency, student/graduate and program comparability and provides employers with “minimal” knowledge and skill standards for those working with elders and their families. It is also requisite for national recognition as a quality program. Additionally, this involvement positions the Gerontology Program to participate in AGHE’s nationally recognized Program of Merit in the future when the budget allows. Furthermore, continued involvement in this organization and use of the newly updated Gerontology Core Competencies assures curricular compatibility as the national accreditation movement moves forward. Alignment of AGHE Core
Competencies with Program LO will be completed by the end of Spring 2012 and included in Gerontology Program’s assessment of LO #2.

Some of the Program Outcomes exceed the basic standards identified by AHGE in that we have implemented specific high impact learning applied assignments, activities, and experiences in all Major core courses to advance the applied science of the discipline. All courses include “writing intensive” level assignments and collaborative assignments, and direct application projects. Five courses use service learning and the internships are closely supervised academic experiences (2010 Program document, p. 18; course syllabus on the Gerontology website). These high impact learning experiences include specific direct application and evaluation of knowledge, skills, and services so students can demonstrate how they take and integrate learning into their practice.

8. Finally, what additional information would you like to share with the Senate Committee on Instructional Program Priorities regarding the program’s desired learning outcomes and assessment of their accomplishment?

Learning occurs with support from all aspects of an academic community. The following are strengths that help students achieve the expected Gerontology LO (2012 Program Review):

Students
• An active, involved, growing student body who communicate and support each other in their learning experiences: FSMP/Ambassador program, National Honor Society, Gerontology Club.
• Passionate students who are committed/willing to learn and apply learning - not just get a degree.

Faculty & Staff
• Highly qualified/dedicated long-term part time faculty members who “live and work” in the areas they teach and willingly go above and beyond expectations to enhance student learning and participate in programmatic development and implementation.
• Highly qualified/committed full time interdisciplinary faculty who actively participate in the maintenance and growth of the curriculum in addition to working in their own departments.
• Direct faculty involvement in all community-based programming that insures currency as well as achievement of LO.
• Skilled/dedicated/student-focused staff member.
• Creative/supportive College administration.

Community
• Interested/active community members serving on the Gerontology Program/Longevity Center Advisory Council who evaluate Program LO relation in to knowledge/ desired for employment.
• Agency supervisors who devote time/knowledge to student learning and evaluate progress toward LO accomplishment (provide formal and informal data) as well as provide feedback on employability of students with whom they are working.