X. Special Major (Special Master’s Program) in PPA and Gerontology

Substantive Emphasis Related to Gerontology and Public Policy & Administration

A. OVERVIEW

This document sets forth guidelines for students wishing to develop Special Major Master’s degree programs combining gerontology and public policy/administration (PPA) courses (hereafter known as special master’s programs in PPA and gerontology).

B. BACKGROUND AND NEED

In recent years, several students have approached gerontology and PPA faculty about developing special master's programs drawing on curriculum elements from both units. Some of these students have a deep interest in advocating for public policies that serve the interests of elderly Americans. Others desire to work in capacities that require both substantive gerontological knowledge and understanding of the policy and administrative arenas.

We believe that the University is well served by permitting special master's degree programs that combine courses from both units. At the same time, we have a mutual interest in ensuring that such special programs are coherent and rigorous. Such an interest is reflected in the present set of guidelines.

The guidelines outlined in this document are in addition to the general standards for special master's programs developed by the University's Graduate Center. Students should obtain and consult the Graduate Center standards.

C. PREREQUISITES

Before a special master's program in PPA and gerontology can be approved, a prospective student needs to meet the following prerequisites:

Complete introductory level college courses in the following subjects with grades of B or better:
1) statistics and/or research methods;
2) introduction to American government; and
3) microeconomics.
D. SPONSOR AND COMMITTEE

All Special Major students in this area must choose as their faculty sponsor either the director of the Gerontology Program or the chair of the Department of Public Policy and Administration. The remaining two faculty committee members must come from these two disciplines, and every committee must include representation from both disciplines. Students must also obtain approval from the Office of Graduate Studies.

E. REQUIRED COURSES

Student in the special master’s programs in PPA and gerontology must complete the following courses:

- GER 101, Elder Care Continuum Services and Strategies
- GER 102, Social Policy for a Aging Society

Note: The Director of the Gerontology Program may waive the above requirements and authorize substitution of other courses if a student has already completed similar course work.

- GER 200, Adaption to Age Related Changes
- GER 221, Models for Successful Longevity
- GER 222, Managing Disorders in Elders
- GER 295, Internship/Project
- PPA 200, Introduction to Public Policy and Administration
- PPA 205, Research in Public Policy and Administration
- PPA 210, Political Environment of Policy Making, or PPA 240A, Public Management and Administration
- PPA 220A, Applied Economic Analysis, or PPA 230, Public Budgeting and Finance
- ID 500, Thesis Seminar

Except as specified above, any modifications to these requirements must be approved by the directors of both programs, and will only be permitted under unusual circumstances.

F. PROGRAM TITLE

The master's degree is a Special Major. Each student may select up to four words to describe the emphasis in his/her program coursework (e.g., Elder Policies and Politics). The degree cannot use the words gerontology or public policy as CSUS offers specific degrees in those areas.
G. THESIS/PROJECT

Each Special Major student must complete a culminating thesis or project developed in consultation with the student’s faculty committee.

H. APPLICATION MATERIALS

In addition to the University’s application materials, candidates for the as Special Major are required to submit the following materials to both the PPA Department and the Gerontology Program:

- Copies of the Graduate Special Major Application available from Graduate Studies,
- Three letters of recommendation;
- General Subject GRE Scores;
- Copies of transcripts for all previous college level work; and
- A current resume.