2006-2007 Assessment Report

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Program Mission

Gerontology is an applied interdisciplinary program that fosters study of the aging process along the life continuum; particularly the years after 65, focusing on individuals, families, and communities. It is designed to promote an understanding of gerontological issues within scientific biological, psychological, socio-cultural, life long learning, and political contexts. The Gerontology Program's mission is to prepare graduates to assume roles in diverse settings serving the older adult community throughout the region, state and nation, and to develop a clearly humanistic, ethical, responsible, and professional approach to the conduct of those roles. Students may expect the Program's interdisciplinary course work to provide the following:

- an interdisciplinary foundational knowledge base from the social, natural, and behavioral sciences that will prepare students for practice or graduate school
- opportunities for exploring gerontology theory and practice
- opportunities for functioning in various roles as advocates for aging individuals, caregivers and the older population
- opportunities for exploring issues related to social policy, ethics and aging adults
- opportunities for functioning in an interdisciplinary role with other discipline-based practitioners an appreciation of life-long learning and development for people of all ages
- An opportunity for developing competency in information literacy.

1. What goals or learning objectives/outcomes were assessed in AYs 2006-2007?

All program learning outcomes are directly assessed each year through portfolio analysis. Other measures (indirect and direct) are used to expand evaluation. Individual faculty evaluate their course whenever it is taught and complete (formal) written assessments at least every three years. Graduating senior and alumni surveys along with input from faculty during faculty meetings and Community Advisory Committee members complete assessment measures.

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the discipline of gerontology and its role in society.
2. Apply current theory and research in gerontology.
3. Use knowledge of reciprocal relationships among older adults, their families and society in applied settings.
4. Exhibit knowledge of the impact of diversity when working with older adults.
5. Demonstrate socially-conscious behavior regarding the elder population.
6. Acquire knowledge necessary for competent interdisciplinary gerontological practice.
7. Demonstrate critical thinking as a foundation for decision making.
8. Exhibit effective written, oral and interpersonal communication skills with individuals, caregivers, families, and agency staff.

9. Exhibit effective use of various information sources needed for functioning in a global, information society.

2. How did you assess these learning outcomes?
   a. Describe the measures you used and the information gathered? (Description, date administered, results)
      Gerontology faculty randomly reviewed graduating students’ portfolios from the capstone course that comprised their entire internship work: reflective journals, research critiques, Community Service Learning Project, and all contracts and evaluations. Sample papers and coursework from core and interdisciplinary core gerontology courses were also included along with exemplars from some of elective courses. Reviews of two (2) portfolios (n=7) – one each semester – demonstrated that students were meeting Program learning outcomes. Student writing, organizational, critical thinking, and information competency requirements showed improvement over time.
      Gerontology faculty also evaluated capstone students’ Community Service Learning Project Presentations. Along with Portfolio completion, student projects/presentation criteria address many of the Program terminal objectives and thus serve a primary measure of student ability to meet learning outcomes.

   b. As a result of these assessments what did you learn about the program’s success in helping its students achieve these learning outcomes?
      It was determined that the Program has been successful this past academic year.

   c. In what areas are students doing well and achieving expectations?
      All students met the >74% minimum required for graduation in all gerontology major/elective courses and learning outcomes.

   d. What areas are seen as needing improvement within your program?
      Although meeting basic competency standards (>74%) some students still need additional work in critical thinking and writing skills. Faculty would also like to see greater sensitivity to all forms (cultural, ethnic, generational/cohort) of diversity in older adults.

3. As a result of faculty reflection on these results, are there any program changes anticipated?
   a. If so, what are those changes?
      Faculty will analyze courses for any possible changes in assignments to enhance critical thinking and writing skills and additional focus on all forms diversity of older adults.

   b. How will you know if these changes achieved the desired results?
      Discussion of analysis conclusions and any recommendations will occur in the last Spring faculty meeting.

4. Did your department engage in any other assessment activities such as the development of rubrics, course alignment?
Faculty continued to refine/develop individual course grading rubrics for assignments to help align and measure course assignments with course objectives.

At each faculty meeting throughout the semester a faculty member presented their course (course outline, assignments, texts etc.) for information and discussion.

5. **What assessment activities are planned for the upcoming academic year?**

a. Continue course presentations to inform faculty of content and changes.
b. Review course evaluations at first faculty meeting.
c. Present and discuss new curriculum survey to be completed by December 2007.
d. Evaluate and augment Student survey to have graduating seniors complete beginning Spring 2008.
e. Continue yearly active involvement of Advisory Council in program evaluation and planning.