

# MEMO

TO: CGS Committee

FROM: Jacquelyn Frank, Graduate Coordinator for the MA in Aging Studies  
graduate program

RE: Proposed Master's in Aging Studies low-residency online cohort program

DATE: April 21, 2015

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Due to the changing demographics of the population, careers in the area of Gerontology are on the rise across multiple disciplines. The Face-to-Face (F2F) Gerontology program has been offered since 1981 and was the first integrative program offered at EIU. The program currently holds the prestigious National Program of Merit Status; only four Master of Gerontology/Aging programs in the United States have been awarded this honor.

Over the past ten years, the F2F program has seen a decline in enrollment. Potential students from across central and northern Illinois have expressed interest for a program that allows for flexibility as well as accessibility. During the 2013-14 AY, the MA in Gerontology faculty approved the development of an online low residency program for students interested in pursuing a Master's degree in Aging Studies.

The proposed program will operate as a cohort; therefore, admitted students would progress together through the coursework and comprehensive exams. The program will require 36 hours of coursework and take five semesters (18 months) to complete. The coursework will include seven different disciplines representing all four colleges at the university (See Appendix A for course listing). The projected start date is June, 2015. Before developing the program design and structure, the Graduate Coordinator conducted a needs assessment to determine the educational priorities of professionals currently in the field of aging. A convenience sample of 56 gerontology professionals from across Illinois participated in an online survey during summer, 2014. The results from the survey were used to create a program that would meet the needs of professionals seeking to enhance their disciplinary expertise.

People obtaining Master's degrees in the field of aging typically follow one of two professional tracks: *Direct Services or Working on behalf of older adults.*

### **Direct Services Would Include:**

- **Program Development** such as Health and Wellness programs, intergenerational programming, or recreational programs
- **Counseling older adults and their families** on issues ranging from mental health to death and dying to grandparents raising grandchildren
- **Advising older clients** about estate planning, or caregiving for THEIR elderly parents

### **Working on behalf of Older Adults would include:**

- **Conducting research** on the aging process or issues associated with the elderly such as Alzheimer's, caregiving, or osteoporosis
- **Planning, Administering and Evaluating** Community-based service delivery and delivery systems for older adults
- **Advocating** with or on behalf of older adults before legislative bodies
- **Advising** business, industry and labor regarding older workers and older consumers

Recent graduates from our MA program have been hired for a variety of positions including: Executive Director, Villas of Hollybrook; Director, Wellness and Recovery Services, Wellspring Resources; Human Subjects Research Specialist, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; LGBTQ Senior Services Case Manager, Center on Halsted.

A study of cost comparison with five other online Gerontology Master's programs revealed that EIU will be very competitive and be able to offer the complete program for approximately \$12,500 (including all tuition and fees; excluding travel/lodging costs for on campus components) It is appealing as it is the least expensive program compared to five other Gerontology online programs (See Table 1).

Table 1: Cost Comparison for Online Gerontology Master's Program

	Credit hours	Cost (tuition & fees only)
University of Indianapolis	36	18,132.00
Webster University (St. Louis)	36	26,460.00
Iowa State	36	32,760.00
University of Louisiana	36	17,100.00
Concordia University, Chicago	33	15,800.00
<b>Eastern Illinois University</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>12,500.00</b>

The first six hours of the program (which will launch in the summer, 2015 semester) will include FCS 5400, *Aging Policy in Action* and FCS 5301, *Consumer Management Problems of Older People* (see Appendix B for schedule).<sup>1</sup>

Currently 25 students have expressed interest in the program. The Graduate Coordinator is working with the School of Continuing Education on the marketing plan to further promote the MA in Aging Studies at the University Center of Lake County. In addition, several key alumni from the Gerontology MA program have agreed to help market the program at several professional conferences in the area. At this time, we are seeking permission from the LCBAS Curriculum Committee to offer the Master's in Aging Studies Low-Residency Online program at Eastern Illinois University.

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Date approved by MA in Aging Studies Faculty Committee: February 17, 2015

Date approved by LCBAS Curriculum Committee: April 8, 2015

Date approved by CGS:

<sup>1</sup>Due to department scheduling issues, courses for the first cohort will not be offered in the permanent rotation slots. When cohort 2 begins in the summer of 2016, the permanent rotation slots will be in place.

## **APPENDIX A: Proposed course curriculum for the Aging Studies low-residency online MA cohort program**

CMN 5155	Communication in Aging
EDF 5590	Educational Response to Third Age Learning
FCS 5301	Consumer and Management Problems of Older People
FCS 5400	Aging Policy in Action
FCS 5900	Research Methods
HST 4890	Health and Aging
KSS 5225	Physical Activity and Aging
MBA 5520	Strategic Human Resource Management
PSY 5540	Psychological Processes of the Aged
FCS 5100	Societal Aspects of Aging
FCS 5200	Immersion in Long Term Care

*Students will have a choice to register for either: Independent study, thesis, or internship for their capstone experience (see Appendix D).*

## Appendix C: Low Residency Component Description

### Low Residency Component (LRC) Dates

LRC Component	Term	Location	Number of Days
1	Summer 2015 (June)	EIU, Charleston Campus	Thur, Fri, Sat, Sun (4)
2	Fall 2016 (Sept/Oct)	Sullivan Rehab & Health Care Center, Sullivan, IL	Fri, Sat, Sun (3)
3	Fall 2016 (mid-November)	EIU, Charleston Campus	Fri, Sat, Sun (3)

**LRC1:** During the first semester of the program, students will be required to attend a new student orientation, welcome dinner, D2L tutorial, library orientation, and introduction to the independent study course. Also during the LRC1 the students will spend one day in a face-to-face component for the FCS 5400 course.

**LRC2:** Students begin their residency at Sullivan Rehab noon on Friday (during one of two possible weekends). The instructor will visit students 3 times during their stay. Immersive learning experience ends at 1:00 p.m. Sunday and students participate in a 2 hour debriefing/critical reflection session with the instructor before departing Sullivan, IL.

**LRC3:** During the third residency component, students will be on campus for the purpose of giving hour long professional presentations on their completed independent study/thesis/internship projects. Presentations will be given in front of their cohort members as well as the faculty from the Aging Studies program.

## GERONTOLOGY

**Program Mission:** The Master of Arts in Gerontology Program is designed to provide a multidisciplinary education for future and current professionals in gerontology. We are committed to maintaining the quality and distinction of the program that was exemplified by our recognition as a Program of Merit by the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education. Opportunities are available for students to gain exposure to specialized expertise in gerontological theory, research, practice, social policy issues, and the process of aging in a global and culturally diverse society. This expertise prepares students for a wide range of careers in gerontology, including direct community and social services, program administration, mental health practice, government services, higher education, long-term care, and health and wellness.

**Admission Requirements:** To be eligible for degree candidacy, applicants must meet all of the requirements for admission to the Graduate School (see "[Admission to Graduate Degree and Certificate Programs](#)").

**Degree Audit:** The graduate plan of study is the EIU Degree Audit, which is generated automatically in the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) at the time of degree or certificate candidacy. Modifications of the standard EIU Degree Audit are submitted by the graduate coordinator to the certification officer in the Graduate School at the time modifications are approved. The Degree Audit serves as an unofficial summary of requirements for the program. Degree and certificate candidates are advised to review the comprehensive summary of the Degree Audit process specified on the "Requirements for All Degree and Certificate Candidates" section of the Graduate Catalog. Individual programs may require candidates to submit plans of study in addition to the Degree Audit, candidates should consult with the program coordinator.

### Degree Requirements

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Degree requirements include those outlined for the master's degree by the Graduate School (see "[Requirements for the Master's Degree](#)").

The courses for the degree must total at least 30 semester hours for programs including the thesis and at least 32 semester hours for program without thesis. In addition to the core requirements, 9-11 hours of graduate credit electives are to be selected by the student with prior approval of the advisor. Without the appropriate preparation, additional graduate or undergraduate course work may be required as determined by the

Gerontology Program Committee. All students enrolled in this program must satisfy the basic course requirements listed below:

**Total. Credits: 21**

- [EDF 5590 - Educational Response to Third Age Learning](#) Credits: 3
- [FCS 5846 - Administration of Human Services Programs](#) Credits: 3
- [FCS 5900 - Research Methods in Family and Consumer Sciences](#) Credits: 3
- [FCS 5980 - Internship](#) Credits: 3 to 6
- 3 to 4 semester hour credits may be earned with FCS 5980
- [KSS 5225 - Physical Activity and Aging](#) Credits: 3
- [PSY 5540 - Psychological Processes in the Aged](#) Credits: 3
- [SOC 5100 - Sociological Aspects of Gerontology](#) Credits: 3

## Revised Catalog Copy:

### **GERONTOLOGY—AGING STUDIES**

Program Mission: The ~~online~~ Master of Arts in ~~Gerontology~~ **Aging Studies** Program is designed to provide a multidisciplinary education for future and current professionals in gerontology. We are committed to maintaining the quality and distinction of the program that was exemplified by our recognition as a Program of Merit by the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education. Opportunities are available for students to gain exposure to specialized expertise in gerontological theory, research, practice, social policy issues, and the process of aging in a global and culturally diverse society. This expertise prepares students for a wide range of careers in ~~gerontology~~, **the field of aging** including direct community and social services, program administration, mental health practice, government services, higher education, long-term care, health and wellness, **and entrepreneurship**.

Admission Requirements: To be eligible for degree candidacy, applicants must meet all of the requirements for admission to the Graduate School (see "[Admission to Graduate Degree and Certificate Programs](#)").

Degree Audit: The graduate plan of study is the EIU Degree Audit, which is generated automatically in the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) at the time of degree or certificate candidacy. Modifications of the standard EIU Degree Audit are submitted by the graduate coordinator to the certification officer in the Graduate School at the time modifications are approved. The Degree Audit serves as an unofficial summary of requirements for the program. Degree and certificate candidates are advised to review the comprehensive summary of the Degree Audit process specified on the "Requirements for All Degree and Certificate Candidates" section of the Graduate Catalog. Individual programs may require candidates to submit plans of study in addition to the Degree Audit, candidates should consult with the program coordinator.

### **Degree Requirements**

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Degree requirements include those outlined for the master's degree by the Graduate School (see "[Requirements for the Master's Degree](#)").

~~The courses for the degree must total at least 30 semester hours for programs including the thesis and at least 32 semester hours for program without thesis. 36 credit hours. In addition to the core requirements, 9-11 hours 12 hours of graduate credit electives are to be selected by the student with prior approval of the advisor. Without the appropriate preparation, additional graduate or undergraduate course work may be required as determined by the Gerontology Program Committee. The program is organized in a cohort fashion, with all students progressing through the courses together and completing the Master's degree in 18 months. Students are never actively taking more than two courses~~



at once. All students enrolled in this program must satisfy the basic course requirements listed below:

**Total Credits: 21**    **Required Courses: All courses in the MA program are required and are listed below.**

- [EDF 5590 - Educational Response to Third Age Learning](#) Credits: 3
- ~~[FCS 5846 - Administration of Human Services Programs](#)~~ Credits: 3
- [FCS 5900 - Research Methods in Family and Consumer Sciences](#) Credits: 3
- ~~3 to 4 semester hour credits may be earned with FCS 5980~~
- [KSS 5225 - Physical Activity and Aging](#) Credits: 3
- [PSY 5540 - Psychological Processes in the Aged](#) Credits: 3
- ~~[SOC 5100 - Sociological Aspects of Gerontology](#)~~ Credits: 3
  
- CMN 5155 Communication and Aging      Credits 3
- FCS 5400 Aging Policy in Action      Credits 3
- HST 4890 Health and Aging      Credits 3
- MBA 5520 Strategic Human Resource Management      Credits 3
- FCS 5100 Societal Aspects of Aging      Credits 3
- FCS 5200 Immersion in Long Term Care      Credits 3
- FCS 5301 Consumer Management Problems of older people      3 Credits
- FCS 5900 Independent Study (3 credits) or FCS 5985 Gerontology Internship (3 credits) or FCS 5950 Thesis (3 credits)\*

\*Students in the program will choose between the three options above by the end of their second semester.

### **On-Campus/Low Residency Component (LRC)**

Included in the Master's degree program are three in-person components, referred to as LRCs that are as follows:

- LRC1:** At the start of the degree program, students will be required to be on campus for four days (Thur, Fri, Sat, Sun). Included in this in-person component will be a new student orientation, welcome dinner, D2L tutorial, library orientation, and description of the independent study/internship/thesis options. Also during the LRC1 the students will spend one day in a face-to-face component for the FCS 5400 course.
- LRC2:** The second in-person component will occur in the final (5<sup>th</sup>) semester of the program and consists of an experiential/laboratory learning experience as part of the FCS 5200 *Immersion in Long Term Care* course. Students in the course will reside in a nursing home for 48 hours. Students begin their residency at Sullivan Rehab noon on Friday (during one of two possible weekends). The instructor will visit students 3 times during their stay. Immersive learning experience ends at 1:00 p.m. Sunday and students participate in a 2 hour debriefing/critical reflection session with the instructor before departing Sullivan, IL.
- LRC3:** The third residency component will take place toward the end of the final/5<sup>th</sup> semester of the student's program. The purpose of the 3-day on campus module will be for students to give professional capstone presentations based on their completed independent

study/internship/thesis work. Presentations will be given in front of their cohort members as well as the faculty from the Aging Studies program.

## Appendix B: Course Rotation for Cohorts 2-5, Aging Studies Online MA Program

AGING STUDIES COHORT PROGRESSION 2016-2020 (Cohorts 2,3,4,5,6)											
<b>COHORT 2</b>	FCS 5400	PSY 5540	FCS 5900	FCS 5100	EDF 5590	FCS 5301	HST 4890	KSS5225	MBA5520	CM N 5155	FCS5230
Summer 16	x	x									
Fall 16			x	x	x						
Spring 17						x	x				
Sum 17								x	x		
Fall 17										x	x
<b>COHORT 3</b>											
Sum 17	x									x	
Fall 17			x	x	x						
Spring 18						x	x				
Sum 18								x	x		
Fall 18		x									x
<b>COHORT 4</b>											
Sum 18	x	x									
Fall 18			x	x	x						
Spring 19						x	x				
Sum 19								x	x		
Fall 19										x	x
<b>COHORT 5</b>											
Sum 19	x									x	
Fall 19			x	x	x						
Spring 20						x	x				
Sum 20								x	x		
Fall 20		x									x

**APPENDIX D:  
AGING STUDIES PROGRAM SKELETON SHOWING ALL SLOTS AND COURSE LENGTH**

SUMMER 1		FALL 1		SPRING 1		SUMMER 2	FALL 2		
On-campus component: June 4,5,6,7  Thur: 1-6 Fri: 9-6 pm Sat: 8-5pm Sun: 9-3pm	8 week session	(First 8 wks.)	15 WEEKS	(15 weeks)	15 Weeks	6 or 8 weeks	On-campus Components:  (a F-S for the Immersion class and living in the LTC facil)	8 Weeks	15 Weeks
		(2 <sup>nd</sup> 8 weeks)							
	6 or 8 week session						6 or 8 weeks	On-campus component: Final presentations Fri: 1-5 p.m. Sat: 8-5 p.m. Sun: 9-3 p.m.	
				Indep Study/Internship/Thesis 1 Credit		Indep Study/Internship/Thesis 1 Credit	Indep Study/Internship/Thesis 1 Credit		