

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate

From: D. Gagan, Chair 
Senate Committee on Academic Planning

Subject: Proposed Minor Program in Gerontology
(SCUS Reference: SCUS 98-20)
(SCAP Reference: SCAP 98-61)

Date: December 11, 1998

Action undertaken by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and the Senate Committee on Academic Planning gives rise to the following motion:

Motions:

"that Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors as set forth in S.99 - 2 , the proposed Minor Program in Gerontology."

New Program Proposal

GERONTOLOGY MINOR

October, 1998

A. Institutional and Program Identification

The Gerontology Program at Simon Fraser University, Harbour Centre, proposes a minor in Gerontology. Contact Gloria Gutman, Director Gerontology Program/Gerontology Research Centre at 291-5062 or Norah Holtby, Assistant to the Director at 291-5065 for more information. This credential, which will be awarded by Simon Fraser University, will use existing course offerings, and teaching staff of the Gerontology Post-Baccalaureate Diploma and Masters Program.

According to current estimates, by the year 2011 when the leading edge of the baby boom generation become senior citizens, 15% of British Columbians will be aged 65 and older. By 2021, the proportion will increase to an estimated 20%. As the older population grows there will be an increasing need for employees with some university training in gerontology but for whom an intense concentration would not be necessary. These would include entry-level positions in the housing and hospitality industry, in recreation, health care and government concerned with administration and planning of services for older adults, persons in the design and manufacturing professions, or in money and banking, who develop products for the older market, and for individuals in positions requiring a bachelor's degree which interface directly with older persons and their families. Another segment of students will be comprised of persons interested in aging-related courses for personal development and to better understand and meet the needs of family for whom they may be providing assistance.

The Gerontology Minor will provide an opportunity for students without a previous degree to obtain specialized education in gerontology, while enhancing Simon Fraser University's existing mandate to provide innovative multi-disciplinary programs that will continue to develop existing relationships with our community partners. This program would meet a geographic need in that there are only two institutions in Canada which offer a similar credential, neither of which are in Western Canada.

Given that this program will not require additional staff or library resources it is hoped that the program could be implemented within the next year.

B. Program Description

In 1983, Simon Fraser University became one of the first institutions in Canada to offer an accredited multi-disciplinary program in Gerontology. The Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Gerontology addressed the lack of educational programs in gerontology at that time. The program was designed for individuals who had completed an undergraduate degree and had a minimum of one year of work experience with the elderly. It was designed for health care professionals, administrative staff and those who had already completed an undergraduate degree but were interested in focusing specifically on aging.

In 1996, the Masters program became the only program in western Canada to provide students with the opportunity to pursue applied research at the graduate level. Since the inception of the Masters program, there have been a growing number of undergraduate students who are interested in obtaining an undergraduate credential in Gerontology. A portion of these students are looking to pursue a Gerontology Minor in preparation for graduate work while others would like to enhance the marketability of their undergraduate degree by adding a specialization in Gerontology.

The Gerontology Minor program differs from the Gerontology Diploma and Masters Programs in being targeted specifically for students who do not have an undergraduate degree. The Minor program would provide an excellent opportunity for undergraduate students to enhance the multi-disciplinary focus of their undergraduate degree by combining a Minor in Gerontology with an existing major program. A Minor in Gerontology would most likely attract undergraduate students from Psychology, Sociology, Kinesiology, Criminology, Inter-Disciplinary Studies (BGS) and Education and might also be of interest to those in Business Administration, Geography, Philosophy, Political Science and Women's Studies. In general, these students would be at an earlier stage in their work cycle and have less work and academic experience than those students pursuing existing Gerontology programs at Simon Fraser University.

As previously mentioned, the aging of the Canadian population will result in an increasing number of older persons who will be clients of future industries. It is anticipated that the Gerontology Minor Program will provide graduates with a better knowledge of aging related issues which they can incorporate into their field of work. This would fill both a vocational and social need, in addition to contributing to the personal and professional development of the individual students involved.

The minor will provide specialized education in gerontology for undergraduate students interested in combining course work in aging related issues with an existing major program.

Students intending to enter the program must have completed a minimum of 60 credit hours with a CGPA of 2.0 or better. The following prerequisites for their equivalent are recommended: KIN 105/142, PSYC 100/102, SA 150 and STAT 203.

Approved minor students must complete GERO 300-3 Introduction to Gerontology plus twelve credit hours from the following:

GERO 301-3 Research Methods in Gerontology
GERO 302-3 Health Promotion and Aging
GERO 400-3 Seminar in Applied Gerontology
GERO 401-3 Aging and the Built Environment
GERO 402-3 Drug Issues in Gerontology
GERO 404-3 Health and Illness in Later Life
GERO 405-3 Aging in Rural and Small Communities
GERO 406 - 3 Death and Dying
GERO 407-3 Nutrition and Aging
GERO 408-3 Families and Aging
GERO 410/411/412 Special Topics in Gerontology.

Additional courses from various department are designated for inclusion in the minor; a list is available from the department. A maximum of six credit hours of designated courses may be applied towards the minor, provided that prior approval is obtained from the program advisor. Candidates intending to apply to the Gerontology Post-Bacclaureate Diploma or Masters Programs should contact the student advisor before selecting courses for the minor.

C. Admission and Transfer

To date, 63 SFU undergraduate students not enrolled in the Gerontology Diploma Program have completed 9 or more credit hours in Gerontology. Given that Gerontology courses have never been specifically marketed to undergraduate students this indicates considerable interest in the subject area. Currently these students, who are close to having completing the equivalent of a minor program, are not able to receive recognition for their concentration in Gerontology because no undergraduate credential exists. It is estimated that the number of students who would pursue a Minor in Gerontology would range from 15-25 per year, if students knew such a program existed. Over the last several years the Gerontology Program has compiled a list of undergraduate students who have indicated an interest in pursuing a minor in Gerontology. To date there are more than 200 names on this list. We are also in the process of contacting community and professional organizations to enlist their support and to determine which segments of their membership would be most interested in this program.

D. Program Resources

The minor will be constructed of courses which already exist as required or optional course offerings for the Gerontology Post-Baccalaureate Diploma Program. It is expected that the flexibility offered by the minor program will stimulate interest at the undergraduate level and increase enrollment in existing courses. The graduate program will benefit by increasing the pool of potential students. We do not anticipate or request any input of additional resources.