



Date: November 5, 2021

To: Hossein Saiedian, University Senate President
Faculty in the Department
Barbara A. Bichelmeyer, Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor

From: Karen Moeller, Chair Academic Policies and Procedure committee

Re: Program Discontinuance for Gerontology

In Accordance with University Senate Rules and Regulations USRR 8.2, the Academic Policies and Procedures Committee (AP&P) has reviewed the documentation and held an open public hearing on October 6, 2021, regarding the recommendation to discontinue the following active programs in Gerontology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Kansas:

- Ph.D. in Gerontology
- Dual-title Ph.D. in Gerontology and Sociology
- Dual-title Ph.D. in Gerontology and Psychology
- Dual-title Ph.D. in Gerontology and Communication Studies – Inactive

In the submitted documentation titled “Recommendations for Discontinuance of an Active Academic Program,” the College cites low enrollment in all majors, lack of faculty in these programs, and inability to meet Kansas Board of Regents minima. The report notes, that the College and University will still be able to train and mentor researchers in gerontology through partner departments (e.g. COMS, PSYCH, SOC).

At the public hearing on October 6, 2021, two faculty members spoke regarding continuing the Dual-title Ph.D. programs in conjunction with Sociology and Psychology. Speakers indicated the growing field of Gerontology secondary to the growth in the aging population. Per the speakers, only two other universities offer these dual degree programs, and the continuation of these degrees can increase KU’s visibility as leaders in the area of Gerontology. The speakers note that the continuation of the dual-title degrees does not require additional faculty or staff. However, due to the recent retirement of a professor and the director leaving the program, one teaching professor is needed to teach one required class in the program. The speakers identified several faculty outside of Gerontology that are able teach the class; however, this course would not count toward their teaching load in their departments or towards student credit hours in the faculty member’s department. The speakers suggested a memorandum of understanding with their departments and the dean’s office to count this course in their teaching load and to count the credit hours to the faculty member’s home unit. No speakers were present concerning the sole Ph.D. in Gerontology. No written reports were provided to the committee.

On October 22, 2021, the AP&P committee met to discuss the submitted documentation and the hearing. AP&P recommends by a majority vote that the Dual-title Ph.D. in Gerontology and Sociology and the Dual-title Ph.D. in Gerontology and Psychology be continued. This decision was based on the fact the Dual-title Ph.D. in Gerontology with Psychology or Sociology have a strong, direct connection to

KU's strategic plan, Jayhawk Rising – "The Jayhawks Rising Strategic Plan is organized around three Institutional Priorities, creating a clear and ambitious direction to fulfill our mission to educate leaders, **build healthy communities** and make discoveries that change the world." The committee felt this program strongly aligned with building healthy communities through outreach to the aging population. KU has committed faculty in place wanting to support the continuation of these dual degrees. The committee did not see any financial loss by continuing these two programs but recognizes the need for a faculty member to teach the one required class. The committee recommends a rotation of instructors to teach the required course and a memorandum of understanding that the courses and student credit hours contribute to their home unit. The committee concluded that the loss of these Dual-title degrees would impact graduate students seeking the added interdisciplinary credentials of Gerontology and impact their employment in Gerontology departments. Loss of these programs could hinder the ability to attract Ph.D. candidates to the University who wish to study the aging population. The committee does recognize that the Ph.D. program in Gerontology has had a significant loss of faculty secondary to retirements or faculty leaving the programs. At this time, the committee recommends continued suspension of applicants to the Ph.D. program in Gerontology but highly recommends support to rehire these positions to help achieve KU's strategic plan to build healthy communities in later life. The committee recommended the dual-title Ph.D. in communications be discontinued due to continued inactivity.

Documentation Reviewed by the Committee:

1. Recommendation for Discontinuance of an Active Academic Program, October 2020
2. Program Review, February 2018
3. External Gerontology Program Review, no date

C: John Colombo, Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences