Proposal to Establish an Undergraduate Certificate

Name: Undergraduate Research Certificate in Behavioral & Community Sciences

College: Behavioral & Community Sciences

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Total Credit Hours: 16 hours minimum

Implementation Date: Fall, 2010

Anticipated Enrollment: 15 – 20 students per year

Description and Rationale

The College of Behavioral & Community Sciences is seeking approval for an Undergraduate Research Certificate for students who are enrolled in a BCS major or minor. The purpose of the certificate is to provide a planned sequence of courses that will support the systematic development of students as undergraduate researchers. The certificate is intended to: (1) provide students who plan to apply to graduate school with a “credential” that signifies that they have completed a systematic undergraduate research preparation program; (2) encourage students to pursue research mentorships that will lead to the completion of an independent research project by the time they graduate; and (3) guide students toward the goal of disseminating the results of their research at a national conference or peer-reviewed publication within six months of graduating from college.

The certificate is a cross-college initiative that will involve all BCS departments that have an undergraduate major or minor (American Sign Language, Behavioral Healthcare, Criminology, Gerontology, Interpreter Training, Long-Term Care Administration, Social Work, Speech-Language-Hearing Science). The certificate builds on courses that will count toward general education requirements or the requirements in a student’s major (please see Table 1). The certificate was developed by BCS faculty who have experience with undergraduate research. Committee members included: Dr. Tamara Baker, Aging Studies; Dr. Robin Ersing, Social Work; Dr. Stefan Frisch, Communication Sciences and Disorders; Dr. Amber Gum, Aging and Mental Health Disparities; and Drs. Roger Boothroyd, Eva Kimonis, Kathleen Moore, and Paul Stiles from the Department of Mental Health Law and Policy. In addition, Lisa Landis, Criminology, and Bea Smith, BCS Director of Academic Advisement and Student Services, provided input on general education, course sequencing, and graduation requirements. The group was convened by the BCS Associate Dean, Dr. Catherine Batsche.
Table 1: Certificate in Undergraduate Research in Behavioral & Community Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Topic</th>
<th>CSD</th>
<th>Criminology</th>
<th>Gerontology</th>
<th>Social Work</th>
<th>BCS Minors:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpreter Training</td>
<td>Criminology</td>
<td>Gerontology</td>
<td>Long-Term Care Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Research (1 hour)</td>
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<td>IDS 1604: Introduction to Research in Behavioral &amp; Community Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistics (3 hours)</td>
<td>STA 2122: Social Science Statistics (or equivalent)</td>
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<td>STA 2122: Social Science Statistics (or equivalent), e.g., PSY 3204: Psychological Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing for Research and Publication (3 hours)</td>
<td>MHS xxx: Writing for Research and Publication in the Behavioral and Community Sciences</td>
<td>Exit course (writing intensive course)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Directed Research or Thesis Course (3 - 6 hours)</td>
<td>SPA 4910: Directed Research and/or SPA 4970: Honors Thesis or MHS 4912 or IDH 5975: Honors Thesis or MHS 4906</td>
<td>CCJ 4910: Directed Research in Criminal Justice or MHS 4912 or IDH 5975: Honors Thesis or MHS 4906</td>
<td>MHS 4912 or IDH 5975: Honors Thesis or MHS 4906</td>
<td>SOW 4910: Directed Research in Social Work or MHS 4912 or IDH 5975: Honors Thesis or MHS 4906</td>
<td>Directed research in department of minor or MHS 4912 or IDH 5975: Honors Thesis or MHS 4906</td>
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Recommended course: REA 2105 Critical Reading and Writing Skills for Research

Note: Students may complete their mentored research project from any faculty member from the Departments of Aging & Mental Health Disparities, Child & Family Studies, Communication Sciences & Disorders, Criminology, Mental Health Law & Policy, Rehabilitation & Mental Health Counseling or from the School of Aging Studies or School of Social Work.
Notes on Certificate Courses

Introduction to Research (1 hour) is a new course developed specifically for the certificate. This course will provide students with an overview of research problems and processes in behavioral and community sciences, research ethics involving human subjects, and the responsible conduct of research. Students will be exposed to a wide range of research problems and methodological approaches used by behavioral and community science faculty. This course is currently in the approval process and will be offered for the first time in fall, 2010.

Social Science Statistics (3 hours) is a course currently offered as part of the General Education program. All students seeking the certificate will be required to complete STA 2122 or its equivalent such as PSY 3204 for students in the Behavioral Healthcare minor.

Research Methods (3 hours) is currently offered by three of the four BCS disciplines: Criminology, Gerontology, and Social Work. Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) does not currently offer Research Methods. CSD students will be advised to complete GEY 4401 or PSY 3213: Research Methods in Psychology. PSY 3213 has a prerequisite of PSY 2012: Introduction to Psychological Science which also fulfills a General Education course requirement.

Research Processes (3 hours) is offered by the Florida Mental Health Institute as MHS 4741. The course is being redesigned as a college-wide course and will be renamed Research Processes in Behavioral and Community Sciences. Students in this course will learn how to develop a comprehensive concept paper that will form the basis of the student’s mentored research project to be conducted in the final two semesters of the certificate. It will be a team-taught course and will focus on the application of concepts and skills learned in Research Methods.

Writing for Research and Publication (3 hours) is a new course developed specifically for the certificate but will also be open to other students who are interested in research. The course is being submitted to the General Education Council for approval as a writing-intensive course that will fulfill one of the two General Education exit requirements. The course will focus on the development of skills needed for research writing and dissemination such as: locating and critically reviewing research; applying appropriate publication/reference styles (APA, AMA, and Chicago Style), understanding peer review processes, and writing precise and cohesive research problem statements and literature reviews.

Directed Research or Thesis (3 – 6 hours) will be the culminating experience for the certificate. Students will conduct an independent research project with the guidance of a faculty mentor. These courses are all currently offered within the college. Students who have taken the courses leading to the certificate should be prepared to undertake an independent research project that will have the potential for dissemination through a conference presentation or peer-reviewed journal publication. Students may complete their mentored research project from faculty members from the Departments of Aging & Mental Health Disparities, Child & Family Studies, Communication Sciences & Disorders, Criminology, Mental Health Law & Policy, Rehabilitation & Mental Health Counseling, the School of Aging Studies or the School of Social Work.

Target Population
The certificate is designed for students who declare a major or pursue a minor in the College of Behavioral & Community Sciences and have an interest in exploring research and research careers. During summer orientation for new students, the BCS Director of Advising and Student Services will describe the certificate at each orientation session for incoming freshmen and transfer students. Students who express interest in the certificate will be enrolled in the Introduction to Research course as part of their orientation experience. Students who do not declare a major/minor in BCS as new students will be able to begin the certificate by enrolling in the Introduction to Research course.
**Requirements**
Students must have an overall GPA of at least 2.5 in order to participate in the undergraduate research certificate. A grade of at least a B must be obtained in all courses counting towards the certificate in order to pursue the directed research/thesis requirement and for the certificate to be awarded.

**BCS Activities that Complement the Certificate**
Through the generous donation of a private donor and with financial resources from the USF compact planning process, the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences will be able to offer a select number of students with undergraduate research assistantships. Students who successfully complete the Introduction to Research class will be eligible to apply for a position as a Research Assistant I. The purpose of a Research I Assistantship will be to engage students in a research laboratory setting so they can gain experience with the research environment and processes. It is anticipated that the responsibilities of Research I Assistants will be fairly basic. As they gain experience and sophistication with research processes, they will have the opportunity to be promoted to positions of Research Assistant II, Research Assistant III, and, as Seniors, to Research Scholars.

Students will also be able to apply for mini-grants to pilot test their own research projects conducted in partnership with faculty mentors and advanced graduate students. The mini-grants will provide resources to pay for the research expenses of the student as well as provide a stipend for faculty mentors and graduate students working as a research team with the undergraduate student.

An Undergraduate Research Interest Group (U-RIG) will also be initiated to provide a venue for students from the college to meet together to discuss their research ideas and form new cross-disciplinary collaborations.

**Suggested Catalog Copy**
The Undergraduate Research Certificate in Behavioral & Community Sciences is designed for students interested in attending graduate school and pursuing research careers. Students will complete a systematic undergraduate research preparation program consisting of 16 hours of coursework, many of which will count toward their general education requirements or requirements for their major. Students will explore various research questions and methodologies, receive training in research ethics and IRB processes, develop an independent research project with a faculty mentor, and have the opportunity to submit their findings for dissemination through a research conference or publication. The certificate is open to undergraduates who are pursuing a major or minor offered by the College of Behavioral & Community Sciences. An overall GPA of at least 2.5 must be maintained. A grade of B must be obtained in all courses applying toward the certificate.

**Relationship to University and College Priorities**
The Undergraduate Research Certificate contributes to the USF goals to Infuse and Nurture the Skills and Practice of Inquiry and Research in Education (INSPIRE, 2005). INSPIRE formed the basis for the USF Quality Enhancement Plan prepared as part of the SACS reaffirmation process in 2005 and continues today as an area of strategic importance to the university.

The Undergraduate Research Certificate contributes to the College goal to expand undergraduate research activities as part of the most recent compact planning process. Undergraduate research was one of the initiatives funded by the Provost in the College of Behavioral Science. The Dean was able to obtain funding from a private donor, which was then matched by the Provost, to further augment the budget available to support undergraduate research in the college.