

UNIVERSITY SENATE

**UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

Introduced by: University Planning & Policy Council
and the Graduate Academic Council

Date: December 1, 2008

**PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A HEALTH DISPARITIES GRADUATE
CERTIFICATE PROGRAM**

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the University Senate approves the attached proposal as approved by the University Planning & Policy Council and the Graduate Academic Council.
2. That this proposal be forwarded to the President for approval and subsequent transmittal to SUNY System Administration & the NYS Education Department for further consideration and final registration action.

Graduate Certificate Health Disparities Certificate

This graduate certificate proposal is the product of a collaboration within the Education Core of the NIH Export Center for the Elimination of Minority Health Disparities (CEMHD) at the University at Albany, State University of New York. During the time when this proposal was developed, the Chair of the Health Education Core was Blanca Ramos, School of Social Welfare (who is currently at the University of North Carolina—Charlotte). Members of the Core who contributed to this effort include Bonita Sanchez, Jacqueline Melecio, and Anna Zendell (School of Social Welfare), Janine Jurkowski and Dwight Williams (School of Public Health), Myrna Friedlander (School of Education), Gregory Gross (College of St. Rose), Karen Nash and Maryanne Pepe (Hudson Valley Community College).

Need for Certificate Program:

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Institute of Medicine, there are striking differences in the burden of risk factors, such as illness and death as well as the lack of health care access experienced by various racial/ethnic groups including African Americans, Latino(a)s and Native Americans. Many other groups including the poor, people with disabilities, women, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered (LGBT) population also experience disparities in lack of access to care and the burden of disease and death. Health disparities are on the national agenda as a major social issue. The Education Core developed this Health Disparities Certificate in direct recognition of this key social issue and the need for current and future leaders in the social services fields (public health, social work, psychology, and medicine) to be knowledgeable of the issues and strategies needed to address health disparities.

Goal of Certificate Program:

The goal of this program is to train graduate students or professionals in the field to be leaders in addressing and eliminating health disparities. As stated by the Institute of Medicine and NIH, central to addressing health disparities is conducting research and practice at the community level and working with community partners to build community capacity and sustainability. The interdisciplinary certificate aims to provide an in-depth knowledge of the causes and issues in health disparities, provide strategies for eliminating disparities while improving students' multicultural competence and leadership skills.

The Health Disparities Certificate is to be offered to individuals working towards or currently in leadership positions in health services, policy, promotion, or provision. This program will provide an opportunity for preparedness and enhancement of the capacity to address and influence health disparities in students' individual communities and service organizations.

Audience:

The Certificate program will be available to all currently matriculated University at Albany graduate students (master's or PhD students). Current students must make a separate application for admission, and pay the admission fee. Graduate students who are currently enrolled in other accredited colleges or universities or non-matriculated individuals who are practitioners in health care, counseling, social work, and public health may also apply to the Certificate program, provided they have a bachelor's or R.N. degree and the required pre-requisite coursework (see below).

Certificate Coursework:

All are existing courses within the Schools of Public Health, Social Welfare, and Education. In order to receive the Health Disparities Certificate, students must take four 3-credit graduate courses, for a total of 12 credits, in at least two different Schools. Enrollment credit (both FTEs and number of students) will be given to the School in which each course is taken.

The Course Catalogue descriptions are listed below. One course on health disparities is required; the other three courses can be selected from three separate areas: multicultural practice in psychology or social work, community partnerships, and public health leadership. An individual student may substitute one or two of the courses listed below (except the one required course, HPMB 620) by specific authorization from the student's assigned Certificate advisor.

- Required course:

HPMB 620 Health Disparities and Community Health (School of Public Health):

The goal of this course is to understand what contributes to health disparities in the United States. The course discusses historical contexts of race, underlying assumptions of group definitions, biological versus social definitions of race, why particular groups may experience disparities, and individual versus ecological approaches to health in our current health system. This course also covers theoretical frameworks for understanding and addressing health disparities. The course is geared for students to think critically and discuss health disparities. The knowledge gained through the class will be useful for public health practitioners and researchers as well as for those in social sciences and welfare.

- Select one of the following courses on multicultural practice:

(1) *SSW 746 Cultural Diversity in Social Work Practice** (School of Social Welfare):

Social work practice with clients of diverse cultural backgrounds. Includes similarities and differences in practice among clients from selected cultures and sensitivity to the experiences of discrimination, alienation, oppression, and exclusion.

(2) *ECPY 627 Multicultural Perspectives: Counseling Theory and Practice* (School of Education):

Provides more advanced study of specialized counseling approaches and techniques, including application of counseling techniques with diverse populations. *Note: This course is only open to students with prior coursework in counseling theory.*

(3) *ECPY 750 Multicultural Counseling* (School of Education):

This doctoral seminar is designed to explore selected theory and research in the area of multicultural counseling. Topics emphasized include research on the influences of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and social class on the counseling relationship. *Note: This course is only open to PhD students in counseling or clinical psychology at the University at Albany.*

- Select one of the following courses on community partnerships:

(1) *SSW 792 Community Building** (School of Social Welfare):

This course introduces community definitions and theories; examines the characteristics and functions of communities; identifies community-based services and resources; examines the role of community systems in change and development; and focuses on community building as an effective social work intervention model. Action and experiential learning are emphasized. The social worker is viewed as a professional facilitator and advocate assisting in developing community leadership, participation, enhancement, and empowerment.

(2) *HPM 669 Community Based Public Health* (School of Public Health):

Community based public health is on the national public health agenda. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, American Public Health Association, and Institute of Medicine all emphasize

that community based public health is essential for improving the nation's health. The goal of this course is to learn a community based perspective of public health and health promotion, stressing an understanding of social determinants of health. The course will include readings about the importance of working with diverse communities, concepts and best approaches for community based public health interventions, as well as strategies for assessing community assets and needs and strategies for working with community members to improve the health of the community. Some topics that will be covered include; coalitions, a variety of approaches for community assessment, community health workers, empowerment evaluation, and participatory health promotion approaches. The course is geared for students who are interested in working at community based organizations, government agencies, advocacy organizations, and in community based research.

- Select one of the following courses on public health leadership:

(1) *SPH 569 Public Health Leadership* (School of Public Health):

Provides students an understanding of the attributes and skills/behaviors associated with effective public health leadership and the abilities required to lead communities towards improved health status.

(2) *SSW 793 Leadership in Human Service Organizations* (School of Social Welfare):

This course is an introduction to the theories and models of leadership that are used in human service environments. The primary objective of the course is to explore leadership as a subject central to human services administration. Special emphasis will be placed on the leadership for the delivery of social services.

*These courses have pre-requisites, which will be waived for students completing the Health Disparities Certificate, as endorsed by the respective Deans of the Schools of Public Health and Social Welfare.

Student Information:

Admissions

Applications for the Health Disparities Certificate, due February 1 (for Fall admission) and October 1 (for Spring admission), will be forwarded to the School of Public Health to be evaluated by a committee of faculty from the School of Public Health, the School of Social Welfare, and/or the School of Education. Approximately 10 new students will be admitted each academic year for the first three years.

Applicants who are currently enrolled in a graduate program at the University at Albany (or at another regionally-accredited college or university) are eligible for the Certificate program if they are in good academic standing, i.e., a Grade Point Average of at least 3.0 ("B"). University at Albany graduate students may formally apply for and receive the Certificate if they have taken all of the requisite courses as part of another degree program at the University within the five years prior to being admitted to the Certificate program.

Applicants who are not currently enrolled in an accredited graduate program in a relevant field (i.e., Social Welfare, Public Health, or Psychology) are eligible for admission to the Certificate program if they have a B.A., B.S., or R.N. degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the

U.S. or abroad and have the equivalent of at least 6 undergraduate or graduate credits in the social sciences (psychology, social work, sociology, anthropology, or political science, women's studies, communication, economics, Africana studies, or Latin American and Caribbean studies).

All applicants must provide three references, preferably from both faculty and from employer(s) in a field relevant to health disparities. Applicants must also provide an essay addressing the following question: "Discuss two issues related to health disparities in the contemporary U.S."

Resources and Support

The Certificate is co-sponsored by the School of Public Health, the School of Social Welfare, the School of Education, and the Center for the Elimination of Minority Health Disparities. The Certificate will be administratively housed in the School of Public Health, whose personnel will coordinate admissions, student advisement, and Certificate conferral. A Committee of faculty from the three schools and the CEMHD will meet after the third year to revisit the issue of enrollment in light of demand for the Certificate and the available resources.

Student Advisement

The Committee will assign an appropriate advisor in each student's particular area of interest to guide him or her through the Certificate program.

Completion Requirements

There is a transfer credit limit of one course (3 credits) from another institution.

Students must file an application for Certificate completion within 5 years from the date of admission.



May 20, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

The School of Social Welfare enthusiastically supports the creation of a new interdisciplinary University at Albany Certificate in Health Disparities. We have worked closely with the College of Arts & Sciences, the School of Public Health, and the School of Education's Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology. Three of the required or selective courses for the certificate will be offered by this School:

- (1)SSW 792 *Community Building*
- (2)SSW 793 *Leadership in Human Service Organizations*
- (3)SSW 746 *Cultural Diversity in Social Work Practice*

Additionally, the School of Social Welfare will provide a faculty/staff member to represent the Department to serve on the admissions review team and serve as advisor in each student's particular area of interest.

Student Advisement

The committee will assign an appropriate advisor to guide him or her through the Certificate program.

This new certificate will be a valuable contribution to the University's offerings. It will be a recruitment tool as well as an asset to our undergraduate and master's degree programs.

Minority Health Disparities are of the most urgent concern. To advance our research and demonstration projects regarding these issues, the certificate will play a vital role.

Sincerely,

Katharine Briar-Lawson, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor

Anne M. Fortune, Ph.D.
Associate Dean and Professor

KBL:AMF:jma



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY State University of New York

Philip Nasca, PhD
Dean

*A joint venture with the
New York State Department of Health
In affiliation with Albany Medical College*

May 5, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

The School of Public Health enthusiastically supports the creation of a new inter-scholastic University at Albany Certificate in Health Disparities. We will be the administrative home for the certificate, in close partnership with the School of Social Welfare, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the School of Education's Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology. Three of the required or selective courses for the certificate will be offered by this School: Health Disparities (Janine Jurkowski), Community-Based Public Health (Janine Jurkowski), and Public Health Leadership (Dwight Williams).

This new certificate will be an invaluable addition to the University's offerings. It will appeal both to students enrolled in a degree program such as the Master of Public Health (MPH) who want to strengthen their focus on health disparities, and to students who are interested in only a certificate in this area, including professionals at state or local health departments or staff at health-related non-governmental organizations.

Eliminating health disparities is one of the US Department of Health & Human Services' key goals in their document *Healthy People 2010*. As a university that hopes to have an impact on important public issues, this is a critical area for us to focus on.

Please contact us if the School of Public Health can be of further assistance in development or implementation of this new program.

Sincerely yours,

Philip Nasca, PhD
Dean

Mary Applegate, MD MPH
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs



June 16, 2008

Dear colleagues:

I am pleased to write in support of an interdisciplinary Certificate in Health Disparities at the University at Albany. The School of Education has a long-standing commitment to equal opportunity for all people regardless of their cultural background, health, or social standing. This certificate program is quite consistent with the mission of the School and fits well with existing work of faculty in the Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology. At least two courses in the division of Counseling Psychology (ECPY 627 "Multicultural Perspectives: Counseling Theory and Practice" and ECPY 750 "Multicultural Counseling") can be valuably integrated into the certificate program, and School of Education faculty are ready to participate in program admissions processes and needed student advisement.

The collaboration of the School of Education with the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Public Health, and the School of Social Welfare integrates a powerful combination of faculty expertise and academic offerings that can provide a great service to the region and nation and is a wonderful opportunity to bolster the University's reputation as an institution responsive to critical social needs. We expect that this certificate program will be of interest to current and prospective School of Education students and will stimulate ongoing research related to this area. We are enthusiastic to see the creation of this new Certificate in Health Disparities and welcome continuing collaborations with our colleagues.

Sincerely,

Robert Bangert-Drowns
Acting Dean