Gerontology Institute  
Georgia State University  
2014-15 ACTION PLAN

Status of Action Items from Prior Review:

The last APR cycle was in 2005. At that time, the Gerontology Institute had recently transitioned from a "Center" to an "Institute" and had just begun its new MA program with the first class starting in Fall 2004.

- **Increase Tenure Track Hires:** INCOMPLETE. During the last review, the Institute housed four full-time faculty (one TT Director and 3 NTT Research Assistant Professors). The Action Plan committed to hiring four additional TT faculty between FY07 and FY11 this was to be funded through a combination of PUHR (1 TT faculty) and new hires (partially supported by transitioning NTT lines to TT). By the end of the Action plan period, there were 4 full-time faculty members in Gerontology (1 TT Director, 2 TT Assistant Professors, and one NTT Research Associate Professor). When the remaining NTT Research Associate Professor retired in 2012, that position was transition to a TT line. As of FY15, the Institute has 4 Full time faculty members (1 TT Director, 1 TT Associate Professor, 2 TT Assistant Professors). Although the transition from NTT to TT faculty has facilitated the growth of the Institute, the absolute number of faculty has remained the same and does not reach projected level for FY11 (5 TT faculty members).

- **Build and strengthen the MA programs:** ON-GOING. Since the last review, the Gerontology Institute has revised and updated its curriculum to better prepare MA students to pursue additional graduate education (Research Concentration) or careers in aging (Administration Concentration).

- **Appoint a Director of Graduate Studies:** COMPLETE. The college supported funds for a Director of Graduate Studies (one administrative course release during the semester and 5% summer funds). This position was held by affiliate faculty members until FY14 when Dr. Kemp took over the position.

- **Develop Recruitment Strategy:** ON-GOING. The external reviewers from the last review stressed the importance of a developing and maintaining a strategy to recruit students the MA program. Appointing a DGS has allowed for more focused recruitment, including coordinating with the COAS office of graduate studies, visits to local colleges/universities, classroom visits at GSU. In addition, the Institute has invested resources into our website, extensive use of social media, and advertising through professional organizations.

- **Build Enrollment for MA program:** ON-GOING. As a new program, building enrollment was and continues to be vital. Over the ten years since the program began we have maintained a small but steady pool of applicants.

- **Increase Faculty and Student visibility:** ON-GOING. The core and affiliate Gerontology Institute faculty are active members of professional associations, serve in leadership roles in professional organizations, and serve on editorial boards for academic journals. We have increased student participation in local and regional professional conferences.

Major Findings of Current Review:

The External reviewers identified five areas of strength for the Institute: "the quality of instruction; the quality of faculty; the extent of engagement with Institute members outside of the core group of faculty; engagement with the Atlanta community; and leadership."

1. **Quality of Instruction.** The external reviewers felt that "the program has a history of excellence in gerontology education at the Master’s level and is recognized as a strong program regionally and increasingly at the national level." They felt that our numbers (19 undergraduate certificate, one minor, 14 MA degrees and 10 Graduate Certificates) during the review period were "very good considering the small size of the Core Institute faculty." There is potential for growth, particularly in the undergraduate credit hours. A permanent full-time Lecturer dedicated to teaching undergraduates would enhance this mission.
2. **Quality of Faculty.** According to external reviewers, the Institute has made “excellent strides in recruiting and retaining very strong junior faculty members.” They felt that the external funding (R01 from NIH) that Dr. Kemp received was particularly impressive in the current funding climate. Moreover all of the core faculty members have promising research agendas.

3. **Engagement of Affiliate Faculty.** Affiliate faculty are “positive about their level of involvement and full of enthusiasm for the Institute.” Moreover, Gerontology “serves as a catalyst that improves the productivity of affiliated faculty from throughout the university.” The Institute could do a better job monitoring and tracking the impact of Institute affiliation and involvement on faculty productivity across campus.

4. **Engagement with Atlanta Community.** “The Institute has done a very good job of linking with community organizations and agencies. These community partners have been sites for field placements for students studying Gerontology and from other majors, and have cooperated with faculty and students on research projects related to aging. Gerontology courses include community members as guest lecturers which have the dual advantages of giving students ‘real world’ knowledge and exposure, but also strengthening the bond with the community. The community linkages also serve as a pipeline to employment for program graduates.” The Institute could do a better job monitoring and tracking the impact of Institute engagement and involvement with the community.

5. **Leadership.** The external reviewers feel that the Director has created a “welcoming climate for faculty across campus” and continues to successfully recruit and mentor junior faculty. The Institute would be strengthened by the recruitment of additional senior scholars to mentor the junior faculty and lead large research projects.

**Action Steps for Coming Cycle:**

As noted by the External Reviewers, the Gerontology Institute only has four core faculty members who “each have extensive obligations not only in conducting research and teaching their courses, but also in service and advising activities. The faculty appears to be spread thin.” The implementation of these Action Steps (ranked from short to long term) described below can facilitate the continued growth of the Gerontology Institute.

1. **Strengthen Research Base (ST=Short term step; MT=Medium term step; LT=long term step)**
   a. Facilitate new research collaborations in aging that have a potential to lead to external funding. Continue to use Institute indirect funds to grow the Interdisciplinary Seed Grant program. Support one $5000 grant per year for the next three years, as funds are available. (ST)
   b. Support and retain core faculty through use of indirect funds to provide additional professional development (PD) for research, such as conference travel or research supplies. Provide each core faculty member with an additional $500 in PD for the next three years, as funds are available. (ST)
   c. Support and retain engaged affiliate faculty through the use of indirect funds to support additional PD. Support conference registration for two affiliate faculty members to each attend a Gerontology Conferences (Gerontological Society of America, Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, Southern Gerontology Society, or similar association) for the next three years, as funds are available. (ST)
   d. Continue to explore partnerships that can attract more senior scholars in the field of aging to Georgia State, this may include using the mechanism that will replace 2CI or other Strategies for attracting high impact scholars to campus. Such a scholar could have an academic home in Gerontology or a joint appointment with another unit on campus. (LT)

2. **Enhance Educational Experience of Undergraduates in Gerontology**
   a. Increase credit hour production and increase undergraduate enrollment by expanding the opportunities for Gerontology classes to meet general education requirements (Area F or Area G). (ST)
   b. Increase undergraduate participation in research through research internships and mentorship to present their research experience at student conferences such as GSURC, Georgia Gerontology Society, and
Southeastern Student Mentoring Conference in Gerontology and Geriatrics. Provide undergraduate research awards for travel or printing of presentation materials 2-3 undergraduate presenters for the next three years. (ST)

c. Support the growth of undergraduate instruction by transitioning the current Visiting Lecturer (VL) to a permanent NTT Lecturer position. As indicated above (finding #1), a permanent lecturer dedicated to undergraduate instruction will facilitate planned growth in the program (2a and 2d). In addition, this hire will facilitate innovative teaching, such as digital education (2e), and nurture community connections for undergraduate internships. In support of the goal one of the Strategic Plan, Gerontology seeks to pursue excellence in undergraduate education. A permanent lecturer provides the Institute with the resources to expand our undergraduate programing and further solidify our reputation as a leader in gerontology education. Ideally, this transition would occur in FY 17. (MT)

d. Develop a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS) in Aging and Health in collaboration with the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and Health Professions. Over the next five years, the Gerontology Institute seeks to strengthen its participation in undergraduate education. The mechanism of the BIS program allows the Institute to quickly develop a degree program specializing in aging and the partnership with nursing and health professions provides a path to diverse careers and graduate programs. The curriculum will be developed and submitted for approval by Fall 2015 and the first class of BIS students enrolling in Fall 2017. (MT)

e. Explore the possibility of offering additional online or hybrid classes. Recruit permanent NTT lecturer (2c) with an expertise or interest online education who serve as the digital education leader within the department. (MT)

3. **Continue our strong Graduate Program**

a. Continue the quality and success of the MA and Graduate Certificate Programs with incremental growth (an additional 2-5 newly enrolled graduate students per year over the next five years) (MT)

b. Explore reducing the number of credit hours required for Graduate Certificate (currently 21 credit hours) to reflect national standards. (MT)

c. Grow the dual degree program with (BA/MA) Sociology through targeted recruitment of outstanding sociology undergraduates enrolled in Gerontology classes. (MT)

d. Increase the number and disciplinary diversity of internal graduate certificate students who are simultaneously enrolled in the gerontology certificate and other graduate degree programs. Currently there are three internal students (two who are doctoral students in sociology and one student who is pursuing a masters in social work). Reducing the requirements (3b) would make the graduate certificate more attractive to internal students. Using affiliate faculty to promote the changes in the graduate certificate program to students in their departments. This should result in an average of five internal graduate certificate students per year. (LT)

4. **Engage in Strategic Planning to tighten the focus of the Institute and publicize its strengths**

a. Codify Mission Statement for the Institute. Schedule and plan a half day retreat in FY16 to bring core and affiliate faculty together to develop a clear mission and vision for Institute.(ST)

b. Track impact of Institute on the productivity of Affiliate Faculty by collecting that information on an annual basis and present reports through newsletter and website. Conduct an annual survey of affiliate faculty each Spring to gather relevant information. (ST)
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<tr>
<td>Elisabeth O. Burgess:</td>
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<td>Director, Gerontology Institute</td>
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<td>William J. Long:</td>
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