

The Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. In 1972, a five school consortium was formed in order to provide a collaborative educational effort offering credentials to students interested in the field of aging. Additionally it sought to encourage faculty to incorporate aging content into their existing courses as well as to develop new ones with an aging focus. The Board of Regents in Utah gave their approval and funding followed, provided by the United States Administration on Aging. Dr. Max Carruth served as the Consortium Board Chair and Coordinator to the University of Utah Program. Dr. Richard Connelly served as Acting Director after the consortium was dissolved, and in the early 1980s, Dr Linda K Amos, a newly appointed dean, offered the program an administrative home in the College of Nursing at the University of Utah. Dr. Dale Lund served as Director for the Gerontology Center from 1988 - 2002 and helped to develop the Gerontology program into a fully operational educational unit on campus. This was a time of unprecedented growth that featured a significant increase in course offerings as well as the establishment of a Master of Science program in 1993 and a certificate in 2001.

The Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program's (GIP) mission is to understand the aging experience at many levels – individual, family, community, and society – and ground the discovery of knowledge in scientific process and evidence-based research, which translates into applied interventions and programs for adults and their environments. The program's theme, which underlies our research, teaching, and service activities, is to prepare the next generation of leaders in the field of aging.

The program consists of a blend of tenured, clinical, and adjunct faculty who are skilled and accomplished in aging issues and research, including an endowed chair in healthy aging, two Gerontological Society of America (GSA) fellows, and an AGHE fellow. Program faculty come from diverse academic backgrounds including health promotion, human development, sociology, social work, and nursing and are associates of the Center on Aging, Hartford Center of Geriatric Nursing Excellence, and the Huntsman Cancer Institute. The program is an institutional member of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE). Several adjunct faculty are leading gerontology professionals employed in community-based positions, allowing the program to form strong ties between academia and community. Faculty evaluations in teaching continue to be exceptionally positive.

In addition to excellence in teaching, Gerontology faculty have pursue active programs of research in areas that include bereavement and loss, family caregiving, health promotion and self-care, special populations with disabilities, environmental issues, cancer, end-of-life and palliative care, and quality of long-term care funded through grants from governmental and private sources.

The program is a dynamic and evolving organization where professionals and scholars are prepared at all levels for diverse leadership roles. Master of Science (M.S.) students have the opportunity to pursue one of several areas of emphasis that include Healthy Aging, Geriatric Care Management, Educational Gerontology and Lifelong Learning, Long-term Care and Aging Services Administration, and Research and Evaluation. Students also have the opportunity to design a customized program of study that is tailored toward their specific educational goals. The program also has a solid set of online offerings for matriculated students. Both undergraduate and graduate certificates are fully available online, attractive to students across the country.

The program honors the efforts of those who have worked and served to make it what it is today. It is the result of many, many people having dedicated their time and effort to sustain the field of gerontology at the University of Utah – and the relevancy of gerontology for an aging society is both timely and critical. We welcome the growth and development sure to come in the future. Here's to the next 40 years!