

UMBC'S ERICKSON SCHOOL
ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW – 2014-2015
UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL REPORT

The Erickson School offers a B.A. degree and a minor in Management of Aging Services. The undergraduate program began in 2006, awarding its first B.A. degrees in 2010. During the five years covered by the APR, the Erickson School granted an average of thirteen B.A. degrees each year. In addition, the Erickson School serves undergraduates from across the campus, showing steadily increasing enrollments from 714 to 1662 students in their undergraduate courses annually during the review period.

A. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The Erickson School aims to train students at all levels as professionals in the field of aging services. It offers students a combination of course work focused on aging processes, experiences, services, and research, as well as courses focused on the business aspects of aging services. This combination is something that the reviewers point out is valuable and unique among aging programs. The department's learning assessment plan focuses on basic competencies involving information literacy, written communication, and critical analysis as taught in three undergraduate courses. In addition, more focused major-specific goals focusing on processes of aging, aging services, communication with clients, management applications, and case-based problem solving are assessed in at least two 400-level courses. The primary way the program assesses student achievement of these learning goals is by systematically sampling students' written course assignments.

B. STATE OF THE DISCIPLINE; PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS; PROGRAM CHANGES

The Erickson School reports that as the need for aging services and management professionals is growing, their program is increasingly important. The reviewers support this and encourage the faculty to be vigilant about staying current in the field, revising their curriculum in pace with these innovations. As this is a new program, there have not been major revisions to it. However, the Dean notes in his response that the gradual plans for revision that the Erickson School already has are not only in keeping with the reviewers' recommendations, they are already underway.

C. UNDERGRADUATE CURRIULUM

Undergraduate courses offered as part of the Management of Aging Services degree promote an understanding of aging processes, of related services and policies, and of foundational management skills. Majors in the Management of Aging Services complete 54 credits. This includes a set of 14 core courses, 6 credits of internship, and two elective courses. Minors in Management of Aging Services must complete 18 credits of work in the department, including 2 core courses.

D. RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNDERGRADUATES

In addition to the internship placements, undergraduates in the Erickson School have the opportunity to participate in research opportunities and to learn about current research in the field through programs sponsored by the School. Faculty offer the option for students to pursue independent studies, mentoring students within their major and in INDS as well. Erickson undergraduate students have also worked with students from across campus to develop and implement innovative approaches to elder care, participating in national professional associations. In addition, the Erickson School fosters interaction between their undergraduate and graduate students.

E. UNDERGRADUATE ADVISEMENT

Three faculty members provide advising to an average of 20 undergraduate students each. These advisers help students who are interested in the major and contact them to develop their academic plans. This includes consulting about major requirements, internships, and UMBC requirements. An adviser may also meet with students at the student's workplace.

F. COUNCIL OF MAJORS; UNDERGRADUATE HONORS; AWARDS; RECOGNITION

Students are encouraged to participate in the Erickson School's Council of Majors.

G. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT; TEACHING QUALITY

The Erickson School faculty consists of the Dean, two Clinical Associate Professors, one Clinical Assistant Professor, and 12 part-time instructors. Their active engagement in professional practice as well as scholarly activities contributes to the quality and relevance of the instruction they provide. The Erickson School selects and mentors new instructors to encourage high quality teaching. Each semester, the program reviews all SCEQ scores, which regularly exceed the UMBC mean scores. In addition, the program conducts occasional classroom observations.

H. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS; SUMMARY EVALUATION

The internal and external reviews all concur that this program provides undergraduate student an important combination of knowledge and skills to prepare them to enter a growing segment of our economy. The external reviewers recommended efforts to augment and update the curriculum, strengthen the focus on undergraduates, and increase ties across and outside of the campus, efforts that were apparently already underway and are reflected in the strategic plan.