

# GERONTOLOGY TODAY

## Gerontology Master of Science Program in Approval Process

### Inside this issue:

GRN Now Part of HAHS	2
Alumni Corner: Tony Locklear	2
Delta Omega Chapter	3
Student Spotlight On...	4
The Director's Corner	5
Donate to the Program	6

We are pleased to announce that UNCW has approved our intent to establish a Master of Science degree in gerontology. We are currently waiting for final approval from the UNC Office of the President. The first degrees may be awarded Fall 2007 as there are currently students enrolled in the post-baccalaureate program who are already working on Master of Science projects in anticipation of that approval. The College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee will review proposals for undergraduate gerontology programs this year as well. Look for good news in the next issue of this newsletter.



### General Program Information

The Graduate School will offer a 36 hour master's degree in applied gerontology in response to area workforce needs. The goal of the program is to provide an academic foundation for anyone who plans to work with aging adults. As those who serve the elderly must be aware of all

*(Continued on page 6)*

## GRN Now Part of HAHS

Perhaps the newest and most exciting development in the Gerontology program this past year has been the move to become a part of the Health and Applied Human Sciences department. The reasoning behind the move was the idea that the program would not have been able to flourish as well as an interdisciplinary program without being part of an established department. The HAHS department is the perfect fit, being that it is an interdisciplinary department containing

seven majors already. Department director Dr. Terry Kinney is very excited about the new addition to the HAHS family. Among his goals



Pictured: Dr. Terry Kinney (Chair, HAHS), Dr. Jeffrey Chesky (Guest Speaker), & Dr. Eleanor Krassen Covan (Director, GRN)

are to bring more

intergenerational learning into the program. The upcoming masters program has also become a model program for the department, as it is the first masters program for HAHS. Another advantage to having the gerontology program part of the HAHS department is a hope that more health majors will choose to make the post-baccalaureate certificate or a Gerontology minor be part of their academic goals. Right now several options are being explored to create ways to introduce new courses

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Alumni Corner: Tony Locklear

Tony Locklear is Lumbee Indian, and grew up in Maxton, North Carolina. He received his Masters' degree in Liberal Studies (2005), but his Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Gerontology is what he uses most. He has done research on cultural differences in aging as well, but it was research on elder abuse during his graduate studies that led Tony to realize how slim the resources were for

older adults in his own community. When he graduated, he decided that he needed to "fill some of the gaps in the social services area." Tony is now a Research Associate with the Wake Forest University School of Medicine; his research field is Robeson County, and at the moment he is gathering information for a study of oral health in older adults in that area.

Tony doesn't always live behind a desk, though - he's donated a considerable amount of time to developing the HELP Center in Maxton. The acronym stands for Helping Elders Live Progressively, and the center works throughout Robeson and Scotland counties. Eventually the Center hopes to be a registered non-profit organization, but

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Delta Omega Chapter, Sigma Phi

The University of North Carolina Wilmington's Delta Omega Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega was established in Spring 2006. Sigma Phi Omega, the national academic honor and professional society in gerontology, was established in 1980 to recognize the excellence of those who study gerontology/aging and the outstanding service of professionals who work with or on behalf of older persons. Delta Omega's founding members proudly include five undergraduate, four graduate, and two faculty members! Nursing major Katherine Gaurino serves as President while Elizabeth Fugate-Whitlock, Lecturer of Gerontology, Department of Health & Applied Human Sciences, serves as the Chapter Advisor. The Spring 2007 inductees include graduate students Nancy Cowdrey and Regina Stidham, and undergraduate students Sarah Eidson and Megan Barton. The chapter participated in UNCW's 2006 Sound Mind in a Sound Body health fair by creating an



Photo from ceremony: from left to right: Elizabeth Fugate-Whitlock (chapter advisor), Katherine Gaurino (President), Katie Kutcher, Whitney Posey (Secretary), Lauren Walser (Treasurer), Mary Farmer, & Eleanor Krassen Covan (not pictured: Lorraine Perry)

information booth about nutrition and aging. The group's Let's Make a Meal interactive table offered information and activities about the newly redesigned Food Pyramids, proper portion size, and nutrition needs related to aging. This semester Delta Omega is planning and implementing Senior Games at Elderhaus in conjunction with the New Hanover County Senior Center. The chapter was featured in the Sigma Phi Omega national October 2006 newsletter, which can be viewed at the following link:

<http://www.aghe.org/files/aghewebsite/SPO/SPOnewsletterOct2006.pdf>



Photo from *Sound Mind in a Sound Body*: from left to right: Eleanor Krassen Covan, Katie Kutcher, Whitney Posey, Elizabeth Fugate-Whitlock & Lauren Walser

## Student Spotlight On...

Chet Saunders, biology major, gerontology minor, and Sigma Phi Omega member, was awarded a fellowship in the lab of Dr. Julia Frugoli in the Department of Genetics and Biochemistry of Clemson University. Twelve undergraduate students were selected from a national pool of application for the program which is funded by the National Science Foundation. During the course of this NSF-funded program, the students will 1) engage in an intense, hands-on research experience involving interactions with faculty, postdoctoral associates, graduate students and other undergraduates; 2) learn about the application of a large variety of instrumentation and contemporary methodologies in life science research; 3) share their results and experiences with faculty and other students at bi-weekly brown bag lunches; 4) attend seminar

presentations by faculty members in the REU program and other active research labs at CU; 5) visit local sites of interest (research entities



Picture of Chet Saunders

and biotechnology companies); and 6) present their work both orally and as a poster at a concluding Research Symposium. In addition to the research component of the program, Chet will participate in workshops

and discussions about the ethical conduct of scientific research.

Chet has also been invited to lead a workshop at the Unity conference at UNCCH dealing with public health issues, primarily STDs, and the aged. The Unity conference is a yearly conference aimed at bringing together college students from diverse backgrounds in an attempt to increase awareness of diversity and ending discrimination based on race, socio-economic status, sexuality, religion and age. His workshop will examine the impact of sexuality education, or lack thereof, on older adults. He will also look at the rates of STD transmissions and discuss how it impacts the economic status of older adults in addition to private insurance and public healthcare programs such as Medicare.

## The Director's Corner

When I was first employed at UNCW twenty-two years ago, I was hired as an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology with the expectation that I would teach courses in medical sociology and aging. Always an advocate of older adults, and in recognition that UNCW must become regionally engaged in the community that surrounds our campus, it soon became my personal goal to develop a graduate program in gerontology to serve older adults in our area. That dream was realized several years ago when gerontology became an interdisciplinary program and the university began to offer a post-baccalaureate certificate program in gerontology. A few years later, we began to collaborate with the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies Program to offer an MA in Liberal Studies with a concentration in gerontology. Graduates of this program found

employment as faculty members, administrators in long-term care facilities, and others are healing arts therapists in the community. I am now thrilled to announce our newest degree program, the UNCW Master of Science degree in professional gerontology that will become a reality in the fall of 2007. Due to a generous grant from the Ford Foundation, we have had the resources to plan the degree program and to expand our relationships with both public and private sector practicum sites. Twenty-two practicum agreements are in place with long-term care institutions, departments of aging, private practice medical groups and non-profit organizations such as the Salvation Army. The first future graduates of the Master of Science program have already completed their post-baccalaureate certificates in

gerontology and should graduate with their master's degree in the fall. Since my personal goals have been met, I am ready to step down from my position as director, and pass the leadership torch to another who will take gerontology forward. It is with a great sense of personal satisfaction, that I plan to return to a full-time faculty position in January 2008.

## Gerontology Graduate Program *Continued*

*(Continued from page 1)*

aspects of aging, course work will be multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. Our dynamic curriculum will be taught using the talents of our own faculty and members of the North Carolina Gerontology Consortium. Courses include a number of different disciplines such as: biological sciences, communication studies, English, health, philosophy and religion, psychology, social work, sociology, therapeutic recreation and nursing. Our program provides a broad practical perspective on aging with service-learning experiences.

## GRN Now Part of HAHS *Continued*

*(Continued from page 2)*

into the program. Although the program is going to be able to grow and thrive in its new location, the interdisciplinary nature is still going to be retained. This means that the gerontology program will still need continued help and support from other departments in the university. Overall it seems that the program without a home, has now found one that fits, in HAHS.

## Alumni Corner *Continued*

*(Continued from page 2)*

while that paperwork is still in progress, volunteers continue to work to protect older adults from scams, fraud, and other abuse. HELP also runs outreach, training, legal counseling, social work services, a substance abuse program specifically designed for older adults, several support groups, and hosts an Aging Resource Library.

## Give to the Gerontology Program

The continued success of the Gerontology Program depends on your support. Volunteers are needed to assist in service-learning activities.

We also need your financial help! Donations are used to fund service-learning activities, general program operation, and community activities. All donations are tax deductible.

Checks to assist us should be made out to the Gerontology Trust Fund and mailed to:

**Gerontology Program Trust Fund**

**C/O UNCW Advancement  
601 S College Road  
Wilmington, NC 28403-5905**

*Visit us on the Web!*  
[www.uncw.edu/gero](http://www.uncw.edu/gero)