Contact: Rachel Boon

REQUEST FOR CHANGE FROM FAMILY SERVICES TO FAMILY AND LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

Committee Action Requested: Recommend to the Board approval of the request by the University of Northern Iowa to change the program in Family Services to Family and Lifespan Development in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

The Council of Provosts and Board office support approval of this request.

Proposed Change: The proposed renaming and consolidation of three existing programs into a single major with a common core and three concentration areas are intended to achieve two critical goals: improving operational efficiency and creating a more cohesive, streamlined academic program for undergraduate students interested in working with individuals and families across a variety of settings. The change from family services to family and lifespan development more accurately reflects the breadth of career pathways available to graduates and better aligns with the program's focus on development across the lifespan. Additionally, the designation aging studies is more readily recognizable to prospective students as a pathway for careers serving older adults in diverse professional settings, particularly those focused on healthy aging. In contrast, the previous title, gerontology, is less familiar to many students and may not clearly convey the field's scope and career opportunities.

There are no changes to overall credit hours for the three majors being merged into the new family and lifespan development major. However, each of the three tracks will now share three core courses (Famserv 1020, FamServ 1055, FamServ 3150), setting a foundation of family relationships and human development knowledge while also creating efficiencies.

Reason for the Change: By requiring students to complete a shared common core and alongside more focused concentration in family services, aging studies, or long-term care administration, students will experience a more streamlined plan of study that has greater appeal to potential students interested in working with people and families across the lifespan. The College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and UNI focus on training students to work with people in the real world. This program change aligns with these missions, as it focuses on both families and individuals across the lifespan.

Effect on Students: Current students will see no interruption, as their course requirements will still be provided on a timeline that allows them to graduate as expected. In addition, students previously enrolled will still be able to graduate under the previous requirements through either currently offered courses that meet those requirements or substitutions with the current courses.

Resource implications: This change is meant to pursue efficiencies in course offerings and to create clarity in pathways for students.

By consolidating family studies and gerontology (including long-term care administration) together as family and lifespan development, costs related to instruction, marketing and recruitment, and administrative overhead will decrease.

Instructional cost efficiencies: 9 credits of common core that will be shared leading to $24,000 in savings (using the adjunct rate)

Marketing & recruitment streamlining efficiencies: $2,500

Administrative cost savings: Simplified curriculum, scheduling, streamlined advising, and administrative tracking leading to $5,000 in savings

Total Estimated Cost Saving: $31,000

Accreditation: The changes do not alter the state approved curriculum for the long-term care administration track, as the required classes are included in the new track and it will be listed on students' transcripts. Additionally, the optional coursework pathway, approved by the National Council on Family Relations to achieve Certified Family Life Educator status is still available for students who are interested.

Date of Implementation: August 2027.