



TRANSMITTAL AND ABSTRACT OF SENATE REPORT

Date Presented to the Senate: April 21, 2008

Presenter: Carmen Balthrop, Chair, Senate Programs, Curricula, and Courses Committee

Subject of Report: Proposal to establish an M.S. in Couple and Family Therapy

Senate Document Number: 07-08-30

**Voting: (a) on resolutions or recommendations one by one, or
(b) in a single vote
(c) to endorse entire report**

A. Statement of Issue:

The School of Public Health and the Department of Family Science propose to establish a new M.S. in Couple and Family Therapy. Since 1978, this program of study has existed as an area of specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) within the approved M.S. in Family Studies.* The MFT specialization in has been accredited continuously since 1983 by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Should the program be approved, accreditation would be transferred from the specialization to the new M.S. degree.

Establishing a distinct M.S. will clarify the program's educational objectives and purpose. The M.S. in Family Studies will continue, albeit as an option for those students in the Ph.D. program in Family Studies who do not complete the degree. The proposed M.S. is identical to the MFT specialization except for a change in the title, from "Marriage and Family Therapy" to "Couple and Family Therapy," reflecting the current practices in the field to ensure diversity and inclusiveness. Should the program be approved, accreditation would be transferred from the MFT specialization to the new M.S. degree.

The program provides students with the counseling work and supervised clinical training typically required in states with marriage (couple) and family therapy licensure. The curriculum has three components: didactic coursework, clinical practica, and supervised client contact. The minimum total credits required are 48 for the non-thesis option and 51 for the thesis option. Didactic coursework is taken in conjunction with 15 credits of clinical practicum seminars and 9 credits of supervised clinical work. In the clinical practicum, theory is applied to specific case material, with faculty supervision providing support and oversight of assigned cases. Clinical students are required to earn 500 hours of face-to-face client contact.

The proposal was submitted to the Senate by the Office of Academic Affairs following favorable recommendation by the Academic Planning Advisory

Committee (APAC) on November 19, 2007; the Graduate Programs, Curricula & Courses Committee on December 13, 2007, the Graduate Council on March 5, 2008, and the Senate Programs, Curricula & Courses Committee on March 7, 2008. If the Senate approves the proposal, it would require further approval by the President, the Board of Regents and the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

B. Recommendation:

The Senate Committee on Programs, Curricula, and Courses recommends that the Senate approve the proposal to establish the M.S. in Couple and Family Therapy.

C. Committee Work:

The Senate PCC Committee considered the proposal for at its meeting on March 7, 2008. Viki Annand, Assistant Dean of the School of Public Health; Sally Koblinsky, Chair of the Department of Family Science, and Norman Epstein, Professor of Family Science and director of the existing program specialization, were present to answer questions. After discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the new degree.

D. Alternatives:

The Senate could decline to approve the M.S. in Couple and Family Therapy.

E. Risks:

If the Senate does not approve the proposal, students specializing in Marriage and Family Therapy in the M.S. in Family Science would continue to obtain a degree with a name that does not accurately reflect the curriculum.

F. Financial Implications:

The academic program exists already as a specialization within an approved degree. All faculty, staff, and courses are in place to offer the degree and no new resources are needed.

*At its meeting on March 13, 2008, the University Senate voted to approve the change of name of the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Family Studies to Family Science. Those proposals now are being considered at the State level.