



1. Explain briefly and clearly the proposed improvement.

**The proposed improvement is to create a 9-credit graduate certificate program in Kinship Care Families in the Dept of Family and Consumer Sciences. Kinship Care has to do with the care of children by family members other than the child's biological parent(s). This care is often provided by grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings or other family members due to a variety of circumstances. The five courses for the proposed certificate were approved last year, and are effective with the Fall 2016 catalogs. Two of the courses are 3-credit courses and three are 1-credit courses. See Appendix and catalog copy at end for details.**

2. Rationale. Give your reason(s) for the proposed improvement. (If your proposal includes prerequisites, justify those, too.)

**There are a few key reasons for the establishment of this certificate: 1) The number of children being raised by family members other than the child's biological parent(s) has risen.**

- 7.8 million children live in households headed by grandparents or other relatives. These households include those both those where the children's parents may or may not be present.<sup>1</sup>
  - 2.7 million children (4%) of all U.S. children are being raised in grandfamilies or kinship care situations.<sup>2</sup>
  - Children placed with relatives make up over a quarter (26%) of all children in the foster care system.<sup>3</sup>
- For every child being raised in the foster care system, nearly 25 are being raised by grandparents or other relatives outside the system.<sup>4</sup> **This data comes from the Generations United website (<http://www2.gu.org/OURWORK/Grandfamilies/GrandfamiliesStatistics.aspx>) Most what's available anywhere is based on the 2010 census 2) There is limited coursework or training available for the professionals working with these families. 3) This certificate program leverages the benefit of the Center for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren that is housed in the FCS Dept and is a collaboration with Georgia State University, as well as the *Grandfamilies Journal* that is housed through WMU's Scholar Works. 4) This program taps the expertise of some key faculty in CEHD. Dr. Linda Dannison, former chair of the FCS Dept, and Dr. Andrea Smith, Professor in TLES, have worked for years in this area and have developed a national and international reputation in the grandparents raising grandchildren area.**

#### **From Course proposals last yr:**

For several years, the FCS Dept has had considerable expertise in kinship care, particularly the care of children by their grandparents. Previous FCS Dept Chair Dr. Linda Dannison and Dr. Andrea Smith, TLES with a joint appointment in FCS, developed resources for kinship care families and those who work with them. The FCS Dept and WMU collaborates with Georgia State University on the National Research Center on for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren <http://www.wmich.edu/grandparenting>. WMU also houses the online journal **GrandFamilies: The Contemporary Journal of Research, Practice and Policy** through the University Library's ScholarWorks platform. These courses have the potential of meeting a need for training in this area for professionals working with this unique family form that capitalizes on WMU's strong reputation. The long-term plan is to develop a graduate certificate program. A proposal to reduce the minimum number of credit hours required for a certificate at WMU from 15 to 9 is before the Graduate Studies Council. If that proposal is approved, the FCS Dept would develop a 9-credit graduate certificate program in this area. If the minimum number of credits stays at 15 hrs, the dept will consider developing a 15-credit certificate program.

3. Effect on other colleges, departments or programs. If consultation with others is required, attach evidence of consultation and support. If objections have been raised, document the resolution. Demonstrate that the program you propose is not a duplication of an existing one.

**There is considerable positive benefit to CEHD that may be derived from this new certificate and by raising the profile of the Center for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. This certificate and the courses therein may also be appealing to students in the MA in FCS, particularly those in the Family Life Education emphasis area. The 5000 level courses (3 1-credit courses and 1 3-credit course) could also be appealing electives for students in FCS's Child & Family Development and Family Studies majors.**

4. Effect on your department's programs. Show how the proposed change fits with other departmental offerings.

**The proposed certificate might eventually serve as a feeder for the MA in FCS. As noted above in #3, courses in the certificate can be used as electives for both undergraduate and graduate students in the FCS Family Science area.**

5. Effects on enrolled students: Are program conflicts avoided? Will your proposal make it easier or harder for students to meet graduation requirements? Can students complete the program in a reasonable time? Show that you have

considered scheduling needs and demands on students' time. If a required course will be offered during summer only, provide a rationale.

**No significant negative impact on enrolled students is anticipated. These courses will be offered online, so they could provide for an online option for undergraduate or graduate students. The courses are intended to be offered starting Summer 2017 and the plan is for the 5 courses to be offered over the course of a calendar year, so the certificate can be completed in one year's time. There will be some courses offered during the summer terms, likely the 1-credit courses. This may actually be appealing to professionals in the field and our own undergraduate and graduate students.**

6. Student or external market demand. What is your anticipated student audience? What evidence of student or market demand or need exists? What is the estimated enrollment? What other factors make your proposal beneficial to students?

In 2011, 7.7 million children in the U.S.—one-in-ten—were living with a grandparent, and approximately 3 million of these children were also being cared for primarily by that grandparent (Pew Research Center, Sept 2013). "Of the 65 million grandparents in the United States in 2012, 7 million, or 10 percent, lived with at least one grandchild, according to Coresident Grandparents and Their Grandchildren: 2012, a new report released by the U.S. Census Bureau. The percentage of children who lived with a grandparent in 2012 was also 10 percent, rising from 7 percent in 1992. About 4.2 million households, or 3 percent of all households, contained both grandchildren under 18 and their grandparents in 2012. More than 60 percent of these households were maintained by a grandparent and about one in three had no parent present. In 2012, 2.7 million grandparents in the U.S. were raising their grandchildren. About 39 percent of these grandparent caregivers have cared for their grandchildren for five years or more."

<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2014/cb14-194.html>

Children who are cared for primarily by a grandparent are more likely to be living below the poverty line (28% versus 17%) and have lower median household income (\$36,000 versus \$48,000) than children who are not being cared for primarily by a grandparent. This widespread family structure involves special considerations related to legal, economic, educational, and child development matters.

**As mentioned above, the number of children being raised in kinship care arrangements has risen. Limited training or coursework is available for professionals who work with this population. The primary audiences for the certificate are working professionals in the US and internationally, and current MA in FCS graduate students. The courses in the certificate will also be appealing alternatives for FCS undergraduates and graduate students. Estimated enrollment is 10-15 students per year within 3 years.**

7. Effects on resources. Explain how your proposal would affect department and University resources, including faculty, equipment, space, technology, and library holdings. Tell how you will staff additions to the program. If more advising will be needed, how will you provide for it? How often will course(s) be offered? What will be the initial one-time costs and the ongoing base-funding costs for the proposed program? (Attach additional pages, as necessary.)

**The plan is for Dr. Andrea Smith to teach one of the 3-credit courses in each of the Fall and Spring semesters, either as part of load or as an overload course. The three 1-credit courses are planned to be offered at various points during the year, but likely primarily in the summer by part-time faculty with expertise in these 1-credit course areas: Kinship care families and a) educational systems, b) health care, and c) economic realities. Graduate advising will be covered by the primary graduate advisors in FCS, Drs. Karen Blaisure and Gary Bischof. Undergraduate advising will be handled by FCS advisors for online and transfer students and by the CEHD Advising office for other undergraduates.**

8. General education criteria. For a general education course, indicate how this course will meet the criteria for the area or proficiency. (See the General Education Policy for descriptions of each area and proficiency and the criteria. Attach additional pages as necessary. Attach a syllabus if (a) proposing a new course, (b) requesting certification for baccalaureate-level writing, or (c) requesting reapproval of an existing course.)

NA

9. List the learning outcomes for the proposed course or the revised or proposed major, minor, or concentration. These are the outcomes that the department will use for future assessments of the course or program.

**Those who complete the Graduate Certificate program in Kinship Care Families will be able to demonstrate:**

1. Heighted awareness of the utility of Ecological Theory as a professional lens when working with kinship care family members
  2. Familiarity with demographics and commonality of kinship care families within the United States and internationally
  3. Increased awareness of the inter-relationships of the varied systems (for example: educational, legal, health care, occupational, economic, etc.) within which kinship care family members frequently interact
  4. Enhanced knowledge of common challenges for adult kinships caregivers, the children in their care and children's biological parents
  5. Enlarged perspectives of kinship care family structures, as well as differing cultural and social realities within the United States and internationally
  6. Increased repertoire of strategies for building resiliency in all generations of kinship care family members
  7. Improved knowledge of available resources and strategies for assisting kinship care family members to access existing resources
  8. Increased familiarity with research describing and assessing programming for kinship care family members
  9. Enlarged awareness of the differences in program services within the U.S. compared to international settings
  10. Enhanced recognition of varied service delivery options and the importance of developing services that are culturally and ethically acceptable and relevant
  11. Write new outcome integrating aspects of items that were removed: Improved abilities to plan, implement, assess and disseminate results of program services for kinship care families.
10. Describe how this curriculum change is a response to assessment outcomes that are part of a departmental or college assessment plan or informal assessment activities.

**One of the CEHD goals is to increase the number of certificate programs in the college. This is also consistent with the CEHD Strategic Enrollment Management plan. Dean Li and others in CEHD were instrumental in bringing the proposal to allow 9-credit certificates to the Graduate Studies Council. Graduate College Dean Stapleton was supportive of this and noted WMU is well behind other institutions in the region in the number of graduate certificate program offerings. The development of such certificates supports efforts in CEHD and WMU overall to develop "stackable" credentials that can be used toward the attainment of other advanced degrees.**

11. (Undergraduate proposals only) Describe, in detail, how this curriculum change affects transfer articulation for Michigan community colleges. For course changes, include detail on necessary changes to transfer articulation from Michigan community college courses. For new majors or minors, describe transfer guidelines to be developed with Michigan community colleges. For revisions to majors or minors, describe necessary revisions to Michigan community college guidelines. Department chairs should seek assistance from college advising directors or from the admissions office in completing this section.

**NA**

## **Courses in the 9-credit Certificate in Kinship Care Families**

### **FCS 5110 - Kinship Care Family Members: Strengths and Challenges**

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Focuses on highlighting varying experiences and realities for multi-generational kinship care family members, including adult caregivers, the children in their care, and children's biological parents. Common challenges will be presented, along with strategies for assisting family members in resiliency building and accessing available resources. Socio-cultural differences, both within the United States and internationally, will be examined. Topics addressed in this course may vary to some extent each semester, depending on students' professional experiences, needs, and interests.

**Credits:** 3 hours

### **FCS 5120: Educational Systems and Kinship Care Families**

Explores the interface between educational systems and kinship care families. Topics will include the history of family engagement in U.S. schools, current practices in American schools, educational risks for children living in poor families, models and strategies of family engagement and common school-related experiences for kinship care family members. Students will focus on strategies for reducing educational challenges for both kinship caregivers and children living in kinship care families.

**Credits:** 1 hour

### **FCS 5130 - Health Care and Kinship Care Families**

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Focuses on health care systems in the United States and their interfaces with kinship care family members. Topics will include the evolution of health care in the United States, current status of health care systems within the U.S., common health challenges for kinship care family members and effective responses and programming.

**Credits:** 1 hour

### **FCS 5140 - Economic Realities and Kinship Care Families**

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Focuses on theories of family economics as well as financial challenges and realities for kinship care family members. Topics will include an overview of family economic theory, poverty in the United States, financial information and challenges for kinship care families, and an analysis of existing and needed services and programs.

**Credits:** 1 hour

### **FCS 6570 - Developing Effective Programming for Kinship Care Family Members**

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Focuses on providing strategies for developing, implementing and assessing effective programs for members of kinship care families. Students will become familiar with research focusing on existing programs and services, both in the U.S. and internationally. Students will become more knowledgeable about varied service delivery options. Initial steps related to program development, including grant writing, advisory boards and community collaboration will be included. Strategies related to successful program implementation, the critical nature of evaluation, and the importance of reporting about program services will be additional areas of focus.

**Credits:** 3 hours

### **Certificate Program in Kinship Care Families**

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Advisors: Gary H. Bischof, Karen Blaisure, Andrea Smith (TLES)  
Room 3326 Kohrman Hall

This graduate certificate program provides a strong framework for working with kinship care families, which involve the care of children by family members other than the child's biological parent(s). This care is often provided by grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings or other family members due to a variety of circumstances. The program prepares human services professionals with the understanding and skills to work effectively with these families. The program emphasizes strengths and challenges of kinship care families, intersections between these families and educational and health care systems, economic realities, and developing effective programming.

#### **Admission Requirements**

In addition to meeting the requirements of the Graduate College, all applicants must possess a baccalaureate degree, provide a statement outlining one's background, human service experiences with families, interest in kinship care families, and career goals (1-2 pages). Admission decisions will be made by the department's faculty, following a review of the applicant's admission materials.

#### **Program Requirements**

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Students will complete a planned program of study consisting of 9 hours of course work with an overall grade point average of 3.0 or better, with no course grade below a "C." The courses include:

- **FCS 5110: Kinship Care Family Members: Strengths and Challenges Credits: 3 hours**
- **FCS 5120: Educational Systems and Kinship Care Families Credits: 1 hour**
- **FCS 5130: Health Care and Kinship Care Families Credits: 1 hour**
- **FCS 5140: Economic Realities and Kinship Care Families Credits: 1 hour**
- **FCS 6570: Developing Effective Programming for Kinship Care Family Members Credits: 3 hours**