

**A PLACE AT THE TABLE:
ACCREDITATION OF GERONTOLOGY
PROGRAMS**

The 37th Annual Meeting and Educational
Leadership Conference of the Association for
Gerontology in Higher Education
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PERMISSION GRANTED

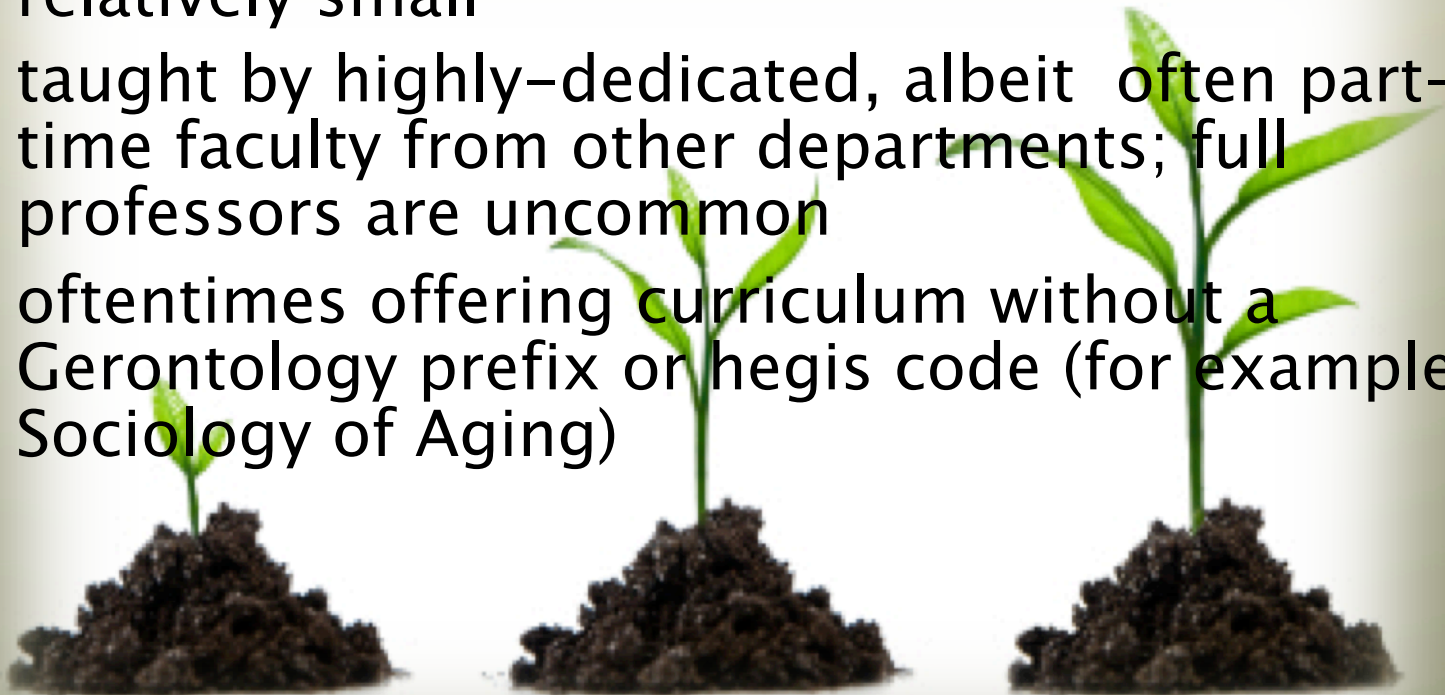


Association for
Gerontology in
Higher Education

- Nationally recognized accrediting organizations need no other “permission” per se, they claim leadership responsibility and start the process
- AGHE can act as an “accreditor” organization
- AGHE can legitimize Gerontology’s place at the accreditation table and is the appropriate organization to take the lead

ACCREDITATION NURTURES

- Accreditation of Gerontology programs will nurture the ongoing growth and development of the field.
- Gerontology programs are:
 - relatively young
 - relatively small
 - taught by highly-dedicated, albeit often part-time faculty from other departments; full professors are uncommon
 - oftentimes offering curriculum without a Gerontology prefix or hegis code (for example: Sociology of Aging)



ACCREDITATION LEGITIMIZES

For emerging academic disciplines that are coming of age, accreditation:

- Nurtures
- Protects
- Legitimizes
- Highlights
- Strengthens
- Validates



ACADEMIC REALITIES: FUNDING

- Funding for academic programs flows through the veins of discrete disciplines.
- Relatively small, young, interdisciplinary (particularly graduate) programs are vulnerable to being collapsed into larger programs.
 - The “corporate model” of numbers and bottom lines
 - Vertically integrating small programs into larger ones
 - Gerontology programs are struggling to preserve their identities



ACADEMIC REALITIES: FUNDING

- Funding vulnerabilities are heightened in public institutions where general fund tax support is declining and will decline for years to come.
- Most Gerontology Programs are offered by publically-funded colleges and universities.
- The 500 lb gorilla offering state-supported Gerontology Programs is California and that budget is about to fall into the Pacific! CSU programs are told to expect a 20% cut, Fall, 2011. Accreditation standards could have protected these Gerontology Programs.

GERONTOLOGY'S "TREASURY"

There can be no other keeper in the 21st Century of Gerontology's core body of knowledge. For example:

- Synthesizing Gerontological knowledge
- Promoting theoretical development
- Exploring the social construction of aging
- Analyzing social theory, social policy and aging



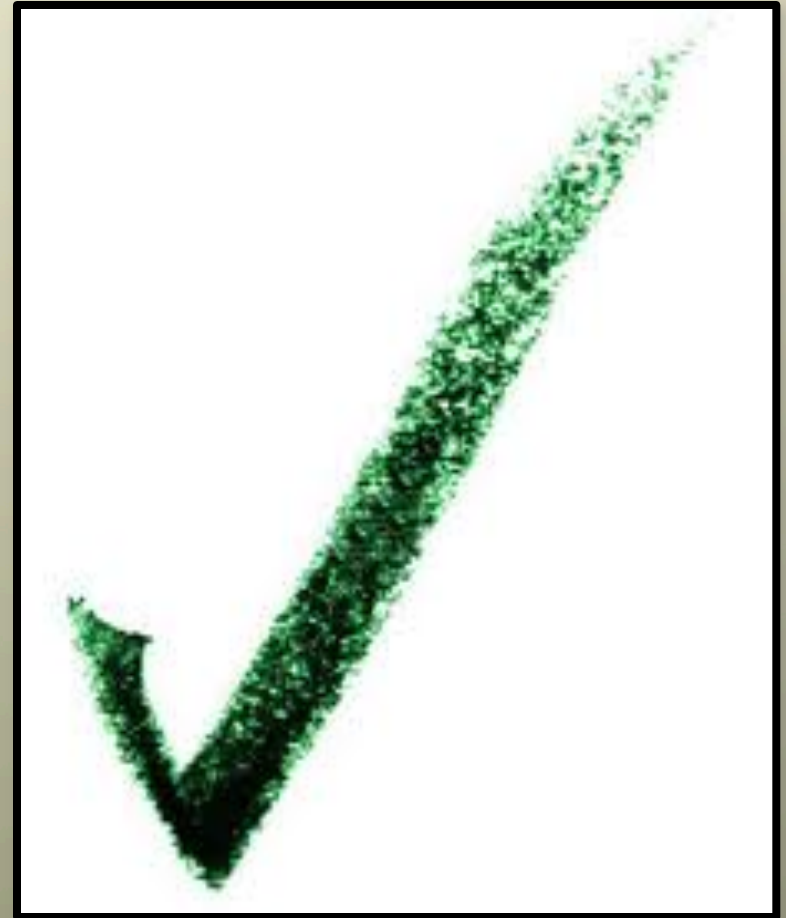
A SEAT AT THE TABLE



- Gerontology alone can synthesize age-related knowledge from multiple disciplines
- Gerontology program directors are due a seat at the Accredited Table

ACCREDITATION MEANS LEGITIMACY...

- As opportunists pop out “instant Gerontologists”
- “As weekend workshop warriors” represent themselves as trained Gerontologists...



WHY ACCREDITATION MATTERS



Without accreditation of Gerontology programs, employers, students, the public, and other academics have no formal way to evaluate the academic preparation or skills of Gerontology graduates.

SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTING REALITY

Because accreditation standards dictate minimum budgetary support, without accreditation, Gerontology programs and departments are last in budget lines for:

- Tenure track hires/Student Faculty Ratios
- Lecturers/Adjunct teachers
- Professional development funds
- Travel support/clerical help
- Budget augmentations for new sections of courses
- Library resources



One Dean's View

- Informational Interview...
- College of Health and Human Services
- In general, Dean Taylor is in favor of accreditation:
- Positive for programs
- Ahead for assessment
- Tend to have finger on pulse of workforce needs
- Helps with development of quality curriculum (sometimes adds more units)
- Challenges: adding resources to programs, (funds for directors, computers etc.)
- Agency “tail wagging dog” (un-realistic, will pass anything, costs from \$200... thousands)
- Agency may not be strict enough on program quality



A CIRCLE OF SUCCESS

Accreditation will enhance AGHE and serve its mission because accreditation supports individual AGHE members (present and future) programs, and departments.

Strong programs = strong AGHE members...

It is our responsibility to stick up for standards and credibility of programs with the mission and (yes) work of accreditation



APPROVED!



Thank you and onward!