Highlights: Gerontology Ph.D. Program

• KU is one of only several universities nationwide offering the Ph.D. in gerontology. This interdisciplinary research degree emphasizes social and behavioral science approaches to aging. The KU Ph.D. is unique among the Regents institutions in Kansas.

• The program is served by an interdisciplinary faculty that is engaged in scholarship and research with significant theoretical and practical value. Core faculty members have been able to attract and support students with external funding, and have held important leadership roles within the larger gerontology community. From across the campuses and schools of the university, the Ph.D. program also has over 30 affiliated faculty members who are available for mentoring and student committee service.

• In addition to substantive topics, all students receive extensive training in research methods. All students are expected to be continuously engaged in research under the direction of a member of the core or affiliated gerontology faculty. This follows the junior-colleague model for graduate training programs at KU. Each student is expected to participate at national scientific meetings, presenting papers and posters.

• Average time to degree for the program’s graduates has been 3.8 years. Graduates have been placed in academic, postdoctoral, research, and service positions. Presently all graduates but one work in university settings and five are university faculty.

• Alongside the conventional pathway to the Ph.D. degree, the program is advancing a proposal for a “dual-title degree” option. This innovative option, unique within KU, will enable students to meet the challenge of undertaking graduate education in the emerging, multidisciplinary field of gerontology that is combined with training in established, traditional disciplines. This design will be advantageous for the recruitment of talented graduate students, the depth and breadth of graduate training, and the graduates’ subsequent opportunities for securing employment.
The external review of an academic program in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences usually covers “the entire range of a unit’s activities and circumstances,” including the unit’s research focus, hiring plans, curriculum, governance, and facilities needs. Such a review of the Gerontology Ph.D. program was last conducted in 2004 and would normally be conducted again a year or two hence.

The present expedited review occurs in the context of a specific challenge to the program, namely, the recruitment of new students to the program. The primary questions before us are the market for gerontology doctoral education (as we conduct it) and the promotion of our program.

This statement will review (A) the organizational location of the Ph.D. program, (B) features of the program, and (C) the specific challenge of student recruitment. Supporting documents are included in this binder under various tabs. Our webpage, http://www2.ku.edu/~kugeron/, is currently being revised and its new iteration will be available for viewing on September 1.

A. ORGANIZATIONAL LOCATION

The organizational location (and naming) of gerontology research and training programs at American universities is characteristically sui generis. In our case, the Ph.D. program in Gerontology is entwined with a research center. On the organizational chart, the Ph.D. program is an academic program of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. It is hosted, nevertheless, in the Gerontology Center that itself resides in a large research institute reporting to the KU Center for Research, Inc. The director of the Ph.D. program is at once the director of the Gerontology Center with one foot each in the academic and the research sectors of the university. So far, the only disadvantage of this situation is the effort that it takes to understand it.

Gerontology Center

The Gerontology Center came first. Established in 1977, the Center was until 1990 a free-standing unit reporting to the Vice Chancellor for Research, Graduate Studies, and Public Service. The Center was primarily a research organization with funded projects and some collaborations to train service providers. In the mid-1980s the Center became the coordinator of a graduate Concentration in Gerontology (a graduate minor), open to students enrolled in any master’s or doctoral program at the university. The Concentration was converted to a Gerontology Certificate program in 2004.

In 1990 the Gerontology Center joined other large, well-funded programs of the Bureau of Child Research to form the Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies
(locally called the LSI). Since that time, the Gerontology Center experienced remarkable growth in the number and capability of its professional staff, the scope of activities, and the amount of research support. Great credit for this is due to Rhonda Montgomery who directed the center from 1992 through 2002. By 2002 the Center funded five 0.5 FTE investigators who had the other half of their appointment in academic departments, plus one investigator with a summer appointment who located her research within the Center. The primary research emphasis was social and behavioral research, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences was the academic home of all these investigators. By this time, the Center’s faculty members were also staffing (as an overload) an interdisciplinary proseminar in gerontology that was cross-listed with five departments in the College. With these features—the Certificate Program, the shared tenurable appointments, the proseminar—Gerontology had become a research center with considerable academic interests.

Prior to searching for a new director in 2003, LSI conducted its own review of the Gerontology Center in 2003 that clarified and affirmed these arrangements. A full, 30-year history of the Center is included under Tab 6. A letter about LSI’s stake in the Gerontology Ph.D. program is under Tab 7.

The Gerontology Center has the capacity in its budget for at least five joint appointments. At the present time, four positions are occupied: by David Ekerdt (Sociology), David Johnson (Psychology), Susan Kemper (Psychology), and Tracey LaPierre (Sociology). We also count among our core faculty Mary Lee Hummert (Provost’s Office and Communication Studies). The Center has two doctoral-level investigators on research appointments: Katherine Froehlich-Grobe (full time) and Ruth Herman (part time).

From across the campuses and schools of the university, the Center also has over 30 Associated Faculty who participate in its research and educational programs, and who maintain age-related research and coursework in their home departments. The list of Associated Faculty is included at Tab 8.

The portrait of Gerontology at KU is not complete without the acknowledgement of other centers and programs that enrich the university. On the Lawrence campus, these include, the Office of Aging and Long Term Care in the School of Social Welfare; the Elder Law Program of the School of Law; and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. In addition to these units, the vitality of campus interest in aging is also shown by research programs within departments that are led by members of the Center’s Associated Faculty.

The Gerontology Center has a complement at the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City, Kansas. The Landon Center on Aging is a state-funded interdisciplinary center that conducts, sponsors and supports the development of educational, clinical, and research programs related to aging. Most Center activities are carried out in partnership with other academic units of the Medical Center campus, including the schools of Allied Health, Medicine, and Nursing, and with affiliated
institutions, such as area geriatric care centers and regional VA Medical Centers. Our two centers have unique histories, mission emphases, research orientations, and organizational locations. They have never been redundant and there are no turf issues between them. Individual researchers collaborate across centers, and campus faculty can and do cross-affiliate with centers. We maintain that, across our two centers, KU has one faculty in aging.

Ph.D. Program in Gerontology

As far back as 1982, Gerontology Center members had discussed the formation of a program to offer a doctoral degree. In 1997 the University of Kansas became only one of several universities in the U.S. to do so. This program within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is governed by affiliated faculty drawn from various academic units. These have included the Departments of Applied Behavioral Sciences; Communication Studies; Health, Sport, and Exercise Science; Occupational Therapy Education; Psychology; and Sociology. The first student was admitted in the fall of 1998.

As originally proposed, the program was intended “to prepare students for academic and research careers in gerontology as well as professional careers in private and public institutions and agencies providing services to older individuals.” The proposal foresaw that “Many students are likely to be professionals currently working in the field of aging who desire to broaden or update their technical skills and knowledge of gerontology and who desire a doctoral degree for reasons of career advancement and professional development.” The approval process was also not without discussion about the advisability of an interdisciplinary degree versus discipline-specific degrees with an aging specialty.

No other Gerontology Ph.D. is available at Regents institutions in Kansas. The M.A. degree is Gerontology is available from Wichita State; a distance-learning M.S. in Family Studies and Human Services with a Specialization in Gerontology is available from Kansas State University. Various geriatric training programs are available at the KU Medical Center in medicine, nursing, allied health, and pharmacy practice.

The Dean of the College has final responsibility for the appointment of the program Director, who has heretofore also been Director of the Gerontology Center (Rhonda Montgomery, 1997-2002; David Ekerdt, 2003 to present). The program director is assisted by a Graduate Advisor (in turn, Mary Lee Hummert and now Susan Kemper) selected from among the participating faculty. In this arrangement, the program does not offer its own coursework, but draws upon the coursework and resources of the university’s departments and schools, including academic units at the KU Medical Center. This creates a responsibility to secure the continued commitment of the faculty and participating departments to offer relevant coursework.

The Gerontology doctoral program was formed in 1997 without formal state budgetary support and has survived with modest funding from the College. The cost effectiveness of the program is high. Support for the doctoral students (tuition, research
assistants) and the administrative infrastructure is generated largely from external grant sources. Of note, a NIH-funded Research and Training Program in Communication and Aging supported some Gerontology students up through 2004. Gerontology students have been able to attend and participate in scientific conferences using extramural funds and to be involved in collaborative research with colleagues across a wide range of disciplines, academic units, and institutions.

The Ph.D. program is important to the Gerontology Center. With standing on both the research and academic “sides” of the university, the Center is at the nexus of added information and strategic insight. The Ph.D. program also brings talented students to work closely with and contribute to the research programs of the faculty.

B. FEATURES OF THE PH.D. PROGRAM

In addition to the general requirements of Graduate Studies and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the following features of the Ph.D. program can be noted.

- Students are admitted to study for the Ph.D. Acceptable preparation includes a master’s degree from KU or another institution, along with basic training in statistics, program assessment or policy analysis, and completion of an empirical research study or thesis. Students entering without an acceptable master’s degree must complete the M.A. in Gerontology.
- Two semesters, which may include one summer session, must be spent in full-time resident study at KU.
- Students study in three areas: (a) core courses in the biology of aging, psychology of aging, and social gerontology; (b) supplemental courses in gerontology and related fields, and (c) methodology and advanced statistics courses. All students are expected to enroll in the interdisciplinary Gerontology Proseminar and to attend presentations of the Faculty Colloquium series.
- The program provides a common focus for all students, yet allows each student to design a course of study appropriate for her or his career objectives. Students design their curricula with the assistance of a support committee of three gerontology faculty members.
- Students attend a professional development course about issues in scientific conduct, research integrity, career pathways, and gender equity and ethnic diversity.
- All students are expected to be continuously engaged in research under the direction of a member of the core or affiliated gerontology faculty. This follows the junior-colleague model for graduate training programs at KU.
- Each student is expected to participate at national scientific meetings, presenting papers and posters. Such meetings offer an invaluable orientation to the profession of gerontological scholarship and practice.
- Students are normally expected to complete the Ph.D. within three years of entering the program or of completing the M.A. in Gerontology.

The graduate brochure for the Gerontology Ph.D. is included at Tab 9.
C. SPECIFIC CHALLENGE: STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Four points of context

First, KU does not have a department of gerontology or multiple degree levels. Some gerontology Ph.D. programs are part of departments that also offer their own courses with instruction at the B.A. and M.A. levels. They have a larger designated faculty and larger student body. When doctoral programs are part of such a structure, there may be an updraft of students into study for the Ph.D.

Second, the KU program is residential (no distance-learning option) and oriented to research training. There are basically two types of graduate programs in gerontology. One type addresses the needs of students who plan to work in clinical or service roles or program administration. Sometimes this is called applied gerontology and the degree typically awarded is a terminal Master’s. Less common, the other type provides research training at the M.A. or Ph.D. levels for students who plan academic, research, or service/administrative careers. The KU program is in this latter category.

Third, there are numerous graduate students at the university with interests or even a specialty in aging who are not in the Gerontology Ph.D. program. We know them well. They take our courses; we advise them formally and informally, in our own disciplines and across disciplines; we serve on their committees; and we even employ some of them on our research projects.

Fourth, the Gerontology Center (and thus the core faculty for the Gerontology Ph.D.) went through a period of staff constriction beginning in 2003. Over a period of two years, the Director (full professor) and two faculty members (full and assistant professor) left the university. The Graduate Advisor (full professor, paid via summer appointment) reduced her presence as she took roles in university administration. Though this had a minimal effect on students already enrolled, it narrowed the number of faculty mentors and potential resources that could be committed to new students. There was also some uncertainty about overall direction as LSI searched for a new director of the Gerontology Center. As a result, the program pulled back on the solicitation of Ph.D. applications for fall of 2003 and 2004.

Good news for the program

We are rebuilding the faculty. David Ekerdt was named Director of the Center and the Ph.D. program in 2005. Two new tenure-track, shared appointments have been made at the assistant professor level, one with Sociology in 2006 and one with Psychology in 2007. A third, full-time research professor has joined the Center from the School of Allied Health. An additional, tenure-track shared appointment is possible, pending budgetary approval. New faculty members with interests in aging and human development have joined other departments of the university. More faculty all around
means more options for courses and mentoring in the field, and more potential sources for graduate research assistantships.

There has been a gratifying increase in support for the program from the College. This includes funds for administration, a contribution to the Director’s salary, program money, and graduate recruitment funds. The College has approved our initiatives to partner with academic departments for the recruitment of faculty. Most welcome was the offer of a graduate teaching assistantship for 2008-2009 by which we could assign one of our Ph.D. students to assist in a relevant academic course.

We continue to have a strong record of training, time to degree, and placement. Our seven graduates to date have all gone on to academic, post-doctoral, or professional positions (see the following table). The average post-M.A. time-to-degree among our graduates is 3.8 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ph.D. Year</th>
<th>Dissertation Title</th>
<th>Next Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kristine N. Williams 2001</td>
<td>Improving Nursing Home Communication</td>
<td>Assistant Professor KU School of Nursing (now Associate Professor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth A.D. Nolan 2003</td>
<td>Predicting Aggressive Behavior Based On Memory Functioning: A Longitudinal Study Of Persons With Dementia Of The Alzheimer’s Type</td>
<td>NIA Postdoctoral Trainee University of Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Y. Savundranayagam 2004</td>
<td>Identity Maintenance Processes Of Spouse Caregivers: Implications For Caregiver Burden</td>
<td>Postdoctoral Research Fellow University of Western Ontario (now Asst. Prof. at U of Wisconsin-Milwaukee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiung-Ju Liu 2006</td>
<td>Comprehension Of Health-Related Written Materials By Older Adults</td>
<td>NIA Postdoctoral Trainee Boston University (now Asst. Prof at IU/PU, Indianapolis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie F. Sergeant 2006</td>
<td>Expectations To Move And Residential Mobility Of Older Adults</td>
<td>Research Associate KU School of Social Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Klaus 2006</td>
<td>Job Satisfaction And Intent To Stay In Birth Cohorts Of Nurses</td>
<td>Research Instructor KU School of Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillian G. Woods 2007</td>
<td>Written Emotional Disclosure For Lay Caregivers Of Older Adults</td>
<td>Bereavement Director, Heart of America Hospice Topeka, Kansas (applying for academic jobs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our students have won awards for their pre-doctoral and dissertation research: American Society on Aging Graduate Student Research Award (2002, 2003); American Psychological Association Division 20 Doctoral Dissertation Award (2007);
Gerontology External Review

Gerontological Society of America Emerging Scholar Award and SRPP Master’s Level Paper Award (both 2007).

The eight Ph.D. programs in gerontology in the U.S. formed a network and information exchange in 2005, and KU faculty have met regularly with this group at conferences. We were also among the group who met with Richard Hodes, Director of the National Institute on Aging, about training opportunities in gerontology. This group includes programs at Miami (Ohio) University and the Universities of Kentucky, Maryland-Baltimore, Massachusetts-Boston, North Texas, Southern California, and South Florida.

Despite all this….

Applications have been declining in number and quality. The following table describes the applications, admissions, and enrollment history of the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For year</th>
<th>Applied</th>
<th>Admitted</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>N in program</th>
<th>PhD Awards</th>
<th>With- drawals</th>
<th>N of 0.5 Facultya.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98-99</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>5+1</td>
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<td>99-00</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00-01</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>5+1</td>
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<tr>
<td>01-02</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>5+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02-03b</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4+1</td>
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<tr>
<td>03-04b</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3+1</td>
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<tr>
<td>04-05</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>05-06</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>06-07</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Transfer to Social Welf.</td>
<td>3+1</td>
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<tr>
<td>07-08</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>4+1</td>
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<tr>
<td>08-09</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. The “+1” denotes a professor not on joint appointment with the Center but with substantial involvement (and sometime summer appointment).

b. The program did not actively solicit applications due to resignations, strategic review of the unit, Director searches.

We make these observations about the table:

- Applications to the program rose to a peak early in the decade, 14 in 2001-2002.
- Enrollment was steady at five or six students through 2006, when three Ph.D.’s were awarded.
- Of the 11 students who have enrolled, three withdrew, including one who completed the M.A. degree and transferred to Social Welfare.
- Fall 2008 will be the third year in row that we have enrolled no new students.
- In Fall 2008 we will have one student enrolled and she is at dissertation stage.
In the last few years, we have advertised the program more extensively than ever. We placed multiple ads in gerontology and disciplinary publications and websites, placed notices on relevant listservs, and mailed letters directly to about 150 programs identified via membership lists at the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (Tab 10). We continue to field a fair number of inquiries generated by these efforts and by our webpage.

Not only are applications down, among the applicants that we did get there were fewer that we could admit. Perhaps applicants were not qualified, misunderstood the program, were not the kind of self-starters our program requires, or had interests that we were unable to address. For example, two students have recently been potentially admissible, but we felt unable to train them in their core interests related to aging (bioethics, community planning).

Why?

The resignations within the Gerontology Center between 2003 and 2005 certainly affected our ability to commit to new students. We nevertheless did admit students during this time and were able to offer support. And the students we had during this period continued to have support. In all, we doubt that this “constriction” explains our declining applications because this is not something that applicants (or their advisors) would readily have known about.

It seems, then, to us that there are three possible ways to understand this situation. First, the market for gerontological doctoral education has changed over the last several years. There may be a turn away from the interdisciplinary degree and in favor of the discipline-specific degree (e.g., psychology, social work) with some specialty in aging studies. Among the network of U.S. doctoral programs in gerontology, we have talked about the fact that our graduates have a narrower job market for academic and postdoctoral positions, and this idea may also be circulating among prospective applicants and their advisors. Employers do advertise explicitly for “gerontology” jobs—we see the ads and our graduates have placed—but the job market remains an issue. In this environment, we may be outcompeted for some applicants by the seven other national programs.

Second, we are not promoting our program in the optimal way. We are first and foremost researchers and scientists; boosterism is further down in our skill sets. Perhaps: our print and web materials need help; we should exhibit at national meetings (though this has not seemed cost-effective); we should tout more strongly the availability of research fellowships and the junior-colleague concept; we should emphasize our expertise in behavioral and social science. And where should we be recruiting? The students that we have enrolled have fallen roughly into three equal groups: students transferring from with KU, students who are anchored (by jobs, family) to this geographic area, and students from out-of-area. This would suggest the best recruitment strategies would be local while still advertising nationally.
Third, our model of doctoral education limits the program, specifically these features: Ph.D.-only, residential, rigorous methods requirements, student support primarily from funded projects. It does not seem immediately likely that KU will add a terminal M.A. (and so open a pipeline to the Ph.D. program). Our residential, research-mentor approach to graduate training obviates distance learning. When admitting students, we have to feel reasonably sure that, among our core and associated faculty, we can provide training that meets the student’s substantive interest. In addition, there needs to be a research assistantship open that is relevant to the student and that student has to be desirable to the PI. These matters have to align more closely than would be the case with more open-ended assistantships or fellowships, which is why the College’s offer of a teaching assistantship was welcome.

Finally, in thinking about this matter we have looked closely at another model of gerontology doctoral education, the dual-title degree being featured at Purdue University. These students are first admitted to a disciplinary Ph.D. but also fulfill specific requirements in gerontology, and so are awarded a degree in, for example, “Psychology and Gerontology.” This actually formalizes what some students already do. The dual-degree option is not the solution to our recruitment problem, but it could be run as an adjunct to the Gerontology Ph.D. It would potentially bolster the original program with a larger body of students, broaden the opportunities for graduate recruitment to KU, and make good use of an already-organized network of faculty and identified coursework.
Executive Summary: Gerontology Ph.D. Program

Mission

We offer multidisciplinary doctoral education in the science of aging, with a special focus on behavioral and social science. Our students will understand the major disciplinary theories of aging and the empirical processes of within-individual change at biological, psychological, and social levels. They will learn research methods specific to the explanation and characterization of age-related change. They will be able to critically assess disciplinary approaches, integrate disciplinary theories and concepts, and employ suitable research designs toward scholarly ends. The program prepares students for academic and research careers in gerontology, as well as for professional careers in private and public institutions and agencies providing services to older individuals.

Faculty

The program does not offer its own coursework, but draws upon the coursework and resources of the university’s departments and schools, including academic units at the KU Medical Center.

Core faculty members of the Ph.D. program concurrently hold appointments in the Gerontology Center, a unit of the Schiefelbusch Institute of Life Span Studies. The present four core faculty have tenure homes in Sociology, Psychology, and the School of Nursing. Each member of the program faculty is engaged in scholarship and research with significant theoretical and practical value, and the senior faculty members have held important leadership roles within the larger gerontology community. From across the campuses and schools of the university, the Ph.D. program also has over 30 Associated Faculty who are available for mentoring and student committee service, and who maintain age-related research and coursework in their home departments.

Ph.D. Program Features (from self-study and external review)

Key strengths of the program include (as cited in the external review): The faculty’s dedication to students and to the field of aging; the senior faculty’s ability to attract highly competitive external funding; evidence of success in terms of placing graduates in appropriate employment positions; the faculty’s strong national reputation and professional networks; the program’s being the only Gerontology Ph.D. program in the mid-western region of the U.S.; and the program’s potential as a resource for state government, especially for state agencies.

Signal features of our training program include:

- Students receive extensive training in research methods and statistics.
- The program provides a common focus for all students, yet allows each student to design a course of study appropriate for her or his career objectives.
- All students are expected to be continuously engaged in research under the direction of a member of the core or affiliated gerontology faculty. This follows the junior-colleague model for graduate training programs at KU.
• Each student is expected to participate at national scientific meetings, presenting papers and posters. Such meetings offer an invaluable orientation to the profession of gerontological scholarship and practice.

Average time to degree for the program’s eight graduates (since the first admission in 1998) has been 3.8 years. Graduates have been placed in academic, postdoctoral, research, and service positions. Presently all but one work in university settings and five are university faculty.

Changes as a Result of the Review Process

In 2008 the Gerontology Ph.D. program participated in an expedited external review, one that we had requested in the context of a specific challenge to the program, namely, the recruitment of new students to the program. The review team credited the quality of the faculty, the quality of student training, and the commitment of CLAS to the program. Among other recommendations, the review team encouraged an expansion in the number of core faculty, development of “adequate and dependable” sources of funding for graduate students, suggestions for the marketing and promotion of the program, and development of a “dual-title degree” option, i.e., partnerships between Gerontology and other discipline-specific Ph.D. programs at KU.

In the intervening time, our admissions pool has expanded and we enrolled one full-time and one-part time student in Fall 2010, and one full-time student for Fall 2011. The College’s offer of a GTA line to the program has been a welcome lifeline for us. Since 2009, we have not been able to expand the size of our core faculty.

We have advanced a proposal for a dual-title degree option in partnership with Communication Studies, Psychology, and Sociology. The dual-title degree will enable students at KU to meet the challenge of undertaking graduate education in the emerging, multidisciplinary field of Gerontology that is combined with training in established, traditional disciplines. This design will be advantageous for the recruitment of talented graduate students, the depth and breadth of graduate training, and the graduates’ subsequent opportunities for securing employment. It would potentially bolster the original program with a larger body of students and make good use of an already-organized network of faculty and identified coursework.

Overall Evaluation

Over the next few decades, most nations of the world will see unprecedented growth in the number and proportion of older adults. This shift in age structure will raise many new issues to be faced by society, increasing the demand for educators and researchers with a specialty in the physical, psychological, social, and policy dimensions of aging. The retirement of the postwar Baby Boom cohort will simultaneously be the retirement of the generation of gerontologists whose ranks expanded sharply in the 1970s with new Federal funding and initiatives. A new generation of scholars and scientists in aging will be needed to take their place. To meet these needs, KU offers a high-quality training program that is cost-effective and unique among the Regents institutions in Kansas.