Transition of the Human Development Counseling (HDC) Curriculum - to 61 Credit Hours

WHEREAS, the Human Development Counseling curriculum is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP); and

WHEREAS, CACREP’s new accreditation guidelines require a minimum of 60 hours of coursework for graduates of the School Counseling, Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) and Marriage, Couples & Family Counseling (MCFC) areas of study; and

WHEREAS, the Illinois State Counselor Licensure Board is pushing for an increase in the minimum number of credit hours required for second-tier licensure to 60 hours of coursework, consistent with national trends; and

WHEREAS, practitioners are required to obtain state licensure in order to practice; and

WHEREAS, the Graduate Council has determined the transition of the HDC curriculum to 61 credit hours would make the program more attractive to prospective students; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Human Development Counseling has a well-developed, sound pedagogical model for delivering the additional courses;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the University of Illinois at Springfield Campus Senate approves the transition of the Human Development Counseling curriculum to 61 credit hours.

RATIONALE

The Department of Human Development Counseling (HDC) has requested to transition to a 61 credit hour curriculum across all three of its concentrations: School Counseling, Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) and Marriage, Couples & Family Counseling (MCFC). The Graduate Council (GC) carefully reviewed and discussed this proposal at their meeting on October 22, 2012.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) offers accreditation for professional counseling programs in the United States. The Department
of Human Development Counseling’s curriculum is accredited by CACREP through 2017. The Department’s next reaccreditation self-study is due in the winter of 2015. On submission of this reaccreditation document, the Department of Human Development Counseling must be in full compliance with all 2009 CACREP standards, including requiring - a minimum of 60 semester credit hours for all students.

Professional accreditation is a major asset for HDC and serves as a strong recruitment tool. Students graduating from a CACREP accredited program are favored by counseling licensure boards and the review process is significantly expedited for these students. Counseling students in CACREP accredited programs are able to sit for licensure examinations during the last semester of graduate study.

In addition to the CACREP requirements, there is a current trend among state licensure boards for an increase in the required number of credit hours required for licensure. Notably, Indiana, Florida, Maine and Massachusetts are now requiring 60 hours of course work for license eligibility with Illinois also moving toward this national trend.

By adopting this new standard for all of the available concentrations, HDC will also increase the attractiveness of the program. The new curriculum will offer a richer educational experience as it will allow for enrollment in elective classes as a part of the program. Normalizing the 61 credit hour requirement across all three concentrations will keep one area from being more attractive than another. Importantly, the increased credit hours will also enhance the portability of licensure and certification for students who plan to leave the state. Most importantly, this adjustment is necessary for the curriculum to retain CACREP accreditation.