

April 28, 2021

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Carl W. Lejuez, Ph.D.
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs



RE: Graduate Certificate in Dementia Care

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Trustees approve a new Graduate Certificate in Dementia Care

BACKGROUND:

The 12-credit Dementia Care Graduate Certificate addresses an existing and growing market need to prepare nurses and other healthcare professionals on essential theories, concepts and skills for healthcare coordination of patients and caregivers affected by Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRDs). The Dementia Care Certificate offered through the UConn School of Nursing is designed to educate healthcare professionals and administrators for the common goal of improving care outcomes and quality of life for patients with ADRDs and their caregivers with a focus on culturally responsive and patient and family centered care principles. The knowledge learned through this program is valuable to nurses and healthcare professionals who are involved in the management of direct patient care and care coordination of patients with ADRDs. This certificate is offered entirely online.

Our anticipated enrollment for the initial year is 5 students, which we will hope to expand in year two to 10 students with a cap of 20 students. No additional resources are needed for the program.

Request for New UConn Academic Degree Program

General Information

Name of degree program:	Graduate Certificate in Dementia Care
Name of sponsoring Department:	School of Nursing
Name of sponsoring College:	School of Nursing
Campuses:	Online
Contact persons:	Angela Starkweather
Type of Proposal:	New
Type of Program:	Graduate Certificate
Anticipated Initiation Date:	Fall 2021
Anticipated Date of First Graduation:	Spring 2021
Program Payment Type:	Fee based
CIP Code:	51.9999 (health professions and related clinical sciences, other)

Justification for the New Program

Overview: This Dementia Care Certificate Program Proposal addresses an existing and growing market need to educate nurses and health care professionals on essential disease processes, treatments, care, and caregiving within the domain of dementia care.

The Dementia Care Certificate offered through the UConn School of Nursing is designed to educate individuals in nursing and other healthcare disciplines for the common goal of improving care of persons living with dementia and their caregivers. According to Surr et al. (2017), ensuring an informed and effective dementia workforce is of international concern. With this perspective in mind, we can begin to shift the culture in a way that will meet the needs of many instead of one at a time. While our primary target audience will be nurses, the knowledge learned through this program is valuable to other health care professional role groups and those who are in need of this knowledge in the context of health care to understand existing opportunities and refine existing ideas and will create an interdisciplinary approach to dementia care.

The proposed Dementia Certificate includes a 12 credit (3 courses) online synchronous & asynchronous program designed to meet the educational needs of:

1. Nurses and other healthcare professionals interested in improving the care environments where they serve or will serve persons with dementia and their caregivers.
2. Nurses and other healthcare professionals interested in learning how to better educate staff and families on dementia care (e.g., in their care environments).

3. Health care professionals interested in improving and solving problems affecting their practice and/or discipline (e.g., certified nurse assistants, healthcare administrators, physicians, and social workers).

Background: Survey findings and regulatory requirements reveal a severe training shortage in the area of dementia care. Multiple studies of the dementia care regulatory environment show that the availability of qualified staff and training opportunities improve resident outcomes and quality of life (see Morrow-Howell et al., 2005; Maslow et al., 2013; Zimmerman et al., 2014; Carder, 2017).

A 2015 study from Justice in Aging found that “state licensing and credentialing requirements for health care professionals include dementia training only to a limited extent,” including:

- Twenty-four (24) states requiring licensure for certified nursing assistants (CNAs);
 - Fifteen (15) states requiring training for administrators of nursing homes and/or assisted facilities; and
 - Two (2) states requiring training for registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses, or licensed vocational nurses (LPNs).
- Requirements for home health aids and personal care assistants, on the other hand, were “found in a minority of states and limited in scope.”

Are there similar programs in CT or elsewhere?

No. Notably, among selected occupational groups related to dementia care, at least 60 percent of all but nurses and general practitioners have a bachelor’s degree or lower education, supporting training at the pre- or immediate post-baccalaureate levels. Further, more than half of job ads that reference ‘dementia’ in the job description in the past six months are for healthcare support occupations, such as healthcare clinician, including nurses, social workers, physical therapists, and physicians.

Despite limited academic options, undergraduate certificate completions trends suggest stable student interest in fields related to dementia care. Beyond the nursing profession, our colleagues in allied health can all benefit from the formalized education with this dementia certificate to address opportunities specific to their disciplines and those requiring collaboration with nursing. These role groups are all faced with daily challenges they must also work around. The Dementia Certificate program will be housed within the School of Nursing to ensure that we attract our core audience, nurses.

What are the desired learning outcomes of the program?

Graduate of the Dementia Care Certificate will:

1. Apply knowledge of Alzheimer's dementia and related dementias to complex care coordination using principles of patient and family-centered care and culturally-responsive approaches.

2. Demonstrate knowledge and skills in the assessment of dementia patient and caregiver needs, available interventions and appropriate evaluation for improving quality of life and addressing legal and ethical issues.
3. Coordinate interprofessional dementia care to manage complex behaviors over the trajectory of dementia stages.

Program Description

The Proposed Three Dementia Care Certificate Courses are:

1. Alzheimer's and Dementia: Disease Trajectory and Management (4 credits)
2. Dementia Caregivers and Families (4 credits)
3. Dementia Behaviors, Communication, and Care Coordination (4 credits) to include designing activities for dementia patients and virtual simulations around communication and pain assessment

The first course in the Dementia Certificate entitled Alzheimer's and Dementia: Disease Trajectory and Management is designed to introduce the student to the disease process of several types of dementia. This will be the first in a series of three courses. The course will describe the pathophysiology, diagnostic testing, current treatments according to the stage of disease for Alzheimer's disease, Frontotemporal Lobe Dementia, Lewy Body/Parkinson's Disease Dementia, Young Onset Dementia, Vascular Dementia, Down's Syndrome and Dementia, Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, Huntington's Disease, Korsakoff Syndrome, Mixed Dementia, and Mild Cognitive Impairment. Students should be able to compare and contrast the pathophysiology, treatment, and symptom presentation of each dementia type.

The second course in the certificate is entitled Dementia Caregivers and Families. This course will follow the Alzheimer's and Dementia course. In this course, students will be instructed on how to use the principles of the first course to identify opportunities to guide caregivers and families of persons with dementia using family centered care. This course will emphasize the critical thinking and problem solving needed to assess caregiver needs at each stage of the disease process, education needed by caregivers, legal and ethical issues, as well as palliative and end of life care. By the end of this course, students should feel confident in their ability to assess caregivers, refer them to appropriate resources and guide the family through the palliative/end of life process.

The third course, Dementia Behaviors, Communication, and Care Coordination will introduce the student to common behaviors seen in dementias and will include designing activities for dementia patients, and use of complementary and alternative therapies. Students will participate in virtual simulations and case studies around effective communication with interprofessional teams and caregivers, effective communication as it relates to challenging behaviors, as well as pain assessment. Through this course, students will learn about quality care indicators for

dementia care that apply across settings, practical skills for decreasing anxiety in persons with dementia that may lead to challenging behaviors as well as navigating legal, policy, and financial issues of dementia care.

Proposed Graduate Catalogue Copy

The 12-credit Dementia Care Graduate Certificate addresses an existing and growing market need to prepare nurses and other healthcare professionals on essential theories, concepts and skills for healthcare coordination of patients and caregivers affected by Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRDs). The Dementia Care Certificate offered through the UConn School of Nursing is designed to educate healthcare professionals and administrators for the common goal of improving care outcomes and quality of life for patients with ADRDs and their caregivers with a focus on culturally responsive and patient and family centered care principles. The knowledge learned through this program is valuable to nurses and healthcare professionals who are involved in the management of direct patient care and care coordination of patients with ADRDs. This certificate is offered entirely online. Required courses: NURS 5105, 5106, 5107

Faculty Involvement

Christine Dileone, PhD, RN, will be primarily involved in the development and teaching of courses, however, she will network widely among the other health profession school to gauge interest in teaching, co-teaching or guest lecturing. In addition to Dr. Dileone, Dr. Juliette Shellman, Dr. Millicent Malcolm and Dr. Christine Tocchi.

Enrollment and graduate projections

Our anticipated enrollment for the initial year is 5 students, which we will hope to expand in year two to 10 students with a cap of 20 students. The proposed Health Care Innovation Certificate is a 12-credit program per guidelines of the University of Connecticut. The cost per credit is \$825.00. One 4 credit course will cost the enrolled student \$3,300.00. The total projected program cost is \$9,900.00. This cost does not include books, materials and any additional expenditures incurred by the enrolled student for this certificate program.

We anticipate the program taking 3 semesters (fall, spring, summer). We anticipate enrollment to initially range in size from 10 to 20 students per cohort. A cohort of 10 students would result in gross revenue of \$33,000 per semester and \$99K per program completion. Those numbers would double for a cohort size of 20 to be \$660K per semester and \$198K per program completion. Cost expenditures for UConn School of Nursing may include compensation of adjunct faculty for a total of \$5,864K per semester. A minimum of 5 students per course would be recommended to hold the class and remain profitable.

Program Evaluation

The program will be evaluated on several levels including the number of interested applicants, number of applicants who apply and enroll to the program on a yearly basis, and number of students who complete the program within one year. Student evaluation of teaching (SET) and SET+ plans will also be used to evaluate student learning and teaching outcomes. Annual course evaluations will also be used to include questions on whether the certification is being supported financially through the student's employer, whether the completion of the program will help the student obtain a promotion or new position, and whether the student would encourage other peers/colleagues to complete the certificate program.

Program Administration

Dr. Christine Dileone will be designated as the Program director to coordinate admissions, advising and oversight. She will work with Associate Dean Dr. Starkweather regarding any programmatic changes or decisions regarding the program.

Funding and Financial Resources Needed

Dr. Dileone, full time faculty member, will develop and deliver the courses. Course workload will be provided for courses taught by any full time faculty member and if needed, adjunct faculty will be paid at usual compensation to teach any courses although this is not anticipated.

Other Resource Needs

No other resources are needed to develop and implement the program.

Consultation with other potentially affected units

We have spoken with the deans of SW and HDFS, and Director of the Center for Aging.

Who can apply to this program?

Internal applicants (current UConn students enrolled in another UConn degree or certificate program), External applicants (individuals who are not currently UConn students)

Anticipated term and year of first enrollment

Fall 2021

Admission Requirements

Graduate of a baccalaureate program in a health professions discipline or related field.

Term(s) to which students will be admitted

Fall, Spring, Summer

Application deadline: Rolling

Initiator

Angela Starkweather, School of Nursing, angela.starkweather@uconn.edu, 860-486-0549

Program Director Name

Christine Dileone, Faculty, christine.dileone@uconn.edu, 860-655-7069

Administrative Contact

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