Dear GIP Community,

It has been my honor and privilege to serve as Director of the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program (GIP) over the past four years. It is with mixed emotions that I have made the decision to resign as Director of the program (as of July 1) pending a move to Ohio where my husband has been provided an amazing professional opportunity at the Cleveland Clinic, which serendipitously also places us geographically closer to our extended families. I am fortunate that I will remain as a gerontology faculty member and will continue to teach remotely from Cleveland. Working with a dedicated and supportive team of GIP faculty and staff, we have accomplished quite a bit during this time period. These accomplishments include the revision of all 17 GERON courses so that we could become an official University of Utah UOnline Program (https://online.utah.edu/graduate-programs/gerontology/index.php).

All of our revised courses now align with best practices in cyber-pedagogy which provides an engaging and state-of-the-art online learning experience for students. I want to thank the gerontology faculty for their dedicated and tremendous efforts put forth to accomplish this goal. Furthermore, our courses now align with the curriculum and competency guidelines from the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE). This alignment with the national gerontology education standards have positioned us to apply for Program of Merit status through AGHE.

I am excited and grateful that Dr. Jackie Eaton has been appointed the new Director of GIP. Jackie’s enthusiasm and vision for the program will certainly propel the GIP onwards and upwards in the upcoming years.

Warm Regards,

Kara Dassel
Director, Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program
Associate Professor

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2017 World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics
July 23-27
San Francisco, California
“Global Aging and Health: Bridging Science, Policy, and Practice”
Hello Friends!

I am excited to begin the 2017-2018 academic year in partnership with you. It is my honor to step into the role of Program Director. Dr. Kara Dassel has accomplished much as the leader of this program. She served in this position from 2013 to 2017 and I would like to highlight a few of the milestones she led us to and through:

- The Gerontology Minor became reality; with enrollment growing annually.
- Scholarship funding has also increased, making it possible to support more students.
- Program activities include volunteering (Remember serving Thanksgiving at the Senior Center?), group fundraising (Walk to End Alzheimer’s each fall), social activities (Fall social, a holiday party), and the Spring celebration to honor program graduates and Sigma Phi Omega inductees.

-Alumni outreach is on the rise. We have compiled an alumni listserv, created a newsletter, and instituted alumni surveys to improve the pulse on careers in aging and the accomplishments of our graduates.

- Each fall and spring, we meet with community partners to identify skills that graduates need to enter the workforce and improve our partnership with those in practice.

- Awarded $145,000 grant through Teaching and Learning Technologies (Online Program Investment Preparation) to revise all gerontology courses (7 core, 11 electives).

- Two micro-certificates in End of Life and Caring for Aging Populations are now available. Professionals from a variety of careers will find these useful in adding value to current positions, job advancement, or to facilitate a career change.

- Currently applying to the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) as an official "Program of Merit."

Thank you Dr. Dassel for your time, encouragement, and kindness. As we begin the new school year, we will continue your efforts. This upcoming year, we look forward to:

- Completing the revision of all gerontology courses as part of the TLT Grant.

- Strategic planning that will give us foresight into the years ahead.

- Continued partnerships with community and alumni stakeholders to improve practicum experiences, and target the needs of the aging population.

- Augmenting our contributions in education, research, and service through interdisciplinary partnerships and initiatives.

We, as a program, will continue to emphasize the core values of excellence, innovation, and integrity. As we move forward, please do not hesitate to reach out with inspiration, hard work, feedback, ideas, and a friendly hand. We, as a program, plan to do the same!

Jackie Eaton, PhD
Research Assistant Professor
STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

Say hello to the College of Nursing’s program manager, Arminka Zeljkovic! Arminka is responsible for overseeing all administrative, technical, faculty, and student support functions of the Primary Care DNP, Psych/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner DNP, and Gerontology Interdisciplinary Programs in the College of Nursing. She supports and advocates for students in the programs, acting as a resource person and facilitator for explaining and complying with University Policies and Procedures. She has been working for the University of Utah for the last 12 years and has more than ten years of experience in student services, academic advising, and higher education. Arminka also has extensive experience in program advising, admission, orientation and graduation processes at the public as well as the private online university.

Arminka is fluent in German and Bosnian and loves to read!

ALZHEIMER’S ASSOC. GRANT

This project, "Group Support for Dementia Caregivers at Risk for Complicated Grief" is funded by the National Alzheimer’s Association. Our research team includes Dr. Kathie Supiano, Principal Investigator, and Drs. Marilyn Luptak, Troy Andersen and Andrew Wilson.

The goal of this project is to adapt complicated grief group therapy to prepare dementia caregivers for the death of their care recipient.

High quality caregiver support should include preparation for the death of the care recipient. While most people manage the loss of a family member to dementia, 7-20% of grievers experience ineffective mourning known as complicated grief. Unlike normal grief, complicated grief occurs when painful thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are severe and long lasting, preventing people from accepting the loss and resuming life.

This project will adapt a proven therapy for complicated grief in bereaved dementia caregivers—Complicated Grief Group Therapy (CGGT)—for soon-to-be bereaved dementia caregivers at risk for complicated grief to promote healthy death preparedness and eventual bereavement—Pre-Loss Group Support (PLGS). First, the death preparedness of both bereaved and soon-to-be bereaved caregivers will be assessed. Second, CGGT will be adapted into PLGS, a 10-session group therapy for soon-to-be bereaved dementia caregivers. Finally, PLGS will be evaluated in 3 partner long term care facilities with caregivers at-risk for complicated grief whose care recipient has a life expectancy of 6 months or less. Our partner facilities include the Salt Lake City Veterans Home, Silverado and Hillside Mission Health.

OUTSTANDING PHD STUDENT AWARD

Congratulations to PhD student Katarina Felsted for receiving the Outstanding PhD Student Award!

This award is a competitive recognition given to a PhD candidate by PhD program faculty.
CONGRATULATIONS
GRADUATES!

MAY 2017 GRADUATE
WINNIFRED HOWARD
"PREPARE" Personal Readiness, Emergency Packs and Recovery Essentials: Emergency Preparedness For Community-Dwelling Older Adults
Committee Members: Kara Dassel, Linda Edelman, Michael Caserta

AUGUST 2017 GRADUATES & PROJECTS

BRITTANY THURGOOD
"Relaxation Techniques Course for Older Adults"
Committee members: Kara Dassel Katherine Supiano Michael Caserta

ALIJANA KAHRIMAN
"Social Isolation among Non-English Speaking Older Bosnian Refugees: A Proposal to Salt Lake County Aging Services"
Committee Members: Katherine Supiano Katarina Felsted Sonia Salari

LEILANI JACKSON
"Looking Beyond Mainstream Medicine: Exploring Complementary Treatments for the Symptoms of Dementia."
Committee members: Katarina Felsted Michael Caserta Scott Wright

WENDY MOHLMAN
"Educating Certified Nursing Assistants on End-of-Life Care."
Committee members: Kara Dassel Kathie Supiano Michael Caserta
New Sigma Phi Omega members
Melanie Stewart, Alijana Kahriman, and
Daniela McCroby inducted by Kathie
Supiano and Jackie Eaton

Celebrating current and future graduates
Daniela McCroby, Alijana Kahriman, Karen Gilbert,
Wendy Mohlman, Winnifred Howard & Kara Dassel

A big thank you to Kara Dassel!
Associate Dean, Barbara Wilson and
Kara Dassel

Gerontology graduates with faculty and staff

**ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS**

Deborah Morgan, a DNP student who is also
earning the Graduate Interdisciplinary
Gerontology Certificate, recently ran in the
London Marathon to raise awareness and money
for Alzheimer's research.

The Alzheimer's research team, consisting of
more than 200 members, raised over $550,000 for
Alzheimer's research!
The College of Social Work, College of Nursing and Neighbors Helping Neighbors collaborated to put on "Careers in Aging," a yearly event dedicated to educating others about different careers available for serving older adults in some capacity. Our theme this year was, "Advocating for Older Adults," and we had various professionals answering questions about how they started in their careers, challenges the older adults are currently facing and how the professionals work with multiple disciplines to provide advocacy. Our keynote speaker was Alan Ormsby, AARP Utah State Director, followed by a panel consisting of five community professionals and one older adult Neighbors Helping Neighbors (NHN) client who has been receiving community services (such as Meals on Wheels, senior transportation and other older adult services).