Memo

TO: Sue Beck and the DAHS Academic Affairs Committee

FROM: Grace Baranek & the PhD Research Methods Courses Restructuring Committee

DATE: November 5, 2014

RE: Proposed research methods courses across three PhD programs

Process: We have recently completed a year-long evaluation and planning process that has culminated in a proposed set of modular courses in research methods designed for use across our three PhD programs in the Department of Allied Health Sciences. With iterative input from the PhD Program Directors [Ruth Humphry (OS), Betsy Crais (SHS), and Joe Myers and Vicki Mercer (HMSC)], as well as the PhD Research Methods Courses Committee, the Office of Research, and the 20+ AHS faculty members who actively participated on the committee and various subcommittees, we have created innovative course offerings in research methods that are applicable across programs. The Graduate School has been apprised of this proposal and has been supportive in the planning process.

In October, a completed draft of the proposal was circulated and formally discussed within each program’s curricular review committees, which included the Division Directors, PhD program faculty, and in some cases also their PhD students. All three programs voted to adopt the new modular courses/sequence as proposed. Subsequently, minor edits were made to the course schedule and instructor listings based on feedback from faculty. The “finalized” documents detailing the full set of proposed courses with mini syllabi, as well as the overall sequence/timeline across cohorts are uploaded to the Sakai folder with this memo for your review. Please note that at this time we are processing only 9 of the 14 “request for curriculum change forms”. These are the 9 modular courses slated for the 2015-2016 academic year, and these would need to be entered into the system by January 2015. We will process the remaining 5 courses (slated for 2016-2017) for your review at a later time point. The program directors will follow up with the graduate school and make handbook changes as needed to reflect any minor changes in their curricula following approval from the DAHS academic curriculum review committee. Very few adjustments are needed to the existing curricula, as the majority of these courses either replace existing courses (eventually), and/or will be offered as electives. The PhD program directors will convene a meeting well in advance of each semester to review the plans/syllabi, coordinate schedules, and make any further adjustments.

Rationale: The proposed modular curriculum will flexibly meet the diverse needs of our PhD students, leverage existing expertise of our faculty, facilitate more interdisciplinary interactions, and, ultimately, reduce redundancy and burden across programs.

List of Proposed Modular Courses:
1. Philosophical Foundations (1 credit)
2. Qualitative Foundations (1 credit)
3. Quantitative Foundations (1 credit)
4. Designing Mixed Methods Research (1 credit)
5. Single Subject Design 1 (1 credit)
6. Single Subject Design 2 (1 credit)
7. Participatory Qualitative Methods: Advanced Application (1 credit)
8. Measurement & Psychometrics (1 credit)
9. Survey Design (1 credit)
10. Group-based Intervention Trial Design 1 (Experimental Studies) (1 credit)
11. Group-based Intervention Trial Design 2 (Non-Experimental Studies) (1 credit)
12. Grant Writing (3 credits)
13. Independent Study: Research Methodology (1-3 credits, variable)
14. Academic Writing (1 credit)

Schedule: See the timeline document for more details of sequencing across 2 cohorts. In general, the new modular offerings provide condensed coverage of specific methods (e.g., 1 credit course = 15 contact hours: 5 weeks X 3 hours per week) and increased flexibility for advisors/students to individualize programs of study to best fit their needs. The first course offerings are slated to begin Fall 2015. Generally speaking, the foundational (required) courses will be offered annually, whereas specialized (elective) topics will be offered every other year to optimize enrollment across two cohorts and decrease faculty burden. Changes in courses and sequence will undoubtedly be made as we learn more about these modules related to faculty and student needs/interests. For example, if we have varying levels of interest, modules could be offered more/less frequently or changed over time as needed. As the 14 proposed courses are operationalized, over time, we will phase out existing courses that are no longer needed in the individual programs (e.g., phase out the intro methods courses in OS, SHS).

Enclosures:

1) Proposed AHS Modular Research Course Descriptions (mini syllabi)
2) Proposed AHS Modular Research Courses Timeline
3) Request for Curriculum Change Forms – new course requests for AHSC 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 914, 896