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## **MS/MBA Program First of Its Kind in the State**

**GREENSBORO** – The University of North Carolina at Greensboro hopes to meet the needs of the retiring baby boomers and other older adults with a new dual degree master’s program.

The Gerontology Program and the Bryan School of Business and Economics have launched a new MS in Gerontology/MBA.

“This new, 57-hour dual degree is the first program of its kind in North Carolina,” said Dr. Sheldon Balbirer, MBA program director. “The program pools the talents and the resources of two well-established programs at UNCG that are collaborating to produce a graduate degree to meet the needs of the rapidly aging population in North Carolina and the U.S.”

The baby boomers, who are now retiring, will be the largest and most affluent group of retirees in American history. According to the U.S. Census Department, the number of those aged 65 or older in North Carolina increased 21 percent from 1990 to 2000. From 2000 to 2030, that population is projected to increase from 969,000 to 2.2 million.

This population increase means an increased demand for those who can care for this population. According to a study by the US Department of Health and Human Services, nearly 6.5 million long-term care workers will be required nationally by 2050 to serve the needs of an aging population. The American Health Care Association estimates that there is an immediate need for some 100,000 health care professionals across the nation.

The new MS in Gerontology/MBA program will help meet that need by training students in both gerontology and business administration. The result will be graduates who are not only capable of filling upper-level administrative and health care positions, but also business-related positions that cater to what is expected to be a healthy, vibrant and active group of retirees. These graduates will assist businesses in addressing this growing segment of the marketplace – from positions in banking and financial management to positions in marketing, human resources development and insurance.

“Students enrolled in the program will bring the multidisciplinary gerontology perspectives of population aging, individual aging and family aging into MBA class discussions – and will simultaneously bring the principles of economics, finance, accounting and management to their gerontology classes. This will prepare these students for the new future of aging baby boomers with unique tastes and demands,” said

Dr. Janice Wassel, director of the gerontology program. “This new program is not only innovative and unique for North Carolina, but one of only a handful of programs nationally merging business education with gerontology.”

Guiding the program’s development will be a national advisory board made up of some of the nation’s foremost experts in this area. Board members include Dr. Harry “Rick” Moody, of AARP in Washington, D.C.; Dr. Neal E. Cutler, of Widener University; Dr. Harvey Sterns, of the University of Akron; Dr. Victor Marshall of the NC Institute on Aging; and Dr. Charles F. Longino Jr., of the Reynolda Gerontology Program at Wake Forest University.

The degree will require 57 credit-hours of course work in both gerontology and the MBA program.

The new program also complements the MS in Nursing/MBA dual degree program already in place at the university.

For more information, call Wassel at (336) 256-1020 or Balbirer at (336) 334-4531 or visit <http://www.uncg.edu/grs/bulletin/gerontology.html#MSMBA>.

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