

THE HUMAN SERVICES DEGREE PROGRAM AT NORTH

For approximately two and a half years Illinois Central College has been exploring the development of a Human Services Degree Program. The overall objective of this curriculum is to educate and train paraprofessionals for employment in a variety of human services agencies and environments in the College district. One of the obstacles to offering the program has been a lack of space. With the acquisition of ICC North, there will classrooms available. During Fall Semester 2003 there is one Human Services course being taught at ICC North—HUMSV 120, Survey of Psychiatric Rehabilitation. In the spring, there will be two courses offered there—HUMSV 110, Introduction to Human Services and HUMSV, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Skills.

Rationale

There are at least four student populations that may be interested in this educational program; they are:

1. New high school graduates who want to pursue a two-year degree in the human services which would be more “experiential and hands-on” in nature rather than a four-year degree in which the experiential component occurs primarily in the junior and senior level courses.
2. Non-traditional adult re-entry students who also want to pursue more “experiential” learning opportunities.
3. Current employees at human services agencies who have little or no formal education experience and want to pursue coursework to upgrade their skills, employability, and income.
4. Transfer-oriented students who are interested in gaining some “experiential” education prior to making a final decision about pursuing a four-year degree.

Most paraprofessionals are hired to provide direct service to people in need. However, many of them have only a GED or high school diploma and lack the education/training to meet the psychosocial needs of the clients they serve.

Due to budget restrictions, agencies are assigning more responsibilities to paraprofessionals than were once given to employees with four-year degrees. Again, these paraprofessionals need coursework and education to upgrade their skill levels.

Development

At this point in its development, the Human Services Degree Program has nine options; seven of them are two-year applied science degrees and the other two, certificates of achievement.

Degrees

1. Human Services Generalist
2. Mental Health Technician
3. Family and Youth Services Aide
4. Geriatric Services Aide
5. Paraeducator (Teacher Assistant)
6. Child Development Assistant
7. Drug and Alcohol Counselor

Certificates

1. Developmental Disabilities
2. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Certificate Program

Human Services Generalist

With this option, the student would take twenty-two hours of general education courses as well as four Human Services courses (Introduction to Human Services, Human Services Applications, Communication Skills for the Human Services Paraprofessional, Human Services Practicum/Seminar). He/she would also select approximately 30 hours of electives in a variety of classes about human behavior in the disciplines of psychology, sociology, health, and criminal justice. Then after graduation and employment, a student would get more specific training from the social services agency where he/she was hired.

Mental Health Technician

The student who pursues this option would take the gen ed component and Human Services courses mentioned above and then take more specific courses in psychology such as Abnormal Psychology and Personality. He/she would also enroll in at least two courses that are part of the Psychiatric Rehabilitation

Certificate (Survey of Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Psychiatric Rehabilitation Skills). Upon graduation, this student should be employable in mental health agencies in the district such as Methodist Medical Center, Human Services Center, Tazwood Mental Health Services, and Office of Rehabilitation Services of the Department of Human Services.

Family and Youth Services Aide

With this option, the student again takes the gen ed component and the Human Services courses and then an array of courses, primarily in sociology, psychology, drug and alcohol counselor training, criminal justice and health. This graduate could be employed in a variety of social services programs at agencies such as Counseling and Family Services, Children's Home Association, The Salvation Army, Peoria County Truancy Services Programs, etc.

Geriatric Services Assistant

The student's coursework would involve courses in psychology and health about the process of aging. Graduates of this program would hopefully be more employable in assisted living centers, shelter care settings, nursing homes, and home health care companies.

Paraeducator (Teacher Assistant)

This option has been developed primarily in response to the No Child Left Behind legislation which requires that teacher assistants in Title I funded programs have 60 hours of college coursework by 2006. Again, the student would take 22 hours of gen ed courses, some of the Human Services courses, and courses in math, science, reading, and education to prepare them to work with special needs children.

Child Development Assistant

This option provides a curriculum that prepares students to work in child care agencies which have a social services orientation. The coursework goes beyond the traditional child development curriculum in that students are required to take the Human Services courses as well as courses about the child in a social context. This degree still includes sufficient child development courses so the graduate can be teacher or director qualified under Department of Human Services regulations.

Drug and Alcohol Counselor

This degree has been offered at the College for seven years and prepares students to work as paraprofessionals in agencies that service those with

substance abuse issues. This program currently enrolls approximately 35 students in its introductory classes each semester.

Developmental Disabilities

This is a \certificate program only. Students are not required to take the general education component to acquire this certificate. The coursework prepares the individual to work in agencies which hire adults with developmental disabilities such as Peoria Association of Retarded Citizens and Community Workshop and Training Center. Courses in this program include Introduction to Developmental Disabilities, Introduction to Assistive Technology, and Communication Techniques with the Developmentally Disabled.

Psychiatric Rehabilitation Certificate Program

This is a sixteen credit hour certificate program whose curriculum was developed at the University of Chicago in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Human Services to train current employees at mental health facilities. The four courses in this program include Survey of Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Skills, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Health Skills, and Vocational and Community Living Skills. Each course includes a 38 hour internship.