

Board Meeting
May 22, 2008

TRANSFER DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN DISABILITY STUDIES,
COLLEGE OF APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES, CHICAGO

Action: Approve the Transfer of the Doctor of Philosophy in Disability Studies from the College of Applied Health Sciences to the Department of Disability and Human Development, College of Applied Health Sciences, Chicago

Funding: No New Funding Required

The Interim Chancellor at Chicago with the advice of the Chicago Senate, the Graduate College, and the College of Applied Health Sciences recommends approval to transfer the Doctor of Philosophy in Disability Studies from the College of Applied Health Sciences to the Department of Disability and Human Development within the College of Applied Health Sciences.

The proposed revision transfers the primary administrative responsibility of the program from the former joint sponsorship of three departments--Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical Therapy (PT), and Disability and Human Development (DHD) in the College to one department, Disability and Human Development. Accordingly, the degree will now be offered by the Department of Disability and Human Development, which can directly negotiate collaborations with other contributing units, rather than being offered at the college level as a formally inter-departmental program.

During the last decade, scholarship and teaching in the program have evolved around two distinct domains of disability: the critical examination of disability as a social and cultural phenomenon and a focus on individual-level impairment and intervention. Although disability is inherently interdisciplinary, the two domains emphasize distinct epistemological traditions. These traditions dictate different research questions, methodologies, and skill sets.

While the current program has accommodated the breadth of scholarship represented across these two domains, the result has been a growing imbalance in several respects. First, most of the courses taken by students in the program are taught by faculty in DHD, with several other important courses taught by OT faculty. Second, most of the methods courses and content electives are controlled by DHD. Third, approximately 80 percent of the students in the program are advised by DHD and the remainder by OT faculty. Fourth, the curriculum and admissions review has been done mostly by DHD and OT faculty, and the Directors of Graduate Studies for the past seven years have been faculty from DHD. Finally, DHD has been managing the program budget. In a sense, the current disability studies program has evolved into an interdisciplinary program offered primarily by the Department of Disability and Human Development with a significant contribution from the Department of Occupational Therapy.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and Federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs with this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The President of the University recommends approval. This action is subject to further review and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.