

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number SD4821S
Date of Senate Approval 04/29/2021

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

**APC Document 41 (LA): Add new course:
LA 250, Discovering and Developing Grit and Perseverance**

Effective Date: Fall 2021

1. Add: On page 298, new course, **LA 250:**

250 Discovering and Developing Grit and Perseverance (2)

Provides an introduction to the science related to grit, well-being, and the positive aspects of human experience. Students will gain an understanding of what makes well-being, and how to build the enabling conditions of a life worth living. They will explore the concepts (biological, psychological, social, emotional), the research behind those concepts, and evidence-based experiential activities that enhance well-being. Students will engage in a detailed analysis and evidence-based positivity change process utilizing validated questionnaires along with positive psychology and well-being enhancing activities. Grading is S/U. Summer/Fall.

Impact:

1. The course does not fulfill a major requirement, LAC requirement, or a requirement from another department, but can be used toward the required 120 hours for graduation.
2. Because of the skill development that occurs through the context of this course, retention of the students participating is one of the primary reasons for this offering.
3. Information about the course:
 - a. Expected Student Learning Outcomes
Students will be able to:
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the aim and scope of positive psychology and implications to well-being;
 - Explain the biological, psychological, social and emotional influences of positive psychology;
 - Critically evaluate the societal myths related to happiness and how they can, and do, impact decision making practices related to health and well-being;
 - Develop a Positive Portfolio of items for putting positive psychology scientific findings, theories and tools into real-world practice.
 - b. Anticipated class size, anywhere from 10-15 students.
 - c. the amount of scheduled class time, The course may be taught asynchronously, however, there will be lectures to watch for approximately 2 hours each week.
3. Information about the number of faculty in the department who will/can teach the proposed course. This course will be taught by Dr. Melanie Fox, Associate Dean of Students, and Dr. Jill Moffitt, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

4. Information about when and how often the course will be offered. (This is of particular concern for new courses and those that are required for the major.)

The course will be offered twice a year during the summer and in the fall as part of the requirement to be in the Living Learning Community.

5. For new courses or changes to offering patterns, information about how the addition or change affects the ability of the department to deliver its existing curriculum and meet its commitments to the LAC.

Because Dr. Moffitt and Dr. Fox from Student Affairs will be teaching the class as part of their job descriptions, there will be no negative impact on any academic department in its delivery of the existing curriculum.

Rationale: The proposal posits that integration of this course into the regular course schedule would be beneficial to students seeking to develop their skills for building grit and resilience in order to navigate their lives successfully. The course was offered in the Summer Session of July 2020, and there were 7 students registered for the course. In order to track the retention efforts The course fits nicely into the LA curriculum as the information, research, and skill building content is applicable to a student throughout college, regardless of their major.

Prior to COVID-19, the need to build these skill sets presented among our student body in a number of ways that we observed first hand as described in the list (not inclusive)

- Fear of failure
- Cancel Culture
- Lack of Self Confidence/Awareness
- Increased inability to manage daily lives
- Fear of connecting beyond a device

Now, more than any time before, this skill is especially useful to the challenges faced by our students living in a pandemic. Discovering the meaning of grit and how to build it in oneself is the focus of this course and it requires that students ask themselves hard questions about their habits and thoughts that have to do with (not inclusive):

- Failure
- Opposing Viewpoints
- Coping during COVID
- Countering the cancel culture
- Optimistic and Pessimistic Personalities
- True Connection in the age of (dis)Information

The class aims to make students aware of their own echo chambers, encourages them to venture into new opportunities for learning that includes failure, and hopes to help students connect their habits, practices, and outlooks with the end result they hope to achieve in themselves through resilience and grit building.