

## GERONTOLOGY

*Aging is everyone's future:  
Be a part of exciting career opportunities that serve older adults*



**CONNIE ULRICH WAS CARING FOR HER AILING MOTHER WHEN A PHYSICAL THERAPIST NOTICED HER NURTURING SPIRIT AND SUGGESTED ULRICH PURSUE A CAREER IN THE HEALTHCARE FIELD.**

“I had gone back to school at HACC as a business major, but I decided to take Perspectives of Aging to explore my interest in aging. I came to the end of that feeling that gerontology was my calling in life,” said the 51-year-old Lebanon County wife and mother who earned a diploma from HACC’s gerontology program in 2007 and an associate degree in general studies a year later.

“It’s extremely rewarding. It takes very little time or energy to make someone’s day because many of these older people don’t have anyone who comes to see them.”

Ulrich works for Home Instead, an in-home senior care service whose goal is to keep seniors in their homes as long as possible. She is working on a bachelor’s degree in gerontology at the University of Maryland.

“I can’t say enough about the wonderful foundation I got at HACC. I’m realizing that as I take some of the same classes, only more in-depth,” said Ulrich, who has spent recent years doing bookkeeping for the family’s poultry farm and raising her boys. “The professors in HACC’s gerontology department are excellent.

They’re professionals who were out in the world, and they were very helpful in encouraging us to succeed.”

Ulrich’s goal is to go into geriatric care management, a relatively new field that involves coordinating care for seniors, acting as a liaison with the family and building a personal relationship with her clients.

She likes that it would involve a personal connection and the ability to use her skills to oversee care.

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## GETTING STARTED

For detailed information about HACC's gerontology program and courses, go to [www.hacc.edu](http://www.hacc.edu), select Health Careers, select Programs Offered and select Gerontology. Or contact Kathy L. Sicher and Annamarie Fazzolari, gerontology program co-coordinators, ~~Perth Center office~~, or email them at [ksicher@hacc.edu](mailto:ksicher@hacc.edu) or [afazzola@hacc.edu](mailto:afazzola@hacc.edu), or leave a voice mail at ~~(717) 221-1319~~ (717) 221-1782.



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## STUDY OF AGING IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF MANY FIELDS

Gerontology is a field that's growing and in demand. Pennsylvania has the second largest population of people age 65 and older, and 43 percent of adults in this country will be age 50 or older by 2010, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Health and Human Services.

The number of jobs in gerontology-related fields will increase by more than 36 percent by 2012, forecasts the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Rather than emphasizing illness and loss however, those who work among older adults are striving to concentrate more on ways to assist them in staying independent and productive, according to the Society of Certified Senior Advisors (SCSA).

In addition to healthcare, increased job opportunities are being forecast in other industries related to older adults, such as business and financial services, fitness and wellness, consumer products, travel, research and professional volunteer recruitment and management, according to SCSA.

## CHOOSE HOW YOU WANT TO DO IT

At HACC, the gerontology program and its courses are designed to help foster sensitivity and competence for individuals who work with the aging population. Students have several options in this course of study:

- **Gerontology diploma, 17 credits** – Course content includes basic principles related to gerontology, allied health, social services, mental health, and psychosocial issues and wellness, and includes 20 hours of volunteering. A wide variety of occupations can utilize the gerontology diploma: nurse aides, home health aides, practical nurses, registered nurses, social service workers, activity professionals, and administration and business leaders. Graduates may enhance current education or certifications or pursue further study. The program works well as a concentration, to be added to many health career and social services majors.
- **Gerontology certificate, 30 credits** – This certificate builds on the coursework of the gerontology diploma and adds in-depth study of legal and ethical issues, as well as of the psychological and emotional aspects of aging. It is designed to expand the knowledge and opportunities for employment for those exploring or working in the aging field, providing basic knowledge of concepts and practices helpful in various fields: social services, therapeutic recreation and activities, allied health professions, healthcare administration, and marketing and business. Graduates secure such career opportunities or pursue further academic study.
- **Senior Healthcare – Workplace Assistant, 16 credits** – This diploma program is designed to enhance the knowledge and effectiveness of personnel currently employed in senior healthcare facilities and also can be used to provide college credit for those who already have completed nurse aide training. HACC's Healthcare Academy offered to high school seniors can be structured so that this diploma is conferred upon students, perhaps even while they at the same time complete nurse aide training. Course content introduces aspects of gerontology, allied health, social services, mental health, and psychosocial issues of aging, as well as basic math and English skills as they relate to the workplace. Also included is a service learning experience with two hours of weekly volunteering with a senior resident.
- **CEUs and noncredit options** – Gerontology courses can be taken individually on a credit or noncredit basis. Each one-credit gerontology course is approved for 12 continuing education credits for personal care/assisted living administrators and direct care workers, and for registered nurses. Students who elect to take gerontology courses noncredit can later articulate them for credit, working toward a gerontology diploma or certificate or using them to fulfill requirements of other programs.

## EXCELLENT JOB MARKET FORECASTS

Gerontology graduates can anticipate a blossoming job market and competitive salaries. For example, medical and health services managers, i.e. healthcare executives or administrators who coordinate and supervise the delivery of healthcare, reported median annual earnings of wage and salary of \$73,340 in May 2006, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

As for nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides, the need for which is projected to grow 28 percent between 2006 and 2016, median hourly earnings were \$10.67 in May 2006. Social and human service assistants, whose employment is expected to grow by nearly 34 percent through 2016, were earning \$25,580 in May 2006.