

## **PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE STUDIES TO THE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the change in title of the Graduate Certificate in Alcohol and Drug Abuse Studies (CADAS) to the Graduate Certificate in Alcohol and Drug Use Studies (CADUS), effective Fall 2023.

### **Background**

Research suggests that addiction is a chronic brain disorder with the potential for recurrence<sup>2, 4</sup>. However, the language used to describe addiction (e.g., junkie, abuser, alcoholic) often signifies personal choices and willful misconduct rather than a health condition with biological causes<sup>1,3,4</sup>. Consequently, this language shapes perceptions of substance use as a crime to be punished rather than a condition to be treated<sup>3,4</sup>. This language also has been linked to health care professionals' negative attitudes and beliefs towards those with substance use disorders<sup>2</sup>. For instance, professionals who use the term "substance abuser" are more likely to assign blame, hold implicit biases, and resist providing evidence-based treatment for those with substance use disorders than those who use the term "person with a substance use disorder"<sup>2,4,6</sup>. To address this concern, several national organizations have endorsed using non-stigmatizing language when communicating about addiction<sup>2,3</sup>. These organizations and groups include the American Society of Addiction Medicine, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Drawing upon these recommendations, the School of Social Work proposes changing the name of the Certificate on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Studies to Certificate on Alcohol and Drug Use Studies. No other changes are proposed to the certificate program besides the title change.

This change will allow the title to align with the certificate curriculum, which uses non-stigmatizing language and a strengths-based framework. Therefore, changes to the curriculum are not needed. Students completing the program before the end of the 2022-23 Academic Year will complete the program under its existing title. Any current students continuing to the 2023-24 Academic Year will complete the program under the new title, Alcohol and Drug Use Studies.

### **Approvals**

The proposal was approved by the faculty of the School of Social Work, Dean of the School of Social Work, the Graduate Council, Dean of the Graduate School, and the Provost.

### **References**

<sup>1</sup>Ashford, R. D., Brown, A., & Curtis, B. (2019). Expanding language choices to reduce stigma: A Delphi study of positive and negative terms in substance use and recovery. *Health Education*.

<sup>2</sup>Botticelli, M. P., & Koh, H. K. (2016). Changing the language of addiction. *Jama*, 316(13), 1361-1362.

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<sup>3</sup>Dennis, J. A., Gittner, L. S., George, A. K., & Queen, C. M. (2021). Opioid Use Disorder Terminologies and the Role of Public Health in Addressing Stigma. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 39(1), 110-118.

<sup>4</sup>Kelly, J. F., Saitz, R., & Wakeman, S. (2016). Language, substance use disorders, and policy: the need to reach consensus on an “addictionary”. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 34(1), 116-123.

<sup>5</sup>Robinson, S. M. (2017). “Alcoholic” or “person with alcohol use disorder”? Applying person-first diagnostic terminology in the clinical domain. *Substance Abuse*, 38(1), 9-14.

<sup>6</sup>Werder, K., Curtis, A., Reynolds, S., & Satterfield, J. (2022). Addressing bias and stigma in the language we use with persons with opioid use disorder: A narrative review. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association*, 28(1), 9-22.