

UCSD offers new program in human development

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UCSD OFFERS NEW PROGRAM IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Students at UCSD will soon have the option of pursuing a bachelor of arts degree in human development.

Courses under the new interdisciplinary program will be offered beginning in fall 1995 in cooperation with the departments of anthropology, cognitive science, communication, linguistics, literature, psychology and sociology.

The study of human development is central to a wide array of issues that have recently received considerable national attention, including prenatal drug exposure, the changing structure of the American family, and public policy and education. An understanding of the processes which underlie human development is crucial to the evaluation of these issues and the ability to offer avenues for remediation of attendant problems.

The program is organized around a multi-faceted concept of development in which the study of the human being is approached from different viewpoints, each of which emphasizes a different aspect of development. The program will initially emphasize developmental processes that occur from birth through late childhood. The course offerings are divided very broadly into two areas, one of which focuses on the development of the individual and the other of which focuses on the child's interactions with others.

The program seeks to explore the course of development with emphasis not only on the consequences of change in the child, but also on the dynamics of change and its contributing factors, said Joan Stiles, director of the new program. The curriculum has been designed with an emphasis on theory and basic research.

"The program reflects the academic profile of the UCSD developmental community with its considerable expertise in the study of neurosciences, basic cognition and cultural issues," she said. "It is that profile which we feel offers the program both its strength and its potential for becoming one of the premier human development programs in the country."

Students in the program will be required to enroll in courses from a wide range of disciplines within the major but will be allowed to specialize in areas of their interest.

Although the initial phase of the program will consist of an undergraduate major and minor, Stiles said plans are also underway to establish an interdisciplinary graduate program in human development.

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