



**NATION'S FIRST PROGRAM IN ASSISTED LIVING  
ADMINISTRATION SURPASSES 100<sup>TH</sup> STUDENT**

FAIRFAX, VA.---George Mason University's program in assisted living administration, the nation's first undergraduate and graduate curricula dedicated to the field of assisted living, has surpassed its 100<sup>th</sup> student.

“Our goal was to re-invent curricula in long term care to address changing housing and care preferences among the nation's seniors,” says Andrew Carle, program director. “Assisted living communities in the United States have grown to outnumber nursing homes by more than two to one, yet when we started there were 106 university programs in nursing home administration and none offering both upper and lower school curricula for assisted living.”

Mason began offering undergraduate coursework in 2002. The following year it added graduate classes. As of the Spring 2005 semester, 116 students have completed at least one core course within the Program.

According to Carle, the program has already received national attention for its innovation. One example, he notes, is its “hospitality” internships at Walt Disney World Resorts in Florida. “Much of what is desired by consumers of

## **ASSISTED LIVING ADMINISTRATION (con't)**

assisted living relates to receiving a high level of hospitality type services,” explains Carle. “Our partnership with Disney helps our students add this talent to their skill set.”

Another innovation is the program’s “Mystery Shops” assignments in which students contact assisted living communities pretending to seek care for a family member. Begun in 2004, contacted communities are graded in five areas of performance, with cumulative results reported in a national industry publication.

Seed monies to develop the program were provided by Sunrise Senior Living, the nation’s largest senior housing provider with nearly 400 communities in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Germany. It is headquartered in Tysons Corner, Virginia.

“The success of this program is a positive sign for our industry”, states Terry Klaassen, Sunrise’s chief cultural officer and co-founder along with her husband, Paul. “The number of people aged 75 and over is expected to more than double in the next 15 years, so it was critical to establish assisted living administrators as part of a recognized profession.”

Additional information about Mason’s program in assisted living administration may be found at [assistedliving.gmu.edu](http://assistedliving.gmu.edu).

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