Program Review
Planning and Review Committee 2007-2008

I. Master of Science in Family Studies and Human Development

Program Director: Dale Hawley

PRC Consultant: Nancy Schofield

Purpose of the Review: To assess the quality of the Master of Science in Family Studies and Human Development as part of the seven-year cycle required of all degree programs at UW-Stout.

Committee Findings: The Committee recommends that this program continue to function as one of UW-Stout's degree programs for the ongoing seven-year cycle, and that recommendations made by the Committee be implemented.

II. Abstract: The program and department have changed significantly since the 2002 review. The Human Development, Family Living, and Community Educational Services Department became the Human Development and Family Studies department when the Early Childhood and the Family and Consumer Science Education faculty joined the School of Education. When the program was revised substantially in 2004 three concentrations (Apparel, Early Childhood, and Family and Consumer Education) were dropped. The program is now solely focused on the remaining concentration: Family Studies and Human Development. In addition, the program objectives and curriculum were revised; student cohorts established; and core courses are now offered during two weeks during the summer.

The program is recruiting and serving non-traditional students who are primarily employed. These students need continued recognition and connection during their years in the program. They have requested better introduction methods and materials. The advisory board should have better representation by those who work in the field.

III. Process Followed for Current Review

PRC consultants met with Dr. Dale Hawley, program director of Graduate program in Family Studies and Human Development and chair of the Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) department, to discuss the review process and offer assistance. We have continued our correspondence by email.

Data regarding several aspects of the program were collected though surveys from students, key instructors within and outside the department, and program advisory committee members through surveys. The data were analyzed and returned to the program director and PRC members.

Out of 43 graduate students, 18 (41%) participated in the student survey. Only 2 of 5 key instructors within the department responded. (The program director is also a key instructor, but was not surveyed. All instructors are in the department.) In addition, 6
out of 11 program advisory committee members responded. The one year and five year follow-up surveys of graduates and employers had too few or no responses and were not useful.

In addition, the PRC consultant reviewed the program director’s PRC self-study report, and the Assessment in the Major report for the year 2007-2008. The consultant then submitted a list of questions for the program director’s responses and wrote a draft program review document summarizing the consultant’s analysis of these documents for the committee.

IV. Previous Review: M.S. in Home Economics, Spring, 2002

Consultant’s comments: many of these issues have been resolved by the program revision of 2003, which included the decision to retain only one of the former four concentrations.

2002 Recommendations for Program Director:

1. Encourage program faculty and committee members to agree on a program name that represents the four concentrations housed within it.

   **Response:** The Program Advisory Committee voted to rename the program at the spring 2002 advisory program meeting. The program revision with the new name will be forwarded through the appropriate channels during fall semester, 2002.

   **Consultant’s Summation:** Resolved.

2. Reestablish the process of formally meeting advisory committee on a biannual basis.

   **Response:** The Program Advisory Committee met spring, 2002 and will meet fall semester, 2002.

   **Consultant’s Summation:** Since 2004 the advisory committee has formally met on a biannual (twice a year) basis (with only one exception).

3. Research the opportunities available to provide additional human resource as well as course-related support to the Early Childhood, Family Studies and Human Development, as well as the Family and Consumer Education concentrations.

   **Response:** Three faculty vacancies in ECE have been placed on hold due to university restructuring and the formation of a new School of Education. Several courses in HDFL and FCSE have been renumbered so that graduate students can enroll in these courses. These changes do not completely answer the recommendation, but do begin to address the issue.

   **Consultant’s Summation:** The reorganization of the University and revision of the program have narrowed the scope of the program. The need for additional allocations and support is being met by providing key courses to students during two weeks in the summer. This arrangement is dependent on willingness of faculty to participate.

4. Consider improving the student assessment process as well as the means by which technology is promoted with the various concentrations.
Response: The student assessment process will be addressed as we move forward with annual program assessments in the AQUIP process. The technology objective and ways to achieve this will be reexamined by the program advisory committee at the fall 2002 meeting.

Consultant’s Summation: The previous consultants’ report stated “students consistently rated the program’s objective to “Promote understanding and use of technology” as low”. This question is no longer asked. The current relevant question: “Classroom facilities allowed for the efficient use of learning technologies” had a response of 3.94 out of 5.

A new assessment plan for the program has been completed and administered. The assessment of the program is imbedded in the assessment of students during key courses to ensure that program objectives are being met.

5. Investigate the means of further promoting the program to prospective students and thus take advantage of current/projected demands for program graduates.

Response: The program director is working on a recruitment plan to further promote this program.

Consultant’s Summation: Recruitment efforts appear to be succeeding but this is an ongoing process.

6. Narrow and strengthen the focus of the program. Consider housing one or more of the four concentrations under other Master’s degrees.

Response: The program director has met with Carol Mooney and Rita Christoffersen to discuss housing the Apparel Design, Manufacturing and Retailing concentration under another graduate program in CTEM. They are considering this issue.

Consultant’s Summation: Resolved. Apparel concentration has been discontinued.

2002 Recommendations for Department Chair:

1. Encourage the key faculty to gain consensus on a program name that represents the four concentrations housed within it.

Response: The Program Advisory Committee has already met and proposed a new program name which will be forwarded through appropriate channels this year.

Consultant’s Summation: Resolved.

2. Support the research of opportunities available to provide additional human resources and courses to bolster the Early Childhood, Family Studies and Human Development, and Family & Consumer Education concentrations of the graduate program.

Response: The filling of three faculty vacancies in ECE has been placed on hold with the university restructuring and the formation of the new School of Education. However, three courses which have not been recently offered for graduate students are being offered this year on weekends to accommodate graduate students: HDFL 703: Child Development Seminar for 3 credits; FCSE-720-600A Update on Family
and Consumer Education Content and Curriculum for 1 credit, and FCSE 651-Family Life Programs for 2 credits.

Consultant’s Summation: The reorganization of the University and revision of the program have narrowed the scope of the program. This need for additional allocations and support is being met by providing key courses to students during two weeks in the summer. This arrangement is dependent on willingness of faculty to participate.

There is still a need for allocations to increase on-line elective courses during the academic year.

2002 Recommendation for the Dean:

1. Support efforts of the program director as it relates to boosting graduate student enrollments and meeting identified human resource needs.

Response:

John Wesolek, Dean of College of Human Development, December 19, 2002

I recommend that the present M.S. in Home Economics program be revised and renamed to M.S. in Family Studies to represent degree seeking students in studies related to family relations, early childhood, and other life-span disciplines. Currently within the M.S. in Home Economics, there are two concentrations which focus on preparing students for teaching careers: Family and Consumer Education and Early Childhood Education. I recommend that these programs be restructured as concentrations under the M.S. in Education program which is transitioning to the new School of Education planned for Fall 2003. The M.S. in Family Studies will remain in the College of Human Development. Of the 66 students (head count) currently enrolled, 51 or 87% are not enrolled in a concentration or a track leading to teacher education certification. These 51 students would appropriately fit into this revised curriculum and program title. Early Childhood students not seeking a certification could enroll, as well as those continuing on for a degree in Family Studies and related fields. Future programming tracks in gerontology and other related life span studies will be natural next steps in further developing and expanding this degree program.

While there was only one PRC recommendation made to the dean which was to provide needed course coverage and other resources to sufficiently offer the present degree program, I believe there exists a larger issue that influences my response to this request. The impending restructuring of teacher education on campus leading to the establishment of a stand-alone School of Education requires that we reorganize other aspects of our degree offerings. The implications for change are significant as it is intended to gather all programs with a focus on preparing PK-16 teachers into one unit on campus separate from the discipline they may represent.

Consultant’s Summation: Dean’s response does not address the recommendation. Program director Hawley indicates that the current enrollment is optimal, but that there are still human resource issues.
V. Current Program Review

Program Strengths

1. Major program revision in 2004 has been successful. The changes, including focus on a single concentration, curriculum revision, and cohort structure are effective in meeting the needs of the targeted student population. Recruitment of students is now meeting the goal of being able to select the 12 to 14 qualified candidates from a large enough pool. This year 13 were chosen from 23. Recruitment is an ongoing process.

   Source: Student survey, PRC consultant meeting with program director, program director’s report.

2. Program director Dale Hawley provides leadership, support, organization and advisement.

   Source: Student survey, key instructor survey, PRC consultant observation.

3. The new cohort group structure provides needed support for students who are often returning students, fitting a graduate program into busy professional lives, and surviving the intensive experience of two week summer sessions.

   Source: Student survey, program director.

4. The Family Studies and Human Development program serves the University by recruiting graduate students who could not participate in traditional programs, providing courses during the summer (which does not interfere with regular semester course offerings or require additional FTEs), and generating Student Credit Hours (and thus revenue) during the summer.

   Source: Program director, Assessment in the Major report, student surveys.

5. Faculty are dedicated and experienced in their field. All key instructors in the program have PhDs.

   Source: PRC consultant meeting with program director, student survey, Assessment in the Major report.

Program Opportunities for Improvement

1. Advisory board representation – while the current makeup of the Advisory Board is a valuable, supportive committee, it would better serve the students and the program to have a greater representation of individuals who work with social services and family life education and who can give better perspective on what they are looking for in our graduates.

   Source: PRC consultant meeting with program director and observations of the value of advisory boards in other programs.

2. Need for improved introduction to library, technology, research methods for new students (especially returning to school after a time span). Several students
specifically mention technology with comments about needing to be better prepared when they start
Source: Student survey, PRC consultant meeting with program director

3. Issues for transitory students
   a. Recognition of legitimacy of students in FSHD program. Better accounting to reflect actual number of students in the program.
   b. Recognition of student’s continuation in the program would facilitate continuation of email accounts, allow continued access to D2L and the library, and reduce registration hassles. Communication is very important for these students who need to remain in contact with the program over time and distance.
Source: PRC consultant meeting and communications with program director, student surveys

4. Students express concerns about the two week summer format – too little access to faculty, too much coursework cramped into too little time.
Source: Student surveys, PRC faculty experience.

5. Recruitment of quality students is an ongoing process. A comprehensive recruiting plan is needed.
Source: PRC consultant meeting with program director.

6. Poor faculty survey response rate
   Only two key instructors responded - this number is very low considering the six faculty who make up the program are dedicated, tenured, full-time, on-campus faculty members. (The program director, who is also a key faculty member, chose not to participate in the survey.) There were essentially no comments included. This kind of response can be a red flag for problems in a program.

VI. Recommendations

Recommendations for the Program Director / Department Chair:

1. Include a better representation of individuals who work with social services and family life education on the Family Studies and Human Development Program Advisory Board.

2. Consider alternate delivery in a less compressed format for required courses. Options include weekend, on-line, semester courses. This may require additional resources.

3. Improve introduction materials / processes for new students (especially returning to school after a time span) to library, technology, research methods, etc.

4. Pursue better methods for system recognition of continuing students and keeping them connected to your program and to UW-Stout.

5. Develop a comprehensive plan for recruiting quality students.
**Recommendations for the Dean**

1. Pursue better methods for system recognition of continuing students and keeping them connected to your program and to UW-Stout.

2. Continue level of support and encouragement for the Family Studies and Human Development Program. Be prepared to increase resources if needed to continue program.

3. Address the issue of poor faculty survey response rate for future program reviews.

**Recommendations for Provost’s Office and Graduate School**

1. Make needed arrangements to officially recognize the students in the Family Studies and Human Development Program who are enrolled during summers only.

2. Create and implement a mechanism to allow students in the Family Studies and Human Development Program to retain their connection to UW-Stout (by continuous enrollment?) while completing their graduate degree during the summers.