

## Three-year review of the Human Development and Family Studies

The Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) program was reviewed 3 years ago by the graduate school. Prasad Tadepalli (EECS) and Belinda King (ME), who were two of the original members of this review committee conducted the follow-up review on February 22, 2007 and wrote this report. We met with the department head Carolyn Aldwyn and the graduate advisor Alexis Walker for about an hour and half.

HDFS was a very strong program even at the time of the original review. The HDFS department was chaired by an interim head, Karen Hooker, at that time. Carolyn Aldwyn was hired later that year as the head of the department. The original review was mostly positive about the graduate program, the department and its leadership. Quoting from the review,

*“Most of the faculty members are active in research, publishing, and getting grants. Some of them are fellows in their respective professional societies and have won numerous awards. They serve on editorial boards of several journals and review for journals and conferences. The students are quite satisfied with the research training and education they are receiving and are full of praise for their professors. They especially appreciate the warmth and concern the faculty members appear to show in their interactions with the students.”*

Nevertheless, the review committee made several recommendations, which are taken very seriously by the department. The actions taken by the department in response to these suggestions are documented in a detailed report from the department head, which is attached as an appendix to this report. In summary, we are very positively impressed by the enthusiasm with which our recommendations are embraced and implemented by the department. We summarize the main points below, leaving the details to the appendix.

### **Curriculum**

One weakness in the curriculum identified by the external evaluator, Teresa Cooney, is the lack of courses in observational methods. In response, the department introduced two qualitative methods courses with particular emphasis on observational methods. Moreover these two courses were made mandatory to all graduate students. They also added new courses in development theory and methods which are supported by the new faculty. They are planning to offer at least 3 elective courses per year to support the research work of the faculty and students.

### **Faculty Recruitment and Research**

The department added 4 full professors since the last review: Scott Hofer, Rick Setterston and Mark Lusk hold regular faculty positions and Marc Braverman is an Associate Dean of HHS with faculty home in HDFS. They also hired a Research Associate professor, Andrea Picciman. They are hoping to fill the Knudsen Endowed chair position in the near future and hire 2-3 assistant professors in the next few years. They were able to increase the diversity in gender and sexual orientation and are trying to increase the racial diversity.

Since the original report, two new signature research centers have been established in which the HDFS faculty play the primary roles: Center for Healthy Aging Research which emphasizes health and behavior issues of the elderly and Sustainable Rural Communities Initiative, which focuses on the well-being of rural communities in Oregon. These centers are supporting a lot of collaborative research with departments such as Public Health, Resource and Agricultural Economics, Forestry, and Sociology.

Child Development Center is a remarkable facility but was not being used much for development research at the time of the original review. There are now several projects, two headed by Joanne Sorte and two by Megan McClelland, that study various aspects such as childhood obesity and emergence of learning-related skills in children.

The faculty was encouraged to pursue more federal research funding in the original report. Several of the faculty have participated in a workshop sponsored by the dean on grant writing. There have been several proposals submitted. Some of the faculty obtained funding from NICHD, USDA-NRI and the Department of Education.

Three new faculty brought in 4 funded projects with them. The department has been very successful in getting internal funding from the college and the university.

### **Student Recruitment and Support**

HDFS has a unique approach to recruiting students in that they exclusively admit Ph.D. students and focus on personal contacts of the faculty and potential match to their research interests. They are also ahead of the curve on web-based advertising. They invite the admitted domestic students to an on-campus visit and a large fraction of them decide to enroll in their program.

Their approach to recruiting through personal contacts and on-campus visits seems to be working well. They were able to attract more Ph.D. applicants than before and increase the racial and gender diversity of the student body. The recruits included 2 McNail scholars and 4 men.

Since the previous review, the department has made significant strides in increasing the support for students to attend conferences. They make awards of \$500 each to students on a competitive basis to attend conferences to present papers and posters. They awarded 11 such scholarships in the last year.

They improved the communication with graduate students by holding open question-answer sessions with the graduate program co-directors every quarter. They initiated a spring celebration of graduate student achievements where the faculty provide lunch and express appreciation of student successes. This seems to have been well-received.

### **Computing Infrastructure**

The department used several technology resource fee grants to significantly improve the computing infrastructure. Milam hall was converted to wireless and a large server and several laptops were purchased so that any class room in Milam can be turned into a computer lab. A variety of software licenses enable the students to access any analytical software they need. With the help of the research office and the Center for Healthy Aging Research, they established a "LIFElab," which is a center for data collection located in Bates Hall. Currently it has a large server and 19 computers that gather in-house and lab-data and process surveys.

In summary, the HDFS department made great strides in all aspects in the past 3 years and seems poised to the next level of advance. Their dedication to their mission, strong focus, and effort are highly commendable and they are worthy of all the support they can get from the college and the university administration.

HDFS Response to Graduate Council Follow Up  
February 2007

The Human Development & Family Studies Graduate Program was evaluated in 2004. The committee was quite positive, but made 13 recommendations for improvements. The following is an account of our response to those suggestions in the last two years. Recommendations are indicated in bold.

**1. Establish at least one course on observational methods.**

We now offer annually two qualitative methods courses, both of which devote significant attention to observational methods. Further, the first of the two is now required for all graduate students. In addition, more of our graduate students who seek additional observational methods are referred to appropriate courses in anthropology (ethnographic methods) and in sociology (qualitative sociology).

**2. Conduct more research in the Child Development Center.**

There are new research projects being conducted at the CDC (see Appendix A). Two are headed by Dr. Megan McClelland and involve seven graduate students, as well as two undergraduates who received URAP awards. Two are headed by Joanne Sorte, Director of the CDC, and involve both graduate and undergraduate researchers. An additional master's thesis project from the Design & Human Environment department is currently awaiting IRB approval.

**3. Consider special topics courses in the signature areas of research.**

With the addition of new faculty, we have added the proposed new courses in development, theory, and methods. We are also planning to offer at least three electives classes a year.

**4. Consider making comprehensive examinations a more productive process for students.**

We have continued to study this issue, including conducting an additional survey of comprehensive exams in other HDFS units across the country. We have not found a common approach nor have we settled on a solution. We continue to believe that interdisciplinary programs such as ours provide a useful exercise by requiring students to integrate material they have learned in coursework taught by faculty from various disciplines. Conversations currently are focusing on ways to make the qualifying exams equitable across students (e.g., developing common theory and methods questions for each cohort). Because our graduate faculty has changed quite a bit over the past several years, we think further discussion of this issue is appropriate at this time.

**5. Improve the quality, quantity, and diversity of graduate student applicants.**

We are convinced that improving the pool of applicants is best accomplished through personal contacts. Toward that end, we have recently developed an invitation for faculty to send electronically to respected colleagues, telling them about our program and encouraging them to send us their best undergraduate students.

We also are learning that print material is not a particularly effective way to reach a young audience. The Graduate Committee intends to focus its efforts during spring quarter on revisions

to our web materials. In addition to make the website more informative and more user friendly, we plan to include a podcast or two about our program.

Our application numbers are growing; we received 19 complete applications for our January 15<sup>th</sup> deadline and we have a second deadline on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Our efforts to increase the diversity of applicants seem to be working as well. For example, we received applications from and admitted two McNair scholars this month. We also had applications from five people of color of whom two (three?) have been admitted. The Graduate Council's report also noted a small number of male applicants. This year, of the 19 applications we received by January 15<sup>th</sup>, three (16%) were from men, two of whom were admitted. In fact, 25% of those admitted were men. Currently, 4 (13%) of our 31 graduates students are men.

Next month, we will have our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual recruitment weekend in which applicants living in the U.S. who received a positive decision are invited to come to campus to meet with faculty, graduate students, and each other; attend classes; and explore the campus and Corvallis. The Department pays the travel and lodging expenses for these visits. So far, the vast majority of people who attend have decided to enroll in our Program.

Last year and in the current year as well, we have promised the best applicants in our pool a graduate assistant position of at least .30 FTE. This higher FTE seems to be leading to more decisions to enroll at Oregon State.

#### **6. Set aside some funds to support graduate student travel to attend conferences.**

We have set aside funding to support \$500 awards for graduate travel to conferences from three sources: the Petersen Endowed Chair, the Knudsen Endowed Chair, and departmental funds. We have developed an application process for these funds (see <http://www.hhs.oregonstate.edu/hdfs/graduate/funding.html>). This program has been very popular, and we have had to tighten eligibility. The most important criterion is participation in the program, either by presenting a paper or poster or by engaging in society governance at some level. In 2005-2006, we awarded 11 students scholarships for a total of \$5,500 (see Appendix B). So far this year, we have awarded 10 fellowships for a total of \$5,000, but denied two.

#### **7. Reconsider the exclusive emphasis on Ph.D. bound students.**

Graduate faculty members have considered this issue at length and our position is unchanged. Given limited resources and the very large number of undergraduates we serve, we do not feel that it is in our best interests to emphasize the terminal M.S. degree, which would require us to provide graduate-level training in research to individuals who will not be practicing researchers. Instead, we seek to improve our recruitment of top Ph.D. students.

#### **8. Improve the communication with the current and new graduate students.**

Last year, the chair hosted an open office period for graduate students to ask questions. This year, each quarter, we are holding an open session each quarter for all graduate students with the graduate program's co-directors at which any question may be raised. Beginning in the fall and for the first time, we paired in-coming students with a current graduate student co-advisor. Although some of these pairings have been more successful than others, the successful ones have far exceeded our expectations. We will continue this practice in coming years. Our research apprenticeship/observation program is rotating students through various research projects and

labs in the department, providing opportunities for students to work with different faculty and to get to know other graduate students. We have instituted a spring celebration of our graduate students as well. Faculty provide lunch and celebrate students' milestones and accomplishments. Finally, on their own, students have initiated a weekly social hour.

### **9. Develop ways of obtaining more federal grants that enable the faculty to do research publishable in top quality journals.**

Several of our faculty have participated in the grant writing program sponsored by the dean, which resulted in a number of submissions. So far, an R03 from NICHD has been funded to Dr. MacTavish; Dr. Richards received funding from USDA-NRI; and Dr. Rosenkoetter is collaborating on several studies funded by the Department of Education, and several other proposals are pending. Drs. Acock and Vuchinich have been collaborating with Dr. Flay in Public Health as co-investigators on federal submissions, and Dr. Vuchinich has recently submitted his own grant proposal. Dr. McClelland is resubmitting her proposal, and has also sought funding with research colleagues in Taiwan from their government.

We have three new faculty, Profs. Rick Settersten and Scott Hofer, and Research Associate Professor Andrea Piccinin, who have brought a total of four new grants or subcontracts with them, three from NIH and one from the MacArthur Foundation. Drs. Settersten, Hofer, Piccinin, Aldwin and Levenson have been participating in a P01 submission from UC Berkeley, and Drs. Hofer, Piccinin, Aldwin, Hooker, & Levenson are collaborating on another P01 submission for this June, with Dr. Hofer as PI.

Faculty have been very successful in garnering pilot funding from either the college or the Center for Health Aging Research (CHAR), which has supported graduate students and publications. Four grants have been funded by HHS: One to Dr. Hooker, one to Dr. McClelland, another to Drs. Levenson and Aldwin, and a fourth to Drs. MacTavish and Richards. Several faculty have also received pilot funding from CHAR, including Dr. Walker and Drs. Hofer and Aldwin.

Thus, the faculty have been very active in seeking funds for their own research and to support graduate students. This is resulting in an increasing publication rate among the faculty.

### **10. Continue the efforts to develop signature research centers and seek collaborators outside the department and college.**

Since the original submission of our graduate review, two centers have been funded in which HDFS faculty participate. The Center for Healthy Aging Research has provided an excellent avenue for collaborative research. Dr. Walker has a grant funded with Drs. Becky Donatelle and Melinda Manore in Public Health on health behavior habit interventions in middle-aged women. Drs. Hooker and Aldwin are consultants on a grant funded to Carmen Steggel and Atiya Mahmood on acceptability of technologies which would help older adults age in place. Drs. Hofer and Aldwin recently received a grant working with Dr. Tory Hagen and psychosocial stress and cellular stress.

Drs. Kate MacTavish, Sally Bowman, Sharon Rosenkoetter, and Leslie Richards have been very active in the Sustainable Rural Communities Initiative, as has new Extension Demographer Lena Etuk. All of these faculty are engaged in rural Oregon. Dr. MacTavish has been examining the issues of mobile home park residence and child and family wellbeing, and is also working with

Dr. Richards on a project looking at community factors that shape physical activity among rural low-income Latino youth. Dr. Richards is just completing the second wave of the multi-state Rural Families Speak study examining the wellbeing of low-income rural mothers in the post-welfare era. Dr. Bowman has a large project funded through the Ford Family Foundation focused on the evaluation of parent education and family support services in rural Oregon. Dr. Rosenkoetter, through a training grant has facilitated the preparation of special education practitioners for work on rural schools. All such work is supported through the collaboration with other rural scholars engaged in the SRCI, such as Dr. Bruce Weber in Resource and Agricultural Economics, as well as faculty in Sociology and Forestry such as Drs. Rebecca Warner and John Bliss, respectively. The SRCI faculty have recently received permission from NSF to pursue an Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship in Rural Studies training grant which would provide significant support for doctoral students.

### **11. Try and get at least 2 more faculty slots, not counting this year's hiring.**

We have been increasing our number of faculty since the last review. As mentioned earlier, we hired two new full professors, Drs. Scott Hofer and Rick Settersten, and one new Research Associate Professor, Dr. Andrea Piccinin. In addition, we have two senior faculty who initially came to OSU in administrative posts. Dr. Marc Braverman is Associate Dean for Extension in HHS whose home department is HDFS. He teaches a graduate course in evaluation methodology every other year. Dr. Mark Lusk came to OSU as Director of International Programs, and has recently stepped down to take a full-time post in our department as a full professor. He will serve as point person for the Human Services option in the HDFS major, and is currently teaching a graduate class in Program Development. We are still pursuing candidates for the Knudsen Endowed Chair in Family Research and Policy. We hope to hire two-three additional assistant professors in the next few years, but it is unclear whether the financial situation of OSU will permit this.

### **12. Improve the computational infrastructure.**

In the past two years, we have substantially upgraded the computer infrastructure for HDFS. Through a series of Technology Resource Fee (TRF) grants we developed a virtual computer lab. One grant funded the conversion of Milam Hall to a wireless facility, and another allowed the purchase of a large server (called "umbrella") and a whole series of software and licenses for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Thus, students can access any analytical software they need as long as they have an onid account. An additional grant funded 25 laptops and a laptop cart for transporting the laptop to classrooms. As Milam is wireless, this allows any classroom in Milam to be a virtual computer lab. HDFS is funding a GTA to help other students with accessing umbrella. This system has been used to great benefit in our quantitative methods classes by Drs. Acock and Vuchinich, and Dr. Richards is currently piloting the system in the new graduate qualitative methods class. Further, other faculty have started using the system in other classes, such as our undergraduate WIC class.

This year we received substantial funding from the Research Office (RERF funds) and the Center for Health Aging Research to develop the LIFElab, a facility for data collection. The LIFElab, located in Bates Hall, consists of 19 computers, 8 of which will be used for data collection (cognitive and survey data) in the lab, one of which is connected to a scanner for processing surveys, and ten of which will be used for in-home data collection. In addition, we

also purchased a large server to support data collection, including web-based surveys. The LIFElab is nearing completion, but will require some soundproofing to be completely viable.

### **13. Upgrade the library collection to research level.**

We continue to support the idea of upgrading the library collection, although resources required seem prohibitive in this regard. Our experience is that access to digital collections, either from campus or through interlibrary loan, has made the collection less of a problem than was true in the past. It would be terrific, though, if the library was able to arrange for immediate access to materials rather than the 6-month delay common for some key periodicals in our field.

## Appendix A: Research Projects at the Child Development Center

McClelland, M. M. *The emergence of learning-related skills*. College of Health and Human Sciences, Oregon State University, (\$14,019). Funded May 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005.

McClelland, M. M. *The kindergarten readiness study*. Oregon State University Research Office, (\$10,000). Funded June 1, 2005 – September 30, 2006.

Carrie Farris (MA student)

Sarah Feeney (MA student)

Michaela Sektnan (MA Student)

Devora Shamah (PhD student)

Shannon Wanless (PhD Student)

Amy Murray (MA Student - is doing thesis on data from project)

Shauna Tominey (PhD student)

Sorte, Joanne.

Health in Action, a program approach to reducing obesity in young children (\$64,844), Northwest Health Foundation grant, 2005-2006. Undergraduate research opportunities (time studies of child activity levels, data review of child 24 hour food recall nutrition assessment, calculation of Body Mass Index for preschoolers); graduate student involvement in program development discussions, no direct implementation involvement or thesis; Director's publication of project design and results in *Young Children*, National Association for the Education of Young Children, presentations for State Superintendent Conference, Oregon Dietetics conference, etc.

Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten Program (\$1,070,728 and etc.) Oregon Department of Education, 2005-2007 (and etc.). Undergraduate and graduate grant management & implementation experience and data mgt; Sako Tsutsuminaka thesis (teacher perceptions); graduate participation Shauna Tominey (potential research at CDC), Cris Dogaru (informed thesis and dissertation), Katherine Lloyd (informed study), Carrie Farris (informed research)

Deb Upington (grad student) and Marilyn Read (DHE). Children's preference for environments study, Research for Master's thesis. IRB pending; project dates March - May 2007.

## APPENDIX B

### \$500 Travel Allotments For Graduate Students

2005-2006

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Travel</b>	<b>Where To</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Account</b>
Devora Shamah	Aug. 8-12, 2005	Tampa, FL	Rural Sociological Society	Department
Erica Srinivasan	Nov. 18-22, 2005	Orlando, FL	Gerontological Society of America	Knudson
Yu Jin Jeong	Nov. 14-20, 2005	Phoenix, AZ	NCFR	Department
Bethany Chamberlain	Nov. 16-19, 2005	Phoenix, AZ	NCFR	Petersen
Cris Dogaru	March 4-7, 2006	Lexington, KY	National Early Childhood Transition Center Research Team Meeting	Department
Shannon Wanless	April 27-30, 2006	Louisville, KY	Conference on Human Development	Department
Cris Mouzong	March 23-26, 2006	San Francisco, CA	Conference for Society of Research on Adolescence	Department
Michaela Sektnan	April 27-30, 2006	Louisville, KY	Conference on Human Development	Department
Amy Murray	April 27-30, 2006	Louisville KY	Conference on Human Development	Department
Doris Cancel-Tirado	April 27-30, 2006	Palm Springs, CA	Western Psychological Association Conference	Department
Amanda Taylor	April 27-30, 2006	Palm Springs, CA	Western Psychological Association Conference	Department

**\$500 TRAVEL ALLOTMENTS  
FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS  
2006-2007**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Travel</b>	<b>Where To</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Account</b>
Devora Shamah	Aug 10-14,2006	Louisville KY	Rural Sociological Society	Dept
Michelle Cox	Nov 16-20, 2006	Dallas TX	Gerontological Society of America	Dept
Shannon Wanless		Taiwan		Dept
Verna Ourada	Nov 8-11, 2006	Minneapolis MN	National Council on Family Relations	Petersen
Shauna Tominey	Nov 8-11, 2006	Atlanta GA	NAEYC	Dept
Doris Cancel-Tirado	Nov 1-4, 2006	San Diego, CA	National Organization of Human Services Conference	Dept
Liz Levaro	Nov 16-20, 2006	Dallas TX	Gerontological Society of America	Denied
Patricia Meierdiercks	Nov 8-11, 2006	Minneapolis MN	National Council on Family Relations	Denied
Yu-Jin Jeong	Nov 8-11, 2006	Minneapolis MN	National Council on Family Relations	Knudson
Sarah Feeney	Nov 8-11, 2006	Minneapolis MN	National Council on Family Relations	Knudson
SoYoung Lee	Nov 15-20, 2006	Dallas TX	Gerontological Society of America	Petersen
Kathleen Lloyd		San Francisco CA	Centenary Celebration & Conference	Dept