

TO: Dr. Clifford Fedler, Associate Dean  
FROM: Michael McCarty, Graduate Program Director in HDFS  
DATE: December 23, 2010  
SUBJECT: One-Year Post Graduate Program Review – HDFS

The Graduate Program Review (GPR) provides a mechanism for maintaining or improving the quality of the graduate programs at Texas Tech University. Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) underwent its most recent GPR in 2008-2009. The Post Graduate Review is designed to gather information on changes resulting from the GPR. Specifically, it is a written update on progress the department has made with respect to the summary report and the action items listed in the report.

The summary report and the external review were very positive toward HDFS. The committee report states that the: "... HDFS graduate programs appear to be excellent in nearly every regard. The curriculum demonstrates depth and breadth, the faculty members are of outstanding caliber, the program boasts dedicated and creative leadership, and graduate students are successful." The committee report continues: "HDFS currently demonstrates a high level of success as an outstanding regional comprehensive graduate program that attracts a high caliber of students, trains them through a broad and comprehensive set of degree programs, and enjoys a highly successful placement rate for its graduates." From the external review: "The Department has a clear and exciting vision for its future—a vision that ... can be achieved with the provision of adequate resources and planning. Priorities are clearly outlined that will lead the unit towards greater excellence in the quality of its research, educational, and outreach programs. Continued and expanded productivity will most assuredly contribute to a stronger national prominence. Most exciting is the Department's devotion to addressing problems experienced in the course of human development and doing so in ways that respect the cultural, historical, and social contexts in which these problems arise. This unique approach, in which research-based information about issues people truly care about is developed, tested and disseminated, serves a critical function in today's society."

Since the summary reports were so positive, many of the recommendations focused on how the university could better support the department rather than on what the department should do differently. For example, the external review concluded with the following summary: "HDFS is a severely underfunded unit that bears responsibility for large numbers of undergraduate and graduate students. The number of undergraduate majors is significantly greater than comparable HDFS programs in the nation. The lack of tuition waivers has seriously hampered the department's ability to attract top quality doctoral students. Nonetheless, research productivity, as measured through publications and grants, is impressive given the size of the faculty. A number of benefits will emerge at both the department and campus levels if additional tenure track faculty members are hired, as urged. HDFS would be able to retain its large student base and active teaching program, while also gaining in productivity and national prominence. Furthermore, the provision of tuition waivers will enable the department to recruit talented doctoral students. Together, these steps would result in recognition that HDFS at Texas Tech is a program of excellence." Given the current economic situation in Texas and at Texas Tech University, it is unlikely that HDFS will see that kind of support in the near future.

In this one-year post graduate program review, the focus is on changes that HDFS has made and is making to continue to improve in quality. Specifically, this report discusses efforts to increase the quality of graduate students, manage graduate student teaching loads, and create and maintain a nationally recognized department.

**Quality of Graduate Students.** HDFS has made progress in improving the quality of graduate students. In spring 2009, the College of Human Sciences (COHS) changed the administration of scholarships to allow departments greater control over how they were allocated. This change has allowed the HDFS Scholarship Committee to award scholarships to the best and most-deserving graduate students. In addition, COHS obtained a one-time \$5000 Helen DeVitt Jones Graduate Student Scholarship in fall 2010 that helped the department recruit two outstanding new doctoral students to the HDFS program. We continue to work with the College Development Office on a proposal to donors for 3 year scholarships to a cohort of highly talented doctoral students. Finally, the HDFS Graduate Faculty is reviewing its admissions process to find a balance between giving a wide range of students an opportunity for graduate study, and improving the quality of the graduate program. We will continue to use the Master's program to identify students who are good candidates for doctoral study. Increasing the number of applicants through targeted recruitment will also help the department to identify and recruit the most qualified students.

**Graduate Student Teaching Loads.** HDFS continues to work on managing graduate student teaching loads. To receive funding, many doctoral students must teach 2 courses per semester. However, students are usually able to teach 2 sections of the same course so that there is only one course prep. The only time a graduate student is assigned to teach 2 separate courses in a semester is when the student is an experienced teacher and he/she has already prepped at least one of the courses.

The department has invested resources into teacher preparation and training. First, teaching is restricted to doctoral level students. Students in the Master's degree program are not allowed to teach. Also, each doctoral student takes a 2 semester teaching practicum. A mentor model is followed in the first semester in which the student is paired with one of the department's top teachers. Students are almost always paired with a mentor in the class that they will first teach, so they have an opportunity to be involved in all aspects of the course. If the mentor determines the student is ready to teach independently, then the student teaches the next semester and the same faculty member remains involved to supervise, advise, and support the student. If the student is not ready to teach independently, then the student spends a second semester being mentored by a different faculty member. This process allows the student to meet the teaching requirements of the degree program without the department placing an unprepared graduate student teacher into the classroom.

The HDFS department has also offered elective courses in "the art of college teaching" and in "advanced teaching techniques." These courses differ from other courses on campus in that there is an emphasis on issues of particular relevance to HDFS. Sample topics include covering controversial issues, and handling student self-disclosure in the classroom.

**Creating and Maintaining a Nationally Recognized Department.** An important step toward this goal occurred in the fall 2010 semester with the grand opening of the Iva Lea Barton Research Suite. This suite can accommodate behavioral research, focus groups, and interviews; it provides space for data coding and data analysis; and it contains a family waiting room with a family-friendly bathroom. It is very helpful in grant proposals to describe these facilities in detail and as being available for use.

HDFS is growing. For several years enrollment management techniques were used to reduce the number of undergraduate majors and semester credit hours (SCH). We “bottomed out” with 1,056 undergraduate majors in fall 2008 and have since grown to 1,091 and 1,118 majors in fall 2009 and fall 2010, respectively. Enrollment management was implemented when additional resources were not provided to the department following the rapid growth experienced in the early part of the decade. The new Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) budget model that the university is expected to follow will increase resources to departments that are growing.

HDFS has also developed 6 on-line courses that allow students in the Bachelor’s of General Studies program to specialize in HDFS. As the number of distance education students increases, we expect to see an increase in the number of students taking these courses. The department is also working on a proposal for undergraduate and graduate minors in Cross-Cultural Studies (CCS). These minors are a good fit with the university’s strategic research theme in culture and communications (see <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/vpr/strategic-research/>) and they will bring additional SCH to HDFS.

HDFS is also a member of the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (GP IDEA) and we offer both an on-line certification in gerontology and a Master’s degree in HDFS with a specialization in gerontology. We are also becoming involved in the Youth Development area of GP IDEA, and we are involved in the development of an Early Childhood Education program that is being especially designed for military personnel and their spouses.

All of the growth described above is helping us be a nationally recognized HDFS department. Finally, we are currently revising and updating the department’s vision statement to better communicate who we are and what we do to prospective students, the university community, and the general public.

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