

Family Studies Program
Department of Child and Family Studies
Faculty Response to Program Review Evaluation Team Report
April 29, 2019

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As part of the Weber State University five-year academic program review, a review evaluation team was selected by Family Studies faculty. Dr. Clay Rasmussen is Associate Professor of Teacher Education at the Weber State University. Dr. Nate Cottle is Associate Professor of Family Science at the Utah Valley University. A site visit was made on February 13, 2019. Below are key commendations and recommendations provided by Review Evaluation Team, followed by faculty response and action plans.

STANDARD A - MISSION STATEMENT

Review team highly commended program's exceptional job conferring and meeting with the advisory board to assess continued accomplishments, strong coursework, and mission statement in alignment and supporting the college and university.

Response: Program would like to thank the review team for positive and supportive feedback. Faculty strive to operate with a successful end in mind and are glad that their efforts are on track.

STANDARD B - CURRICULUM

Review team acknowledged the program's strong curriculum being "practical and needed for certification and licensing." A weakness about curriculum is that many required courses are offered at the same time as other required courses, making it difficult for students "out of track" to complete all coursework in a timely manner. Review team recommended staggered start times of courses and or online courses to meet the needs of students out of track. Another recommendation was to require two Social Work courses to help students obtain requirements of the Social and Service Worker (SSW) certification.

Response: University has required time slots and days for courses to be taught. When scheduling courses, the program takes into consideration other factors such as faculty time, student demand, classroom availability, and budgetary support. Students who do not follow the graduation map may be out of track to complete coursework in their desired timeline. Following the program review, the program conducted surveys to identify blocks and bottlenecks for students in completing their degree. Feedback has identified that more summer and online offerings are important to dozens of current undergraduate students in the program.

Action Plan:

- By Spring 2020, the program will prepare a full-year calendar (summer, fall, and spring) in addition to a semester schedule, for required courses that students need in order to graduate or get into the next-level courses in the following academic year. This will require advanced planning and coordination with other programs in the department.

- The program will develop and offer all required courses to be completed online, hybrid, IVC, evening, or at satellite campuses to accommodate the needs of non-traditional students. These courses in asynchronous formats will be made available beginning in Summer 2019. The full program will have online options for all required courses by Summer 2020.
- The program will continue to offer face-to-face courses at diverse times to meet student demand. Survey feedback will be utilized to update satellite campus offerings as appropriate.
- The program will continue to work with department academic advisor to encourage students to take courses in suggested blocks, and to plan coursework and graduation timeline as soon as they declare major.
- The program will highlight the SSW Certification option in CHF 2990B Seminar in Family Studies and continue to let students know in follow up semesters.

STANDARD C - STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

Strengths recognized by review team include practical applications of course content, reflection on community needs, adherence to National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) guidelines and content areas, and a clear rubric outlining measures and assessments. Review team found no documentation of faculty discussion of measures, or an online version of every course suggested by previous program review. A recommendation was made to provide results of the exit exam in practicum/seminar class, document change of curriculum, and hold faculty meetings to discuss and assess the effectiveness of the measures to determine if student learning outcomes are being met.

Response: Documentation of curriculum change and assessments has been done in the past. Three out of six Family Studies faculty members were hired after the last program review. Mentors have been provided for junior faculty members to assist in this and other processes.

Action Plan:

- The program will use the existing department course assessment system to document measures and student learning outcomes.
- The program will update the exit exam and include results as part of an annual program assessment report.
- The program will continue to make graduation emphases and career paths more evident to students, and emphasize SSW Certificate in CHF 2990B. This will include walking students through the steps associated with graduation, majors, minors, and emphases throughout the semester.
- The program will tap graduates of the Family Studies program who have completed their degrees and have them create online resources for social media pages and/or visit and speak with current students about this process.
- The program will more regularly assess student experiences (bi-annually, if possible). This will include surveys to assess needs for graduation based on evolving semester-by-semester successes, practicum and work experiences/opportunities, and life experiences.

STANDARD D - ACADEMIC ADVISING

Review team commended the excellent staff and faculty advising, and ample assistance in career and graduate school options based on student reports. An established system is recommended to require students to meet with faculty advisors.

Action Plan:

- The department will require students to have at least one meeting with an assigned faculty advisor during the first year as a declared major. This will incorporate a preview of the program, goals for the pathway to graduation, and a preview of what to expect and prepare for in the semesters ahead. The department is pursuing mandatory initial meetings with the assigned faculty advisor for all majors.
- The program will update and enhance resources on the department website to help students become more of program requirements and support available to them.

STANDARD E - FACULTY

Acknowledged strengths about Family Studies faculty include: having terminal degrees in content areas related to the program, diverse experience, and career backgrounds, and services and projects documented by department. Review team expressed concerns about limited females in the program, faculty maxed out on overload, no formal mentoring for new faculty, and no formal procedure for an annual review of faculty. Recommendations were made to consider another faculty line to meet upcoming teaching demands in the new MEd Family Life Education Program, assign a veteran faculty member to serve as mentor for each new faculty, have a formal review process at the end of each year where the department chair meets with each faculty to review progress towards tenure/promotion and overall success in the department.

Action Plan:

- Formal mentors for all junior faculty members have been assigned.
- The program will continue to grow to justify another faculty line, based on needs of online and satellite campuses, and other programs in the department.
- Department will reduce the offering of face-to-face courses at the main campus that have multiple sections.
- Faculty may teach online courses as part of teaching load. Department will work with the Office of Continuing Education to compensate in-load online teaching if enrollment is high.
- Department will increase the use of adjunct faculty based on evaluations of teaching experience, field excellence, and/or “buy-in.”
- Department chair will assess faculty members as per the Weber State University PPM.

STANDARD F - SUPPORT

Review team commended the program’s adequate resources to support faculty teaching and research efforts. The recommendation was made to work more closely with the library to utilize the resources available there.

Action Plan:

- The program will solicit more support from the Department Chair and Dean to support Family Studies courses, advertising/recruiting, and teaching/research assistants.
- The program will set up a more structured guideline for supervised student research that would empower both faculty members and students to succeed in research presentations, publications, etc. As program incorporates more of our undergraduates into research and teaching initiatives, this will build a “brand” including opportunities with the “We Should be Your Minor” Initiative and the MEd Family Life Education Program.

STANDARD G - RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES

Program has regular meetings (quarterly) with the Department Advisory Board. The relationship was acknowledged as a clear strength of the program. No weakness was identified.

Response: Program will continue to build community connections by incorporating guest presentations, connections/networking with alumni, and generating a working list of wants/needs from the community to help shape course objectives (training/preparation) as well as better matchmaking for practicum and employment opportunities. This will include a living document which contains information regarding opportunities and gaps to be filled by persons, projects, or even the Family Studies program. This will be assessed each semester during program meetings and events with community partners.

STANDARD H - RESULTS OF PREVIOUS REVIEWS

Review team recommended the program to continue to work on the accessibility of courses as either online or blended as addressed in prior program review.

OTHER ISSUES

According to the SWOT analysis done by the review team, a weakness of the program is the divide with the Early Childhood Education faculty. A related threat is that department staff are “feeling stuck in the middle between fractions.” Another weakness of the program is the lack of the use of the Melba S. Lehner (MSL) Children’s School, the department onsite laboratory preschool for student field experience and faculty scholarship.

Action Plan:

- Department is one team.
- Department will provide more opportunities for open communication between Family Studies and Early Childhood/Early Childhood Education program faculty.
- Programs will increase transparency when working on projects or making decisions that might affect the whole department.
- Faculty in both programs will collaborate on courses (e.g. parenting, child development, and Masters level courses on human development theories), research, and student support.
- Opportunities will be generated to collaborate between programs by providing workshops for families in the community and MSL Children’s School.

In closing, we thank the review team for their insights and comments. These will be most helpful as we move forward in improving the Family Studies Program. The faculty and staff will conscientiously work at addressing the feedback provided by the review evaluation team.