Report Summary

Graduate Program Review
Department of Applied and Professional Studies
5-6-2008

First, I would like to thank the Graduate School and all of the internal and external reviewers that took part in this review of our Department. All have been very courteous, conscientious, and helpful in the data provided, questions asked and the feedback that has been received.

Given there were three graduate programs reviewed as part of this process, we will provide feedback related to the comments and recommendations in the order they appear (by program) in the report submitted April 9, 2009 from the internal reviewers Dr. Patrick Hughes (Committee Chair), Dr. Thayne Montague, and Dr. Robert J. Ritchey. First we will discuss and respond to the primary recommendations listed in the report cited above and then we will provide responses to other feedback more imbedded in both the internal and external reviewer reports. This more imbedded feedback will be responded to following the numbered responses in bullet format.

Marriage and Family Therapy Program (MFT)

"We anticipate continuing our strengths in mentoring, advising, instruction, research, and clinical sophistication. We appreciate the reviewers in identifying these areas, as well as in identifying areas for us to continue to improve."

1. Describe a plan to integrate the ADRS center (Center for the Study of Addiction and Recovery) and specialization into the MFT program.

Currently the MFT program and the ADRS program share an undergraduate minor, Community, Family, and Addiction Services (CFAS). ADRS/MFT faculty and MFT graduate students mainly carry this teaching load. MFT faculty members have their own accredited Ph.D. program that they administer autonomously with some help from ADRS faculty on 7000 and dissertation committees/chairs. More recently, we developed a plan to increase the MFT masters enrollment to 24 from a low of four. To accomplish this we projected the following:
• The MFT Master’s program would be reorganized with a more clinical focus with an addiction emphasis and 12 students would be admitted each year over the next two years. It appears that nine new students will enter the class in September of 2009. This clinical focus (non-thesis program) will cut back significantly on the amount of research mentoring that was previously required as this program was being treated more like the MFT doctoral degree with the requirement of completing a thesis.

• Dr. Sara Smock, a member of the ADRS faculty who is also a MFT will coordinate the program with oversight provided by the MFT and ADRS program Directors (Drs. Whiting and Kimball).

This is the current plan, though further integration and team-building is needed as per the committee’s recommendations. Team-building is scheduled for the latter portion of the summer of 2009.

2. Develop a plan to recruit and supervise additional MA students.

Supervision will come from the combined MFT/ADRS faculty which currently numbers nine and will increase to ten in the fall of 09. Several recruiting trips have been planned to programs that have historically sent their students to our program. One of these trips has already been completed to Brigham Young University and others are planned in the next few months. Additionally, money has been provided to revise promotional material and create a greater awareness among our own students here at TTU who are enrolled in the CFAS and ADRS undergraduate programs.

3. Identify development opportunities for non-tenure track full-time faculty, which are consistent with the expectations for program growth.

Currently we are limited in the number of non-tenure track full-time faculty we have who are associated with the MFT, CFAS or ADRS programs. Most are either part-time or are graduate students. Two of the full-time non-tenure track faculty members that we employ are heavily involved in administration of the MFT clinic and the coordination of the CFAS program. Additionally, the faculty member involved with the coordination of the CFAS program is also serving as an Assistant Chair in the Department. Having stated this, we will continue to identify additional development opportunities for other faculty members who meet the criteria listed above.
4. **Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of accrediting the MA program.**

   The decision to accredit the MFT Master’s Program has already been decided to be a good thing and cost beneficial. It will take some time, but is already scheduled to be done over the next couple of years.

5. **Discuss choices of methods courses with graduate students.**

   MFT students have historically depended on HDFS offerings for their statistics and some of their methodology courses. With the addition of faculty who have methodological expertise, this dependence will steadily decline. However, where gaps continue to exist, especially in relation to statistics courses, the communication regarding these choices will be stepped up as per the committee’s recommendation.

6. **Plan for facility and resources development to accommodate anticipated growth of the graduate program.**

   Space and the need for additional space, especially clinical space, is always a topic of conversation. The other need related to clinical space is the requirement that the technology within the clinic be updated and effective so that supervision and learning can occur and be as unobtrusive as possible. All of the departments within the College of Human Sciences are collaborating on a grant to secure funding from NIH for a human behavioral research complex where all clinical space within the college could be housed. This is an important initiative and would help with space and technology needs within the MFT program.

**Other Responses Based on More Imbedded Feedback:**

- **Timely Completion:** This has been a transition time for the MFT program, both in terms of many changes in faculty, but also in structure of the Master’s program (now moving toward a joint program with ADRS. Although this may be a factor in some of the doctoral students not finishing their degrees in a timely fashion, we believe that other factors are more likely to explain the situation (e.g., students working full time beyond their 3rd and 4th year given their clinical placements, life circumstances, change in plans, etc.). Despite having a lot of transition, we agree with the reviewer that our faculty are productive, and are good mentors for doctoral students who are becoming scholars in the field of MFT.
• **Diversity of Faculty:** The program has hired a new faculty member since the review, which will help with the identified gender/diversity imbalance. Thus, the MFT program will have two very competent women with international origins (one from Turkey and the other from China). However, these new faculty members are also at the assistant level, which was another identified imbalance (e.g., too many junior faculty). Also, since the review, one of our MFT Professors (Dr. Steve Harris) has accepted a position at another university, which deprives us of another senior faculty member. If approved by the Provost, we will plan on filling this vacant position with an associate or full professor.

• **Diversity of Graduate Students:** There was a concern raised about lack of diversity of graduate students. Although we would welcome more diverse groups of students, we do feel as though we have been reasonably successful in this endeavor, which is a challenge for many MFT graduate programs. Our success in this area is also illustrated by our being awarded four (out of 20 nationwide) Minority Fellowships through SAMSHA/AAMFT in the 2008-2009 year. These prestigious awards are given to students of diverse backgrounds and scholarly promise. We have students from a wide variety of ethnic, SES, and cultural backgrounds and are attempting to recruit more of them from historically Black and Hispanic universities.

• **Non-Tenured Program Director:** The program director is at the assistant level, but the current plan, supported by the departmental and college administration, is to have him go up for promotion and tenure in the 2009-2010 academic year. Clearly his vitae supports this action!

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**Family and Consumer Sciences Education (FCSE)**

> "FCSE faculty members appreciate both the commendations and the recommendations of the Review Committee."

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1. **An additional tenure-track position for FCSE is recommended, along with supporting resources for the position.**

The FCSE faculty work very hard, despite their numbers being few. FCSE has several resource needs as do other areas within the department. Resources will be allocated as fairly as possible with current enrollment and future growth potential being factored into the equation. While this review is about graduate programs, undergraduate production and support must also be considered as part of any decisions that are made. Having said this, further significant growth for FCSE may require an additional faculty line, especially as they grow their distance education capability.
2. To provide depth in the doctoral program, more advanced courses at the 6000 level should be offered.

This could and should be done. Although many of the FCSE courses bear a lower level number, they are taught at a higher level to accommodate both doctoral and master's level students. Additional courses and specialized seminars could be developed. Some of this could also be done by evaluating current offerings and considering where higher level courses could replace the lower level offerings.

3. Constraints which limit faculty publications mostly to journals with a practitioner audience should be addressed.

We note that only one of the journals in which FCSE faculty publish most frequently, the *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, has an audience composed primarily of practitioners. However, we concur with the general recommendation that publication efforts be directed toward the more research based journals and that we capitalize more fully on co-authored manuscripts based on doctoral student research.

4. An equitable share of APS departmental resources should be provided to the FCSE program for graduate assistantship support.

The recommendation to increase the number of graduate assistantships available to FCSE students is also something we would like to accomplish. In particular, it would allow FCSE to recruit more full-time and out-of-state students, particularly at the doctoral level. However, it is difficult to employ FCSE doctoral students as so many of them are already employed outside of the department. We are committed to offering them an equitable share of departmental scholarship monies, though it is important to mention that they have twice the scholarship money available to their students than any other single program or division in our department (this due to the longevity of their program). Moreover, it is suggested that the word "equitable" is appropriately used here and would seem to suggest that we should take into account revenues generated via weighted student credit hours as compared to other programs/divisions in the department when making these decisions. This has been, and will continue to be, one of the balancing acts we attempt to get right.

5. A graduate student handbook is needed and should be developed to provide students with information on policies and procedures.

A handbook existed at one time; however, this is an excellent recommendation and every efforts will be made to accomplish this important task.

We agree that FCSE and other COHS programs should be represented in the FCSRJ annual report of theses and dissertations. We are unsure why the College of Human Sciences no longer collects and reports this information, but we will attempt to get the situation rectified.

Other Responses Based on More Imbedded Feedback:

- **High Levels of Faculty Stress and Inability to Engage Students:** As previously discussed, the FCSE faculty work very hard and are involved in many research activities, course development offerings (both traditional and online), and grant projects. One of the FCSE faculty members has been highly involved in grant writing and grant management and is a key player in several Texas initiatives (related to the grant) that require significant travel. So, as is usually the case, there are many efforts being made and many choices about how to find the appropriate balance between the many expectations of our faculty and their engagement of students. When all is said and done, FCSE faculty members do a commendable job in balancing these efforts.

- **Relation of Curriculum Center to FCSE:** The mission of the Curriculum Center for Family and Consumer Sciences is to provide instructional materials that support FCS programs and to provide related professional development to educators within those program areas. Their primary audience is Texas secondary teachers; however, resulting products benefit FCS programs nationwide, and activities to accomplish the mission involve partnerships and projects with the university FCSE faculty. Some of the funds generated by the curriculum center are used to support excellence initiatives within the FCSE program.

- **Concerns about Admitted Students versus Enrolled:** We will continue to collect data and try to determine more clearly why our ratio of admitted to enrolled students is on the lower side.

**Personal Financial Planning (PFP)**

"Overall, we are very pleased with the report. I think many good observations and suggestions were presented. I know the PFP faculty have read this report with great interest and will be willing to make changes as needed"
1. Most importantly, going forward the size of the doctoral program needs to be assessed to insure that faculty resources are not stretched too thin so that graduate quality can continue to improve. Issues dealing with concentration of dissertation chairs among a few faculty and the type of training needed for graduate planning business school careers should be integrated into the plan.

We will consider and control the size of the PhD Program. Given the current number of faculty, there are no plans to grow the Ph.D. program any further. Part of the success of the PFP program has been our willingness to grow and our faculty being willing to work overtime to accomplish this. Some of this weight has fallen to junior faculty members, but is currently being evaluated based on these recommendations and will be altered where problematic for both student and/or faculty progress.

2. Clearly communicate tenure standards to new faculty with a formal mentoring and review process which is aligned with the merit review process ALSO develop a formal document describing policies and practices for graduate students to include an operating policy on comprehensive exams with specifics on format, topics, grading, etc (combined—portion after ALSO was #5 in report).

New faculty have been communicated with regarding tenure standards, though I’m certain we can always do a better job here. This has been addressed by Dr. Shumway (Department Chair) annually as part of the annual review process, and we have a systematic third-year review process in place. In addition, we talk about teaching, research and service requirements on a more informal basis many times each year in large and small group meetings. The college tenure and promotion policy is currently being reviewed and updated to be more specific and include examples of material that should be submitted. This will help answer some of the additional questions that are raised. New faculty lunches for interaction and question/answer opportunities are also being instituted at the college level and an annual tenure and promotion workshop for interested faculty members will also be offered.

We do have a 23-page PhD Manual that is available to all graduate students via the PFP website (www.pfp.ttu.edu). It is updated annually with the last update being completed in May of 2008. Because we have recently made changes to better standardize the comprehensive exam process in the spring semester of 2009, that particular section will need to be further revised. The comprehensive exam issue drew lots of attention because we had just made these changes prior to the Review Committee’s visit.
3. **Develop strategies for greater diversity recruitment at the master’s level.**

We have just begun an aggressive plan for recruiting diverse students at the master’s level via a funded proposal from the Graduate School and additional funding from the department. We hope to be as successful recruiting for diversity at the master’s level as we have at the doctoral level. Part of the plan includes recruiting trips to historically Hispanic-serving universities including: Angelo State University/University of Texas of the Permian Basin, Our Lady of the Lake University/Saint Mary’s University, University of Texas San Antonio/University of the Incarnate Word, Saint Edwards University/University of Texas-Austin, University of Houston Downtown/St. Thomas University.

4. **Consider using a committee representative of the PFP faculty to establish and administer admission standards and for the awarding of stipend, assistantships and scholarships. These decisions need to be made by more than one faculty member.**

The PFP faculty does pretty much everything together. They meet monthly, discussing a wide range of things related to the program and make decisions as a group. As a faculty, they are carrying a heavy administrative load so designating a point-person to take the lead in different areas is what has been done to be more efficient.

Regarding the specific concern that admissions decisions and decisions regarding assistantships and scholarships are in the hands of single individuals, I believe further clarification is needed.

- Regarding the MS programs, the entire faculty came to a consensus regarding admissions standards for the various MS programs. The director of MS programs, currently Dr. John Gilliam, is in charge of accepting/not accepting students based on those standards. In cases where he is concerned about a student’s application, he brings that application to other faculty for our review and opinions. The PFP faculty meets monthly so these conversations often take place among the entire group.

- Regarding the Ph.D. applications, Dr. Michael Finke currently is in charge of processing applications and visiting with students prior to a decision of acceptance or denial. Typically Ph.D. students travel to TTU to visit with faculty and current PhD students before decisions are made, therefore, faculty have ample opportunity to voice their opinions about acceptance. With international students we try to schedule phone calls so they can visit with a small group of faculty. We do agree with the reviewers that we need to modify our process in order to better control the size of the PFP Ph.D. program.
• Regarding assistantships, Vickie Hampton coordinates those assignments after gathering information 1) from faculty regarding their needs and grant funds they have available, 2) from students regarding their preferences regarding the type of assignment they would prefer, and 3) from Dr. Shumway regarding departmental funding that will be available. Some Ph.D. students are brought in with funding commitments (that decision is usually made depending on how much the faculty want to attract a particular student and the funding available at that time and that is always a decision made by more than one person) and others are accepted knowing that they will not be supported financially with assistantships.

• Regarding scholarship offerings, the whole process has recently been revamped at the college level and requires three people at the program level to be involved, three more people at the department level, and additionally, the Assistant Chair and Chair of the department.

Other Responses Based on More Imbedded Feedback:

• Faculty Expertise in Comparison to Business Schools: The outside reviewer points out that we carved out an objective of preparing students to teach and conduct research in financial planning at academic institutions, more specifically Colleges of Business. I would agree with the first part of this statement; however, we have not specifically selected out preparation of our Ph.D. students for Business Colleges. It’s just that in the US, approximately 90% of the academic positions in PFP are currently in Colleges of Business. We would like our students to be prepared to teach and conduct research in any personal financial planning program, be it in Human Sciences, Business, or Agricultural Economics. In the future, some of our Ph.D. students who are also Law School graduates may very well teach this subject matter in Schools of Law.

• Student Preparation for Faculty Jobs in Business Schools: Regarding whether or not TTU doctoral students can compete successfully for jobs in Colleges of Business, the following are the current academic homes of the students who have come through our PhD program since its focused changed to PFP in 2002:

- Ryan Halley – Business (2005)
- Joe Goetz—Human Sciences (2006)
• Nathan Harness—Business (initially took a position in Human Sciences) (2007)
• Swarm Chatterjee—Human Sciences (2007)
• Craig Lemoine—Business (2008)
• Kim Bridges—Practicing in the profession (2008)
• De’Arno De’Armond—Business (2008)
• Lukas Dean—Business (2008)
• Ajamu Loving—Business (2008)

The students have been competing very successfully for positions in both Human Sciences and Business School environments. Time will tell whether they are successful in getting tenure and promotion in the Business School environment. (The years cited above are when students took their first position, not always the year of graduation).

• **Top Tier Journals not Evident on Faculty Vitaes:** Clearly there has been a tradeoff during the early years of the program between building the program, developing curriculum, and meeting the needs of the accreditation body. Each of these efforts was essential to bringing this program to its current level of national prominence. Though there has always been a commitment to research within the program, and several faculty have done a significant amount of it, we have more recently placed an even higher value on the type and level of research that is generated. We would argue that despite the challenges of building a program of this kind, there has been much progress on the research front and many publications in the top tier of journals dedicated to financial planning and counseling. Though there may be fewer publications in top tier business journals on existing faculty members vitas, we believe that our current students are being mentored at a level that will allow them to publish in the journals of their choice, whether financial planning/counseling or business.

• **Too Many Faculty Chairs from New Faculty/Imbalance Between Old and New Faculty:** Given our focus on providing our students with the best research mentoring possible, we more recently have a greater number of them being mentored by our newer faculty members who were hired because of their high level of research skill. However, when committee membership and chairs are considered, there does not appear to be a large discrepancy here. Perhaps this discrepancy is one of perception or availability and needs to be addressed. This will be done.