Report of the Internal Review Committee for the Graduate Program Review of Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT), Family and Consumer Science Education (FCSE), and Personal Financial Planning (PFP) in the Department of Applied Professional Studies (APS)

A report submitted to the Graduate School of Texas Tech University

April 9, 2009

Submitted by:

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The graduate programs in the Department of Applied and Professional Studies were reviewed by the following committee: Dr. Patrick Hughes (Communication Studies), Dr. Thayne Montague (Plant and Soil Sciences), Dr. Robert Ritchey (Finance), Dr. Marsha Carolan (external reviewer MFT, Michigan State University), Dr. Sharon Nickols (external reviewer FCSE, University of Georgia), and Dr. Brenda Cude (external reviewer PFP, University of Georgia). This report is based on information obtained from the APS self-study document and meetings with the Department Chair, Program Director, faculty, staff, and students. These meetings were held on February 18, 2009 (MFT), February 19, 2009 (FCSE), and March 5, 2009 (PFP).

The following criteria were considered in this review: (1) Program overview and vision, (2) Faculty productivity, (3) Quality and quantity of graduate students, (4) Curriculum, and (5) Facilities and resources. This report is organized into three sections, MFT, FCSE and PFP, representing each of the APS divisions offering graduate programs. Within each divisional section of the report the five criteria listed above as they relate to each graduate program are discussed and evaluated. Recommendations for each program are summarized at the end of each section.

APS is a complex department offering three doctoral programs. The committee appreciates the hard work and cooperation of the Chair, Dr. Sterling Shumway, and his program directors and staff. Dr. Shumway is well-respected among the APS faculty and by all accounts is doing an excellent job at managing the department and its graduate programs.
Marriage and Family Therapy Review

Program Overview and Vision—very good to excellent

The MFT graduate program has experienced sustained growth in many areas since its last review. First, the program has received growth in facilities with the addition of the Center for Addictive Disorders and Recovery Services (CADRS). Second, the program has received faculty expertise in the area of addiction and recovery services adding depth and breadth to its curriculum and potentially new areas of research. Third, the program has experienced a growth in graduate applications and enrollments since its last review. The program’s vision as described in the self-study is to maintain this growth in at least two ways. First, the MFT program plans to integrate the ADRS curriculum and its faculty into the MFT program while offering the ADRS specialty to its graduate students. However, with the exception of an organizational chart, the plan for this integration is unclear. Second, the MFT program plans to grow its MA program to a number four times its current enrollment. Although the potential to grow the MA program is good, there is no recruitment plan for this goal described in the self-study. These goals are consistent with the strategic plan of the department. With respect to these goals, the committee recommends the following: First, arrange a series of meetings or a retreat for the MFT and ADRS faculty, staff, and students to develop a plan for integration of the ADRS Center and the ADRS specialization into the MFT program. Second, during this same meeting or retreat, the faculty and staff may develop a plan to recruit, supervise, and retain the additional graduate students as well as consider the impact this enrollment will have on the program’s facilities and faculty. Overall, there is great potential in this program to build on its current success and momentum.

Faculty Productivity—very good to excellent

MFT faculty members are very productive teachers and researchers. The faculty maintains active research programs, regularly publish (collaboratively and autonomously), present at scholarly conferences, and receive research funding from internal and external sources. The committee made three observations where faculty productivity is concerned. First, according to the self-study, APS faculty members have a 2/2 teaching load with some faculty teaching more than this. The workload calculation in the self-study shows the faculty at the university minimum of 18 credits. Since workload may be calculated using faculty work in addition to teaching and other reporting it is unclear what proportion of this average workload is from teaching in MFT. It’s more likely to be higher given the number of graduate committees supervised by its faculty. Second, the current director of the MFT program is a tenure-track Assistant Professor. Although the program director shows momentum and success in research, this may place a disproportionate amount of workload on this untenured faculty member. Third, several full-time, Ph.D instructors teach in the MFT program. The program may consider development opportunities for these faculty members as well. For example, given the program’s ambitious goals for growth and integration, the program may have an interest in retaining the faculty under TTU OP 32.01 3(c). Overall, MFT faculty members are collegial and productive as teachers and researchers.
Quality and Quantity of Graduate Students:-very good to excellent

The quality and quantity of graduate students in the MFT program are both high. Graduate students in MFT are well-funded (most at .50 FTE some at .75 FTE). Graduate students have various opportunities to conduct research with faculty and teach courses. Admission into the MA and PhD programs appears selective. Three concerns emerged during this review regarding graduate student quality. First, while graduate students are well-placed after graduation (some before graduation), the MFT program may not have accurate statistics on students' time to graduate. The committee recommends that MFT incorporate a means to track time to graduate especially among those students who receive employment prior to degree completion and rarely complete the degree. In most cases, a department's institutional memory can help identify these students. Second, students communicated some uncertainty for the integration of MFT and ADRS. The committee suggests including students in future meetings to discuss the integration plan and its opportunities for students. It may be suitable to feature this plan in future curricular literature. Third, the committee once again advises MFT to develop a plan to accommodate an MA cohort four times its current size. Lastly, Dr. Carolan's report suggests the MFT program lacks diversity, which is an integral part of its strategic plan. However, in regard to student diversity, this committee observes several diversity initiatives. For example, four graduate students received TTU diversity grants. In general, the MFT program is a student-centered program that attracts talented and motivated students (MA and PhD) who are offered many opportunities for professional and intellectual development and who complete the program in a reasonable amount of time.

Curriculum:-very good to excellent

The MFT curriculum is similar to and compatible with other graduate programs in MFT. Two concerns emerged in respect to curriculum. First, the doctoral program is accredited. The MA program is not accredited. However, the MFT faculty is currently developing a plan for MA program accreditation. Although this MA program is not accredited it is clear from the external review report that this program maintains high standards and is assessed annually by the MFT faculty. Also, the program is designed to prepare MA students for licensure. Accreditation is expensive, but a worthy goal. MFT program leaders are encouraged to consider the costs of accreditation against its program goals for growth and integration as well as against its ability to provide resources (personnel, funding) to assess the program according to accreditation expectations. Second, students communicated a need to have more access to statistics courses within MFT. The MFT program clearly provides students with several choices of methods courses including statistics courses in HDFS (primary choice), COE, and A&S. Rather than propose remediation for this issue here, the committee encourages the MFT faculty to visit with its students about their perception of a lack of statistics courses. Overall, the MFT curriculum is consistent with accreditation standards, qualifies students for licensure, and is comparable to the MFT curricula at similar institutions.

Facilities and Resources:-very good to excellent

The MFT program facilities are adequate. However, given the expectations for growth, the program may need to expand these facilities. First, the Family Therapy Clinic may need to
expand as the MA cohort expands, which may also require addition of professional personnel to supervise training of this larger cohort. Additionally, as this cohort expands, which may also gradually grow the PhD cohort, more teaching and research space would be needed to accommodate these students. At this time, its current facilities and resources seem adequate. However, the MFT faculty is encouraged to develop a plan for facility and resource development to match its expected growth.

Recommendations

1. Describe a plan to integrate the ADRS center and specialization into the MFT program.

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

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

4. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of accrediting the MA program.

5. Discuss choices of methods courses with graduate students.

6. Plan for facility and resources development to accommodate anticipated growth in graduate program.
Family and Consumer Sciences Education Review

Program Overview and Vision—very good

The program in Family and Consumer Sciences Education (FCSE) provides an academically sound, highly relevant opportunity for graduate education. In particular, the doctoral program prepares graduates for careers in higher education teaching and research, development of educational materials and programs, and professional leadership. The FCSE program accomplishments appear to exceed reasonable expectations given resources of the program. This success is indicative of the expertise, dedication, and managerial abilities of the faculty and the motivation and intellect of the talented students who enter the program. In addition, staff members play a critical role in the success of APS and FSCE. Staff members are well thought of, have high spirits, and appear to have a good relationship with faculty members and administration.

While the mission statement of the Department of Applied and Professional Studies (APS) suffices as a statement of intent, the vision statement is inwardly focused, process-oriented rather than results-oriented, and awkwardly worded. Furthermore, the mission and vision statements are not consistent with those in the Strategic Plan. As the vision, mission, and strategic plan are developed for the future, it is suggested the following be addressed: To what extent has the APS become an integrated unit? What will it take to achieve programmatic integration? Is APS functioning as a set of four program areas operating in close proximity, or are the programs working toward integration of resources to achieve greater efficiency in program delivery and interdisciplinary expertise on the part of faculty, students, and graduates? It appears the current organization within APS offers tremendous opportunities for innovation to meet current and emerging societal needs. Applied and Professional Studies faculty should build on the synergies that cross program areas and leverage these for greater departmental integration and efficiency to prepare students for emerging opportunities. The relatively recent reorganization which created APS has resulted in a unit with shared purpose in terms of applying knowledge to enhance social capital, prevent and solve human problems. Faculty Productivity—very good

There are four FTE faculty positions in the FCSE program with three designated as tenure-track and one non-tenure track. Three positions are filled by two tenured and one tenure-track faculty members who hold doctoral degrees from highly respected graduate programs. The non-tenured Instructor holds a master’s degree, has extensive teaching experience, and is a Ph.D. candidate in the FCSE program. It appears total faculty workload is extremely high and faculty should be commended for their efforts. However, graduate students and the review committee note FCSE faculty experience high levels of stress due to their workloads. Student comments indicate that due to workload, faculty members sometimes are unable to support graduate student research interests to the extent student’s desire. In addition, it would be beneficial for tenure-track faculty to have senior faculty serve as mentors to prepare for the rigors of promotion and tenure review. Data on completion of degrees, graduate student presentations at professional meetings, and publications are evidence of intense and meaningfully investment in graduate student development by the faculty.

Quality and Quantity of Graduate Students and Graduates—very good
A number of PhD graduate students visited with the committee. Students represented a diverse number of academic and career backgrounds, but shared common interests in the philosophy and theories of teaching, curriculum and program development, and contemporary educational issues. It appears the FCSE program surpasses most, if not all, other universities in the number of FCSE graduate students. Furthermore, the quality of doctoral students is outstanding. Concerns regarding admitted students who did not enroll in FSCE should be addressed. The absence of, or inadequate financial support for graduate students was a frequent concern with graduate students and faculty. This should be explored and corrective action taken in order to maintain an optimal cohort of graduate students moving in the FCSE program. Supplemental information provided during the site visit indicated an impressive record of graduate student presentations and publications. Based upon review of job placements and recent dissertation titles of FCSE graduates (as well as information gathered from the current students), it appears students are finding employment after graduate school and that FCSE faculty have made sound admissions decisions. Graduate students in FCSE have high morale and a great desire to succeed. Additional inputs into their program (graduate student handbook, teaching / research assistantships, etc.) would greatly enhance their opportunity for success.

Curriculum and Programs of Study—very good

The basic program of study for graduate degrees in FCSE is designed on sound educational principles. Doctoral students' programs include core courses in FCSE and courses in an emphasis area often in another department with an appropriate relationship to the students' interests. A wide variety of courses are taught at the 5000-level with few cross listed courses. However, there are few course offerings at the 6000-level. Offerings at the 7000- and 8000-level focus primarily on research methods and dissertation research. There is a need to add greater depth to the FCSE doctoral degree program by offering advanced (6000 level) courses in subjects identified by faculty. This need is greatest for those students who enter the Ph.D. program with previous degrees in family and consumer sciences education. The FCSE graduate course schedule indicates courses are offered on a regular basis to assure timely completion of degree programs.

Facilities and Resources—good

Facilities of the College of Human Sciences are outstanding. Offices for faculty and staff appear to be adequate and are in reasonable proximity to classrooms. However, aside from the FCSE Curriculum Center (a professional service unit), FCSE appears to have no designated space. Lack of space did not appear to be a great concern with students, faculty, or staff. However, lack of designated facilities for social science and educational research projects is a chronic problem in higher education institutions. Space needs of FCSE should be further explored. Although the Curriculum Center was included on the site visit, it is unclear of the relationship between the Curriculum Center and the FCSE graduate program. The Curriculum Center appears to be a stand-alone resource which may be more fully utilized by the FSCE graduate program.

Recommendations

1. An additional tenure-track position for FCSE is recommended, along with supporting resources for the position.
2. To provide depth in the doctoral program, more advanced courses at the 6000 level should be offered.

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

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

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

Personal Financial Planning Graduate Program Review

Program Overview and Vision – excellent

The Personal Financial Planning (PFP) Division located in the Department of Applied Professional Services (APS) offers the graduate degree programs of Ph.D. in PFP, MS PFP and dual degrees in MS PFP/JD, MS PFP/MBA and MS PFP/MS Finance. During the review period these CFP Board-Registered programs have both grown in size and improved significantly in quality and reputation. The recently developed Ph.D. in PFP is the first and only program of its kind in the nation and is now both nationally and internationally recognized as one of the best programs of its kind in the world. The division is supported by the largest and best-trained PFP faculty in the nation with 12 tenure-track positions, one of which is currently unfilled.

The faculty, students and administration are a competent and enthusiastic team producing graduates that serve the academic and professional services communities and effectively execute Texas Tech University’s mission to improve its reputation as a leading research institution. The mission and vision statements for the graduate programs of Personal Financial Planning appear to be well conceived and provide for both increasing quality and sustained growth in the number of graduates.

The doctoral program broadly appears to be serving students with three relatively different career paths: private or business practice, academic appointments in colleges which have traditionally taught PFP courses such as the College of Human Sciences at Texas Tech University, and appointments with a focus on teaching PFP courses within colleges of Business Administration. The program of study for this last group is significantly different from the others and may be both the biggest challenge and opportunity facing the program. It is still unclear though if the PFP Division can provide the faculty expertise, either internally and/or externally, to train and direct the research required for a successful career in a good business school.

The graduate programs in PFP are far more than collections of course work. The PFP division strives to involve students at the masters and doctoral levels both in research and the practice of their disciplines. The Center for Financial Responsibility (CFR) functions as part of the PFP Program and facilitates applied research and outreach to TTU students, the community and professionals nationwide. The unique Red to Black partnership similarly involves students in financial education and counseling thus enhancing the image of Texas Tech University and the opportunities of its graduates.

Faculty Productivity—good

One of the biggest strengths of the PFP program is its faculty. The PFP faculty has been very productive in publishing in the best practice oriented PFP journals. They have experience in securing external funding and have established industry contacts for sources of internships and employment for students. Collectively they represent an enthusiastic group having national recognition in research, teaching and practice. Moreover, the faculty seems intent on passing their success on to their students as evidenced by student participation in a large number of regional and national conferences. Excellent communication among faculty and students and superb leadership at all levels are evident.
Even with these laudable qualities there remain some areas of possible faculty improvement. If the faculty is to be successful in placing students in top business schools they will need to conduct research publishable in top tier academic business journals; these types of publications are currently lacking on faculty vitas. Faculty also need to insure productive junior members are shielded from burdensome service and high teaching and advising loads to enable them the opportunity to develop high quality research programs.

The PFP Division should be realistic and prudent in planning for future growth of the doctoral program. Currently, dissertation chairs are too concentrated among few faculty members, a problem that will surely cause a strain as the program grows. To compound the problem of high growth the Division is overweighed with junior faculty and lacking senior experience with only one person at the full rank.

Another area of possible improvement would be in communicating tenure standards to new faculty with a formal mentoring and review process. The Division should take care to align this process with the merit review process.

Quality and Quantity of Graduate Students and Guidelines—good to excellent

The PFP Division has worked hard to attract bright, energetic and hard working graduate students. Timely completion of degrees and good placement of students attests to the Division’s success in this endeavor. Communication among faculty and students is good. Students seem generally very satisfied with their curricula, opportunities for study in individual courses, faculty, and research and practice opportunities.

There has been steady increase in both masters and doctoral students over the review period and a projected increase in these programs for the foreseeable future. An area of concern is the very large incoming cohort of doctoral candidates which may put a strain on already tight faculty resources. Competition for faculty to direct dissertations could pose a conflict between doctoral students being groomed for business schools and those going into private practice or Human Sciences colleges.

One possible area for improvement would be in better diversity recruiting at the masters level. Another issue that concerned the review team centers around the admission process which has been at the discretion of one faculty member at each level, masters and doctoral. The admission process and policies in a division of this size might reasonably be expected to be formed by a large portion, if not all, of the faculty in the Division. The admission decision similarly would normally be made by more than one faculty member or committee as well as related decisions regarding stipends, assistantships and scholarships.

Curriculum and Programs of Study—good to excellent

The Personal Financial Planning Division offers the graduate degree programs of Ph.D. in PFP, MS PFP and dual degrees in MS PFP/JD, MS PFP/MBA and MS PFP/MS Finance. The recently developed CFP Board-Registered Ph.D. in PFP is the first and only program of its kind in the nation and is now both nationally and internationally recognized as one of the best programs of its kind in the world. Currently the program has about thirty doctoral candidates at various stages of completion with a large cohort expected to be admitted in the fall. The large size of the
program was a clear concern of the review team given that dissertation chairs were concentrated in the hands of a small number of faculty. It is unclear at this juncture if there will be sufficient faculty resources to direct the research of the large group of students coming on board. It is also unclear if going forward the division will have sufficient faculty to direct the technical types of research desired by students pursuing a business school career path.

Graduate courses at all levels appear to be well staffed and offered in a timely fashion. The courses available to students to complete their programs of study, both within and outside of the PFP division, seem to be quite adequate. The number of courses offered by PFP also seems to be reasonable, well designed and suited to the faculty’s expertise. The availability of specialized courses outside of the department, such as the 5000 and 6000 level Finance courses offered in the Rawls College of Business, extend student opportunities without the need for additional PFP resources.

One possible avenue of improvement in the program would be the development of a formal document describing policies and practices for graduate students, including an operating policy on comprehensive exams laying out specifics on format, topics, grading, etc.

Facilities and Resources—good to excellent

Both faculty and students take tremendous pride in the research fellowship and new technology complex that have been funded by a one million dollar grant pledged to the Personal Financial Planning program by the Charles Schwab Foundation. Faculty and doctoral students generally seem satisfied with the generous level of available resources in the areas of computer, library and office support. Both faculty and students also seem to be quite satisfied with classrooms, meeting rooms and labs.

Stipends for doctoral students are plentiful and sufficiently high to attract the best candidates. Money budgeted for faculty and especially student travel is exceptional. In meeting with the faculty no significant concerns were raised with regard to salaries or merit raises. Faculty seemed more concerned that the open tenure-track line be filled as soon as possible and that the uncertainty in summer funding be resolved.

Recommendations

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 few faculty and the type of training needed for graduates planning business school careers should be integrated into the plan.

2. Clearly communicate tenure standards to new faculty with a formal mentoring and review process which is aligned with the merit review process.

3. Develop strategies for greater diversity recruitment at the masters level.
4. Consider using a committee representative of the PFP faculty to establish and administer admission standards and for the awarding of stipends, assistantships and scholarships. These decisions need to be made by more than one faculty member.

5. 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.

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Date 4-09-09 

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