Graduate Program Review
Texas Tech University

Program Reviewed:
Family & Consumer Sciences Education

Onsite Review Dates:
April 13-14, 2015

Name of Reviewers
Internal:
Please include name, title, and Department
Lydia Thompson, Director and Professor, School of Art
Mark Gring, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Communication Studies
Jeffrey Mosher, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Modern Latina America and Brazil, Department of History

External:
Please include name, title, and Department
Dr. Jan Bowers, Dean, College of Education and Human Ecology, SUNY at Oneonta Campus
Dr. Roger Hill, Professor, Department of Career and Information Studies, College of Education, University of Georgia

I. Academic Unit Description and Strategic Plan
Please evaluate the following by marking an X in one of the blanks for each item:

Vision, Mission and Goals
___ Excellent ___X_ Very Good ___ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Strategic Plan
___ Excellent ___X_ Very Good ___ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.

Positive Components
The Vision, Mission, and Goals were very good for this program. It is uniquely positioned as a Ph.D. granting unit in the United States. The vision of becoming the nation’s premiere program is ambitious yet seems achievable, given that there is strong demand for the graduates in this field. The five strategic priorities seem well suited to the particular needs and necessary direction of this program.

The FCSE Master’s degree program is the only one in TX and they also have the only PhD degree program in the US. The PhD is a great opportunity for professionals seeking positions in higher education and other specialized leadership roles. The FCSE is a member of the Texas FCS and a member of the Great Plains Interactive Distance (GPIDEA) education program. The GPIDEA offers the Master’s serves a population of students who are full time employees seeking advanced degrees for professional secondary education. The GPIDEA provides a revenue stream used for TAs, and defrays travel costs for faculty and student workers. The program serves students from 35 states, which could be a great strategy to increase the rate of students who complete the masters and encourage them to apply to the PhD program. PhD programs throughout the United States utilize this strategy to maintain enrollment. The professional need for this program supports the College to continue to offer this degree program.
Areas for Improvement
Several Graduate Program Review Committee members noted that the FCSE Self Study states, “TTU has the only FCSE-specific PhD program in the country” which could be misleading in that there are other programs in the country that provide doctoral degrees in which students are able to focus on FCSE. These programs provide higher levels of competence in the field and more comprehensive Career and Technical Education programs. The program may benefit from including national level and work force development input on the program’s advisory board. In regard to the master’s program, the FCSE needs to emphasize how the program aligns with national board teacher certification for out-of-state candidates to encourage and obtain national certification by their states and districts. The FCSE becomes a stakeholder in its role with K-12 schools and to strengthen FCS teachers’ use of the graduate program to prepare for professional administrative positions such as a school principal and or Career/Technical Education Director. The strategic plan should include more integration of the faculty and development of research/ideas from the rest of the college for the teaching areas of FCSE. As the educational arm of the Human Sciences, it needs to be seen as more integrated into, and accepted by, the entire college faculty “buy in” rather than dismissed as the “mere teaching” side of the college. One area that can be improved on is prioritizing recruitment by participating in regional and national meetings, expand financial support, and emphasize the career paths for prospective students. In addition, improvement can be facilitated by developing strategies to create promotional materials identifying career pathways for K-12 administrations and beyond. Other recruitment initiatives may include encouraging students to spread the word about the program, and placing special efforts to increase gender and ethnic diversity. Additional funding is needed to support the distance education Master’s offered through the GPIDE Alliance. However, overall, the programs provide adequate financial support for their students.

II. Program Curriculum
Please evaluate the following:

Alignment of program with stated program and institutional goals and purposes
____ Excellent ___X_ Very Good ___ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Curriculum development coordination and delivery
____ Excellent ___X_ Very Good ___ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Program learning outcomes assessment
____ Excellent _X_ Very Good ___X_ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Program curriculum compared to peer programs
____ Excellent ___X_ Very Good ___ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Please evaluate the following by marking an X in one of the blanks for each item:

Positive Comments
The External Review Committee indicated the curriculum is consistent and provides the depth and breadth for a graduate program in the FCSE housed in the College of Human Sciences. The content is well organized and clearly communicated to students. In addition, departments outside of FCSE at peer universities provide areas of specializations within the degree area. Students felt the courses were fair, realistic, and relevant.

Areas of Improvement
Several Review Committee members commented on the level of the need for a more rigorous methodology requirement that seem limited to only a quantitative approach, which may appear to be unnecessary compared to other programs within the university and possibly throughout the country. One example would be to develop a “course focused on proposal preparation and publishing of research in professional journals.” Another course such as “Advanced Research Methods” could have a significant qualitative component. The study of pedagogy and pedagogical methods needs to include qualitative, classical, and critical methods to expand the understanding of pedagogical approaches to reach the breadth of humanity. Another important component could include a more interdisciplinary pedagogical approach to include other departments within the Human Sciences. It was also noted the mechanism being used for the preliminary written portion of the doctoral examination is “quite traditional and is no longer used at some research-intensive university programs” and new dissertation models address “deliberate best practices.” Another option is to offer differentiated instruction, rather than independent courses in multicultural education and exceptional learners, to present a holistic approach to teaching. These course examples and more innovative approaches to research will be essential to assessing student learning outcomes.

The College and Graduate School would benefit from a discussion on creating multiple strategies to facilitate “job friendly” doctoral programs, reduce time to complete degrees, streamline program implementation processes and curriculum requirements to increase student access, reduce student cost, time to degree, and reduce delivery cost. Maximize the most efficient use of resources would be of benefits to the College and programs.

While the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) assumptions seem to dominate research and approaches within the college, this program is the unique “teaching heart,” a reminder of the former Home Economics introductions in high schools across the US. The number of faculty can be detrimental to the students’ experience and or lack of, due the availability of resources, perspectives, and expertise. The overall faculty and student ratings were very good to excellent. However, it does allow room for improvement.

III. Faculty Productivity

Please evaluate the following by marking an X in one of the blanks for each item:

Qualifications
___ Excellent ___X_ Very Good ___ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Publications
___ Excellent ___ Very Good ___X_ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Teaching Load
___ Excellent ___ Very Good ___X_ Good ___ Needs Improvement
External Grants
___ Excellent  x__ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

Teaching Evaluations
__X__ Excellent  ___ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

Professional Service
__X__ Excellent  ___ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement
(Very good to excellent)

Community Service
__X__ Excellent  ___ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement
(Very good to excellent)

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.

Positive Components
All faculty are qualified for their positions and carry full workloads and/or unpaid overloads as a result of their commitment to their profession. All faculty are dedicated to the field, advocates, and support their students. The Program Director is to be commended for her exemplary effort to provide state and national leadership and service for FCSE. The Program Director is also to be commended for her role in mentoring the newest faculty member for meeting University tenure and promotion expectations. Faculty productivity is good overall, but uneven across the faculty members. The program and College are being explored to leverage the strengths and talents of the faculty.

Areas of Improvement
Publications seem to be dominated by a senior faculty member in the program. Encouragement and research time (or release from teaching and/or service demands) needs to be given to those who are still in the tenure-track process. The difficulty of a three-person program is that everyone is especially exposed when it comes to the expectations and evaluation of traditional research. The faculty involved seem to be overloaded with the number of graduate students and certificate seekers. This directly contributes to lower research productivity. The teaching load for junior faculty is unrealistic. If it’s expected that they conduct high level research to seek funding, submit articles for major journals, and present papers at national conferences/venues, the administration needs to lower the number of PhD Committees they serve on. One requirement is that the Doctoral Advisory Committee consists of four members of the graduate faculty with at least one member being a teaching faculty in the FCSE program. This requirement is necessary, but certainly compromises time devoted to research. Faculty teaching evaluations are relatively high which is beneficial and demonstrates faculty’s commitment to teaching, but it is not unusual in small programs for faculty to receive high ratings on teaching evaluations. If a new faculty line is ever available, seriously consider candidates who have a significant qualitative aspect to their research agendas.

IV. Students and Graduates

Please evaluate the following by marking an X in one of the blanks for each item:
Time to degree
___ Excellent ___ Very Good ___X__ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Retention
___X___ Excellent ___X__ Very Good ___ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Graduate rates
___ Excellent ___ Very Good ___X__ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Enrollment
___X___ Excellent ___X__ Very Good ___ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Demographics
___X___ Excellent ___ Very Good ___ Good ___X___ Needs Improvement

Number of degrees conferred annually
___ Excellent ___ Very Good ___X__ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Support Services
___ Excellent ___X__ Very Good ___X___ Good ___ Needs Improvement
(Good to need improvements)

Job Placement
___X___ Excellent ___ Very Good ___ Good ___ Needs Improvement

Student/ Faculty Ratio
___X___ Excellent ___ Very Good ___ Good ___X___ Needs Improvement

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement

Positive Components
The Program Review Committee met with a group of students at various levels in the program. Based on the student evaluations and comments during the meeting, the students like the program and faculty. Overall the programs provide several opportunities for students to begin studies in the program. Students are encouraged to present and published their research independently and with the faculty.

Areas of Improvement
The student/faculty ratio is problematic and the program has too many graduate students for three faculty members to advise adequately. It is not clear that the faculty can give sufficient attention to students and help them to navigate all the areas of a doctoral program well. Student comments support the perspective that faculty workloads are heavy, especially advising doctoral students, in which one-faculty members does most of the work. During the student interviews, ABD students are struggling to complete their dissertations. The ABD is not unique to Texas Tech. To address this national issue, the academy is identifying new models to facilitate time-to-degree and to
more closely align the dissertation product with work performance expectations of a program completer in a professional setting. The limitation of increasing the student enrollment based on the number of faculty would not assist in meeting the University, Graduate School, and College enrollment projections. Also diversity seems to be a concern. However, strategies are being discussed to address this issue.

V. Facilities and Resources

Please evaluate the following by marking an X in one of the blanks for each item:

Facilities
___ Excellent   ___ Very Good   ___ Good   ___ Needs Improvement

Facility Support Resources
___ Excellent   ___ Very Good   ___ Good   ___ Needs Improvement

Financial Resources
___ Excellent   ___ Very Good   ___ X Good   ___ Needs Improvement

Staff Resources
___ Excellent   ___ Very Good   ___ X Good   ___ Needs Improvement

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement

Positive Components
The facilities for instruction (classroom, resource center, and offices) are housed in the same building and are adequate for the program. The classrooms are equipped with up-to-date technology and are very good for the types of instruction delivery models being used. Support and funding is provided to attend and present research at conferences as well as for other professional development opportunities. The Great Plains IDEA partnership appears to be playing a significant role in providing financial resources for the programs. The administration is to be commended for keeping the GPIDEA resources aligned with the graduate programs and is encouraged initiating sustainable program growth with additional financial resources. Graduate students also assist the program with various tasks and are assigned assistantships and employment from funded projects.

Areas of Improvement
The program shares a staff member with another program, which is an indication that greater support is needed. If the program goals are to increase its overall enrollment, it is recommended that an additional staff be hired to ensure quality services are maintained. The Great Plains connection seems to be a significant resource for the graduate students and faculty, both in terms of course offerings and money, but there seems to be fewer connections for resources from traditional alumni and other friends of the program.
VI. Overall Ranking

Please provide summative conclusions based on the overall review.

In general the Graduate Program Review Committee members agree the FCSE program is a strong, important and viable graduate program. It is an important component of the College of Human Sciences, the faculty are conducting national research, and it has incredible student/faculty ratio workload. The curriculum meets the needs of the students and offers many certifications, MA and PhD programs with only three full time faculty. Student job placement is a good measure to assess the program’s success. A list of recent graduates reveals that one of them has been selected to serve as a national officer for the Family and Consumer Sciences Education Association of FCS. This program has great potential to continue to prepare students for leadership roles/positions in both K-12 and higher education. The program has a strong national reputation and is meeting an essential need for preparation of FCSE teachers and teacher educators.

Please provide summative recommendations based on the overall review.

Curriculum Collaboration - The program should engage in more exploration of collaboration and partnerships in regards to sharing resources with more links between to the 3 clusters (obesity, recovery, science and retirement planning and living) of research the college. There should be more ways to engage these three areas, allowing the MA and PhD students to participate. This goes hand in hand with encouragement by assisting with funding of innovative projects. The core and theme of cluster learning should center on the mission and goals of the College. The Dean stated that funding opportunities are available for study in these programs.

Curriculum Pedagogy - This program may benefit both its graduate students and faculty research for grant gaining abilities if they are able to establish closer ties with the researchers in other Human Sciences departments. Invite these colleagues. Getting the FCSE graduate students and faculty involved in their research and grants will help to boost the research/grants for these faculty and generate a better understanding between this program and the six departments in the college. This could result in more undergraduate students coming to the FCSE program because they see the value of the pedagogical side of Human Sciences—especially as the demand increases across the country and internationally.

Faculty Collaboration - Seek additional opportunities for collaboration within the college and across the university. Potential partnerships include an early childhood program for field and student teaching placement as well as other teacher certification processes. Developing partnerships with the College of Engineering and other hard sciences will expand opportunities to seek NSF funding focused on STEM initiatives and contribute career development expertise and research. Until additional resources are provided, expanding the base of faculty support for the FCSE program through collaboration with other TTU faculty is a prudent strategy.

Faculty Research - It is true that the majority of the research, grant money, and doctoral dissertation directing seems to have come from only one professor. The other two professors in the program have other duties (directing the MA program and the post-baccalaureate certification) but they both need to be able to have the resources, training, and time to complete research—in order to increase the program’s status in the college. It is essential that the College of Human Sciences provide the incentive and time/resources to accomplish these ends or else they need to be replaced. A further recommendation is that professional staff should be increased to assist with administrative duties associated with the program.
**Additional Faculty Line**- It is clear that the dean stated no new faculty lines would be opened for this program unless/until their undergraduate enrollment numbers increased. Faculty teaching in one of the clusters may offer the opportunity to teach a new course (topics and or seminars) for FCSE undergraduate and graduate students. The plan is to show evidence, interest, and build enrollment, especially at the undergraduate level. The Committee strongly supports an additional faculty line for this FCSE program.

**GPIDEA**- The FCSE enjoys a good work relationship and partnership with the GPIDEA and it should be continued. This innovative programs appears to be meeting the needs of students and is providing enhanced opportunities for graduate coursework that would not otherwise be available.

**Recruitment and Financial Aid**- The FCSE should continue with the recruitment effort to increase overall enrollment as well as diversify the student population by expanding its region and presence at conferences and websites. It should ensure that literature for distribution is available for all colleagues within the College and Graduate School. Promote the program and what it does. Investigate the Texas state plan for using federal Perkins funding if viable to help support undergraduate, graduate, and PhD programs. University financial support as a match could leverage financial support from the State Workforce Board.

**Academic and Advisory Support for FCSE- Utilize**- The FCSE Advisory Committee is a great support group. Consider expanding the membership to include faculty from other disciplines, the state FCSE supervisor, a representative from the State Workforce Board, a K-12 administrator, and an individual who has worked with national board certification. Faculty in this area could focus on cluster projects such as STEM, seminar, and special topic courses. FCSE alumni and affiliated supporters are a good base to attract more donations. The additional resources could help to bolster recruitment and other resources for the program.

**Instructional Delivery (Hybrid Model)**- As the doctoral program moves to increase and adopt an online delivery model, it is recommended that a face-to-face component be maintained. This might consist of a summer workshop or seminar or other opportunities for in-person interactions during the academic year. The TTU FCSE faculty exhibits excellent people skills and maintaining some face-to-face elements can help distinguish this degree from others that are 100% online.