FSoS Students Take a Fieldtrip South

This past January, four Family Social Science graduate students embarked on an unforgettable journey to Monterrey, Mexico. The two-week excursion was the framework for a semester-long class focusing on cross-cultural mental health issues with Mexican and Mexican-American families.

Heather Haberman, Jenet Jacob, Szu-Yi Peng and Christina Robert, along with Dr. Elizabeth Wieling and a group of graduate students from Texas Tech University spent the better part of two weeks taking part in an intensive seminar at the Centro de Investigacion Familiar (CIFAC). The seminar brought together a mix of students from Mexico and the United States to discuss and analyze a variety of topics including family and social relationships, gender roles, family violence and preventive interventions. The field study blended open discussions between the students and lectures given by a variety of local scholars and officials from various Mexican government agencies.

Much like Christina, Szu-Yi Peng is also in the MFT program here and has worked with Liz Wieling for two years. Her research involves working with Mexican-American families in the Twin Cities and the family therapy issues that they face as immigrants. She saw this as the perfect opportunity to gain insight into the other side of the immigration line. In Monterrey, Christina observed the therapy practices and conditions for families who were unable to move to the United States.

The field study ran from January 5th through the 16th and adhered to a somewhat rigid schedule. During the day, the group traveled around the region observing different Mexican cultures and visiting local community centers. At night, they all came together for discussion and lectures at CIFAC.

**Individual goals for the trip**

Due to their differences in background and academic study back here at the U, each student left for Mexico with different goals for the fieldtrip. Christina Robert is in the MFT program here and has worked with Liz Wieling for two years. Her research involves working with Mexican-American families in the Twin Cities and the family therapy issues that they face as immigrants. She saw this as the perfect opportunity to gain insight into the other side of the immigration line. In Monterrey, Christina observed the therapy practices and conditions for families who were unable to move to the United States.

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*Road Trippin*: Four FSoS graduate students spent two weeks studying cross-cultural family therapy practices in Monterrey, Mexico. Clockwise from upper left: Szu-Yi Peng, Jenet Jacob, Heather Haberman, Christina Robert.
Fieldtrip (con’t.)

Jenet Jacob is a first-year Ph.D. student who was especially interested in the international differences in gender issues and therapy. Because Jenet has already studied abroad and taught English as a second language, she was interested in the political climate and how policy drives important issues surrounding family and therapy.

All of the students found that the difference in economic climates between the U.S. and Mexico is a huge factor in how families receive therapy. Although the Monterrey region where the students studied is perhaps Mexico’s wealthiest area, it is still considerably poorer than the United States.

The bonding experience

Each of the students making the trip to Monterrey will tell you that nothing brings four people together quite like spending two weeks together in a country with a decisive language barrier.

Each class session was taught completely in Spanish. Because Jenet Jacob was the only one with a solid command of the Spanish language, the four quickly relied on a system of using context and quick translation to overcome the disparity. Although at times communication was difficult, all four described the language barrier as a “surmountable challenge.”

As part of their experiences, the students had the chance to visit museums, community centers, and even take a two-day trip to Zacatecas. As part of the course they also sat in on a clinical observation of a battered women’s group. Most of these day trips ran right into evening class leaving the them with little “down time” over the two weeks. It was only late at night when the four found time to unwind, reflect and process what they had seen and learned that day.

“The four of us graduate students from the U of M shared a bedroom suite so often times discussions continued up to the last moment before sleep arrived and would begin again in the morning after we had time to ‘sleep’ on our thoughts.” Heather Haberman said. “I was fortunate to have such wonderful companions to share my thoughts and emotions.”

New opportunities for travel

Perhaps the most notable aspect of this field study was the personal and financial commitment each student had to make to ensure a successful trip. The Office of International Programs supported the initial trip to Monterrey, Mexico, to explore the potential for future collaborations between the department of FSoS and the Family Therapy Institute in Monterrey. However, this part of the course taught in January 2004 was not supported because the program is still in its developing stages.

On their own, the students arranged travel and accommodations and set an itinerary in conjunction with the group from Texas Tech…all while personally funding the entire trip. Liz Wieling describes how future FSoS students will benefit from this experience: “This course has opened doors on both sides for future collaborations in terms of cross-cultural research and faculty/student exchanges.” Now that a formal exchange program is established between the two institutions, Global Campus may be involved in assisting with future courses.

From the Department Head...

Greetings!

It is hard for me to believe, but I have been here in the Department of Family Social Science for a year already. I have had a wonderful time getting to know our faculty, staff, and students this year. It has also been my pleasure to meet with some of our alumni, although I hope to have the opportunity to become acquainted with more of you in the coming months.

With this addition of Interactions, I am pleased to note that we are forwarding a copy for the first time to our undergraduate alumni. We are delighted to have the opportunity to connect with you and hope that you – as well as all of you who receive this publication – will let us know how we can be of assistance and service to you.

It is an interesting time to be the head of a department such as ours – issues about families seem to be popping up everywhere and, in many cases, appear to be increas-
ingly political. I think, therefore, it is an important time to remind ourselves of the importance of our department during these challenging times. As an academic unit with a primary focus on family, we are “in the business” of scholarship about the lived experiences of contemporary families. The scholars in our department, both faculty and students, have diverse interests in factors affecting today’s families, how families define themselves, in the ways individual family members interface with family, in the ways family interfaces with its individual members, and the ways in which the experiences of all families are met in the community. Our scholarship takes the form of discovery, engagement, and teaching.

The contributions we make to our expanding knowledge and understanding of contemporary families have at their foundations diverse definitions of family, awareness of the complexity of modern family life, and commitment to discovering the experiences of today’s families. By the very nature of our diverse interests, as a group, we are not always comfortable with this diversity nor are we always in accord about how we should proceed. I am even aware that, on occasion, some are uncomfortable with some of the ideas that are investigated within our department.

To this, I say “Hurrah!” Our department, as well as other departments like ours at public institutions, has an obligation to investigate the lived experiences of families. Without places like Family Social Science, stereotypical ideas and unfounded assumptions about families can continue to affect individuals and their families as well as local, state, and federal policies. We as a nation are increasingly diverse and our relationships, whether intimate or less personal, reflect this diversity. As we grow in our understanding, we will not always be comfortable with the knowledge we discover, but this, in no way, diminishes the importance of that knowledge.

I am honored to be in a department where the challenge to produce excellence in scholarship about families is taken so seriously. It is my hope that you, too, recognize the significance of this commitment.

My Best Wishes,

B. Jan McCulloch, Ph.D.
Department Head

On Wednesday, May 8th, FSOS had a special visitor in town for the weekly Colloquium. Dr. Beth Neil was on hand from the School of Social Work and Psychological Studies from the University of East Anglia (U.K.) to lead a discussion on “Adoptions with Contact in the United Kingdom: Outcomes of Birth Relative Contact for Children Placed Under Age 4.” In this picture, Beth (center) is shown with FSOS Department Head Jan McCulloch and FSOS Professor and colleague Hal Grotevant.

Coming Soon in 2004!!!

The FSOS website will be undergoing a major facelift in early Fall 2004. The new site will offer much more user-friendly access to important
-faculty research projects and initiatives
-undergraduate and graduate course information
-news, events and updates around the department
-department contact information
and much, much more. So check back early and often in 2004 to see what’s new at FSOS!!!

http://fsos.che.umn.edu
Profile: Dr. Patricia Olson

This past semester Family Social Science welcomed Dr. Patricia Olson back to the department. Although she has been working with FSoS extension faculty for more than a decade, her new location in the department will greatly benefit both the extension faculty and the county educators with whom she works.

Hogan and Virginia Zuiker. Dr. Olson said “In these varied positions I had an opportunity to utilize and hone the research skills and content knowledge I gained through graduate school.”

After earning her B.S. from the North Dakota State University, Trish Olson joined the University of Minnesota Extension Service (UMES) as a county educator. In her county position she worked on a variety of projects with Jean Bauer, Sharon Danes and Marlene Stum. She coordinated many educational programs involving FSoS-developed programs including retirement planning, health care directives, and coordinating volunteer budget consultants.

After several years Dr. Olson went on to further her education and moved to Columbus, Ohio. It was there at The Ohio State University where she completed her Master’s & Ph.D. coursework in Family Resource Management. After completing her degree, Trish moved back to the Twin Cities to become more directly involved with a few of the resource management projects she previously implemented at the county level.

She was initially hired to work on Dr. Bauer’s welfare reform project and then to work on Dr. Danes’ rural family business project by web site development and conducting research. She has also taught FSoS classes on personal finance with Jan

Bauer named top DGS

At a reception on April 22nd, Jean Bauer received one of four university-wide awards for Outstanding Director of Graduate Studies.

“Quite frankly, I am overwhelmed with her ability to devote so much time to her duties as DGS. If this were her only commitment, that might be one thing, but Jean is an exceptionally active scholar and a recognized university citizen with many responsibilities. This, to me, makes her stellar performance as the Family Social Science Director of Graduate Studies truly remarkable.”

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Two New Staff Members Join the FSOS Team

Ellen Schwarzkopf Freeman joined Family Social Science this past February as the new Grants Development Coordinator.

After growing up in the small town of Jefferson, Iowa, Ellen received her B.A. (2001) in English and Journalism and then went on to complete her Masters (2003) in Journalism; both from the University of Iowa. While in college Ellen served as an editorial writer for The Daily Iowan, communications intern for the Iowa State University Extension, and marketing intern for the University of Iowa Press. You could also find her on Saturdays playing piccolo for the Hawkeye Marching Band.

While finishing her M.A., Ellen worked as a research assistant in the University of Iowa Division of Sponsored Programs. This job gave her an opportunity to learn many different aspects of the university research grant process. It was here she worked on several development initiatives, managed the university’s internal nomination procedure, and did whatever was necessary to get grant proposals out the door.

In her spare time, Ellen enjoys reading -- particularly historical fiction, cooking, and hunting for vintage baseball memorabilia with her husband.

Arnell Sandstrom joined FSOS in May as an Accountant. She comes to FSOS with twelve years of University of Minnesota experience.

Her most recent appointment was with the Department of International Agriculture. She has experience working with university financial systems such as CUPS, Forms Nirvana, and PeopleSoft. Arnell has a Associate Arts degree in Speech Communications from Florissant Valley Community College in Florissant, MO.

Her personal interests include East Asian philosophy, art history and comparative theology. Most recently she has enjoyed reading about the Shinto faith indigenous to Japan. She was born in Kokomo, Indiana and grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Arnell moved to the Twin Cities in 1980.

It’s dinnertime…do you know where your family is?

Many of today’s families suffer from time famine and parental anxiety. Parents want to provide their children opportunities in sports, music, and academic enrichment; at a cost of potentially losing their quality family time and eliminating shared rituals like family dinners, weekend outings, visits with grandparents, and family vacations.

The Take Back Your Family Time video is an exciting new resource which features Dr. Bill Doherty as he discusses the problem of overscheduled kids and underconnected families with community members. From talking about the frantic, anxious culture of parenting to discussing ways for families to reclaim quality time together, Dr. Doherty gets to the heart of the issues and encourages parents to regain their leadership.

A step-by-step facilitator guide accompanies the Take Back Your Family Time video. It is ideal for leading discussions and versatile enough to be used in a variety of settings. Consistent with the video, the guide is divided into three parts. It also includes one-, two-, and three-session programming options and additional activities to enrich the video and promote interactive learning.

For further information and resources, visit http://edprojects.che.umn.edu/takeback/

Or call (800) 876-8636 to order!
“My parents don’t love me.”

“Our children don’t understand what we’ve been through.”

“My mother doesn’t listen to me.”

“I don’t know how to help Toua in school.”

“Why can’t I wear baggy pants like everyone else?”

“Sometimes I feel so tired and hopeless in this country.”

These are only a few of the dilemmas facing Southeast (SE) Asian refugees in the United States today. Parents have little guidance about how to parent while managing multiple language, cultural, social, and legal barriers. Adolescents, in turn, try to straddle two cultures in addition to managing the normal stress of adolescence. Fear, anger, frustration, and pain often result as these families try to adapt to life in America.

*Bicultural Parenting for Southeast Asian Families: Helping Youth Succeed* is a unique resource developed for and with Hmong, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Laotian families in America and those who work with them. Videos and authentic family stories are available in all four SE Asian languages in addition to English, and help develop bicultural skills by empowering parents, normalizing problems that seem isolated, and promoting successful parenting within these immigrant cultures. This exceptional resource includes a comprehensive facilitator guide and has been used with great success by social workers, parent educators, health professionals, and community agencies alike.

“The program has made a real difference for my family. I have seen my children’s attitudes change significantly. Now my son is also attending our parents support group.”

- Hmong mother, Parent Networks Project, Cleveland Junior High School

To order, visit: [http://edprojects.che.umn.edu/biculturalparenting/](http://edprojects.che.umn.edu/biculturalparenting/)

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**News and Notes**

**STUDENT NEWS**

Molly Kennefick, FSoS Undergrad, has not only been named a recipient of a UROP award, but has been given the *Fibiger Prize for Research*. The Fibiger award is granted to the top proposal submitted. Her project is titled “Distinguishing Between Functional Experimentation and Dangerous Risk-Taking.” The award will mean an additional $500 on top of original UROP amount.

FSoS Undergrad Keara Kleinfeldt has been named the Public Policy Intern for the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). She completed the internship in the spring of 2004.

Undergrads Elizabeth Morgan and Jessica Stripsky were recipients of the College of Human Ecology Undergraduate Professional Experience Grant (UPEG) for 2004.

The following students presented their scholarship at the Phi Upsilon Omicron’s Founder’s Day celebration this past month: Kristin Schneider, honors undergraduate; Carolyn Bird, doctoral student; Karin Lindstrom Bremer, doctoral student; and Kristine Piescher, doctoral student.

Kristine Piescher also received the 2004-05 Margaret Drew Endowment Fund Scholarship by the Phi Upsilon Omicron Scholarship Committee in recognition of leadership ability, fine academic record, and participation in community projects and college-related activities.

Grad Student Kevin Doll recently accepted the position of Assistant Professor of Human Development & Family Studies at UW Stout.

Undergrad Elizabeth Morgan was named “Outstanding Student” at the College of Human Ecology Awards reception on April 23rd.

On April 12th, Jerica Mohlman Berge successfully defended her dissertation entitled “Marital Satisfaction and Mental Health of Couples with Children with Chronic Health Conditions.”
Sayali Amarapurkar successfully defended her dissertation on April 21st. Her research was titled “Childcare Experiences of African Immigrant Parents in Minneapolis-St. Paul: An Inductive Thematic Analysis of Seven Families.”

On April 26th, Chih-Yuan Lee successfully defended his research project titled “Marital Satisfaction and Father Involvement During the Transition to Parenthood.”

On May 3rd, Kristen Holm successfully defended her thesis titled “The Impact of Childhood Chronic Health Conditions on Mothers’ and Fathers’ Health.”

Lynn Von Korff successfully defended her Master’s thesis entitled “Openness Arrangements and Psychological Adjustments in Adolescent Adoptees” on May 18th.

ALUMNI NEWS
Dr. Manfred van Dulmen (PhD, 2001) accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Quantitative Psychology at Kent State University, effective in August.

Dr. Hee-Kyung Kwon (PhD, 2003) has been appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Child and Family Studies at ChangWon National University of Korea.

Bill Allen (PhD, 1996) was named a recipient of the CHE Horizon Award at the reception on April 23rd.

FACULTY NEWS
Congrats to Bill Doherty. He has recently been named a Fellow at the National Council on Family Relations.

Sharon Danes has been named the recipient of the 2004 Juran Scholars Award. The $10,000 grant was awarded to Dr. Danes on May 7th for her research on Family Business and Quality Management.

On May 17, 2004 The Groves Conference on Marriage and Family announced that their highest honor was awarded to Pauline Boss, William Turner, Liz Wieling, Lorraine Beaulieu, and Shulaika LaCruz for their article “Healing Loss, Ambiguity, and Trauma: A Community-Based Intervention with Families of Union Workers Missing After the 9/11 Attack in New York City” published in the October, 2003, issue of the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy. The Groves Conference is an annual gathering of leaders and significant contributors to the fields that study marriage and the family. It is one of the oldest and most prestigious annual meetings. Each year the Groves Conference on Marriage and the Family awards a prize for the most outstanding research/theory article presented in the field: The Sussman Award. In ranking the nominations for this prestigious Award, they especially regarded this article as relating explicitly to the theme of the 2004 Groves Conference. The authors were invited to present this research and broad practice of therapy at the 2004 Conference held in Oklahoma City, OK, May 26-30. The presentation of the Sussman Award took place on Friday, May 28th, at the Presidential Banquet. This award totals $1,000 which will be divided among the five authors.

Make a gift...

You may make a gift to the Department of Family Social Science through the University of Minnesota Foundation. You may choose to designate your gift to any of the funds below:

Friends of the Family Assistantship (3911)
Shirley Zimmerman Fund (5487)
David Olson Fellowship (5816)
FSoS Strategic Initiative (2748)
Jan Hogan Fellowship (5734)
Family Caregiving Program (5995)
Ambiguous Loss Project (5937)

You may also choose to memorialize a loved one by donating in their name. Visit www.foundation.umn.edu or call 612-626-8560 or 1-800-775-2187 for more information.

Thank you,
Family Social Science

Mission: To enhance family functioning in diverse settings through discovery, teaching, and outreach. We contribute to an understanding of families in a changing world that leads to development of strong families for future generations.