Farewell, College of Human Ecology

From the Department Head...

It’s that time of year again – the completion of another academic year! This has been an especially bittersweet ending for faculty, staff, and students in Family Social Science. As we transition to a new academic home, the College of Education and Human Development, we are also saying goodbye to colleagues and traditions within the College of Human Ecology.

Dr. Hal Grotevant, a member of our faculty and one of our former Department Heads, has captured many of our feelings here in the department. For my message this time, I can think of nothing better than to share his message with each of you.

Enjoy!

Jan McCulloch, Professor and Department Head

Note: This essay originally appeared on Dr. Harold Grotevant’s blog on June 30th, 2006.

Today is the last day in the 100+ year existence of the College of Human Ecology at the University of Minnesota.

Although we have been told that we have much to look forward to in our new collegiate home (a re-configured and expanded College of Education and Human Development), this day should not pass without noting that the faculty, staff, and students of the College of Human Ecology (formerly College of Home Economics) made many significant contributions to the University, to the State of Minnesota, to the U.S., and to the world.

The history of the College is recorded in Journey Home: College of Human Ecology, 1894 - 1996, written by a committee of former faculty and staff under the leadership of Keith McFarland, Dean Emeritus of the College. I won’t repeat the history here, except to note that the first baccalaureate program in Home Economics was launched in 1900. So the College...
was 106 years old at the time of its elimination.

Although my undergraduate degree was in psychology and my Ph.D. was in child psychology, all my faculty positions have been within Colleges or Departments of Home Economics, whose names were later changed to Human Ecology. That’s a run of almost 30 years. As a newbie Assistant Professor back in 1977, I knew little about Home Economics, but knew that Child Development and Family Relationships was one of its sub-specializations. I came to have great admiration, affection, and respect for the discipline of Human Ecology. Although some of the field’s detractors don’t think it is a discipline, I strongly believe that it is. In fact, its conceptual foundation provides much richer ground on which to stand than is possessed by many other colleges in the university, which are mainly units of administrative convenience.

Descriptors of the discipline of human ecology include the following: interdisciplinary, holistic, systemic, ecological. Its domains of concern are about the application of the arts and the sciences to everyday life - but I don’t mean that in a trivial sense. It’s about the emotional dynamics of real families in which real children grow up; it’s about ways in which educational programs for new parents help reduce the incidence of child abuse; it’s about understanding the connections between children’s lives in their families, their day care centers, and their peer groups -- and much, much, much more.

It will be critically important that the human ecological approach be brought forward and integrated into the new collegiate home to which we have been assigned. Fortunately, I think our “adjacent disciplines” have been moving in this direction as well over the past 30 years, so I hope that the interdisciplinarity, holistic, systemic, ecological views that we have nurtured in CHE will easily be assimilated by our new colleagues.

As a relatively small college, CHE was able to be innovative and less bureaucratic than some of our larger sibling colleges. Despite the advantages of being nimble in this way, the trend at the U is clearly toward consolidation, centralization, and standardization. The pendulum has swung in this direction quickly and violently; I suspect it will swing back in due time, but probably not for a number of years.

So farewell to the College of Human Ecology -- to its traditions, its humanistic values, and its wonderful people.

At this point, we know what we have lost, but we don’t know yet what we will be gaining. So the feelings of sadness have been palpable up and down the hall. When I drove up the hill next to McNeal after being out of town and saw that the college’s banner had been taken down, the sense of loss hit me one more time.

A ray of hope is that the university has hired a dynamic and visionary dean to lead the new CEHD; she’ll be arriving October 1, although she is already making her presence known. I’m eager to work with her.

Transitions are always bittersweet, and it’s only fitting to honor our history, even if the future holds promise. So on the last day of this venerable unit, hats off to the College of Human Ecology, its leaders, its students, and its many loyal alumni. It’s been a good ride, and it’s been my privilege to have been a part of it.

Dr. Hal Grotevant

INTERACTIONS is published twice a year by the Department of Family Social Science, University of Minnesota. It is distributed to alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends of the department. We welcome comments and news items, which you can send to Chris Liakos, Department of Family Social Science, 290 McNeal Hall, 1985 Buford Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108, or call 612/625-1900, fax to 612/625-4227, or email at cliakos@umn.edu

B. Jan McCulloch, Department Head
Chris Liakos, Coordinator, Editor, and Layout

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance, veteran status, or sexual orientation. © 2006 by the Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.
Faculty collaborations highlight department

As of July 1st, the Department of Family Social left its long time home in the College of Human Ecology and joined other units in the new College of Education and Human Development. To become a fully integrated new college, each unit will go through some adaptation and evolution. Our transition involves many tasks including the transfer of reporting; adjustment to and integration of new administrative structures, policies and procedures; and adjustment to differences in geographic proximities. We continue to “work through” the ambiguity of our transition.

However, one area that FSoS faculty will not need to familiarize themselves with is that of collaboration. Whether academic or research based, FSoS faculty maintain a long-standing tradition of productive collaboration.

As part of the Final Recommendations of the Task Force on Collegiate Design (CEHD-CHE):

The Task Force proposes that the new College be organized in nine academic departments, four college-wide centers and three virtual, cross-cutting “Collaboratives for Excellence”— a Collaborative for Excellence in Interdisciplinary Research, a Collaborative for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, and a Collaborative for Excellence in Public Engagement. This structure balances a desire to reduce the structural and financial barriers that currently impede cross-departmental and interdisciplinary collaboration in CEHD and CHE with a concern that the positive national reputation and rankings of current departments and programs not be jeopardized during this restructuring.

To some this may represent abstract ideas taken from a lengthy report. But to the faculty in Family Social Science, these recommendations reiterate key ideas greatly valued: collaboration both across units and beyond the University of Minnesota.

Research conducted between departments or external organizations is important on several levels. First, interdisciplinary collaboration brings multiple perspectives to the table to address issues. Somebody once said “two heads are better than one.” This is especially important in work involving family contexts. Second, it creates a collegial community otherwise divided by geographic or institutional barriers.

Former CHE Associate Dean for Outreach and Engagement and current FSoS Associate Professor Catherine Solheim shares: “Working collaboratively across academic disciplines within the university and with partners in diverse communities is critical if we are to understand and address complex issues faced by individuals and families in the 21st century.”

Dr. Solheim also notes the importance of collaboration for our FSoS graduate students: “The experience provides a solid foundation as we transition into a new college, collaborate with new colleagues, and create new synergies to accomplish our goals. Additionally, collaborations both within and outside of the University develop important networks for continuous learning, attracting students to Family Social Science programs, discovering and disseminating new knowledge about important issues, and finding solutions for contemporary problems.”

Of course, the new structure opens doors for any number of new collaborations. It’s only a matter of time before similar thoughts, values, interests and methods align to form new inter-departmental research.

In the meantime, here are a few current examples of faculty collaboration.

Dr. Wayne Caron is working with the Departments of Neurology and Psychiatry to establish a new Center for Memory Research and Care. The center is under the direction of Dr. Karen Hsiao Ashe and brings together basic science research on Alzheimer’s and related disorders. Dr. Caron will be providing direct services to families seen in the new clinical center and collaborating in translational research to develop and test new treatments and interventions for persons with dementing illness.

Continued on page 6
FSoS students lobby for equality
By Dr. William Goodman

On April 8, 2006, 43 students enrolled in FSOS 4251: Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual People in Families attended the OutFront Just Fair lobbying day at the Minnesota State Capitol. The purpose of this event was to bring together gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals and families, and their heterosexual supporters to publicly demonstrate and lobby legislators in support of equal rights and against the proposed constitutional amendment that would ban gay marriage and civil unions.

Students contracting for a higher grade—which requires students to teach what they have learned in the course to families and friends—selected this event as an opportunity to teach Minnesota State Legislators. Family Social Science students joined 1,500 fellow constituents in attending OutFront training programs before lobbying day, which would prepare them for conversations with their legislators.

One student’s experience is represented by Ralph Campbell III. He states, “Because my legislators have different points of view regarding the gay marriage and civil union amendment, I tailored the message to each. I mentioned the following items to Senator Michel in a hallway behind the Senate chambers:

-I am a Cub Scout leader at his church
-I am a parent of a son whose close friend has lesbian mothers who are close friends of my wife’s and mine;
-I am the neighbor of a gay couple with a young son attending my son’s school;
-I am an Edina Basketball Association coach.

I told Senator Michel that I, a straight parent in his community who is active in his church and school, do not support the gay marriage and civil union amendment. I also told Senator Michel that I view anything short of the creation of a right to marriage by same sex couples as a direct assault on Minnesota families of all kinds, including mine.”

Trista Pilon reflected in her critical thinking paper the following questions; “How can I begin to fight for equality so everyone has the same privileges, when I can’t even acknowledge and realize I have privileges? What if I, or my family, were not treated equally? What words and thoughts can I delete in my vocabulary and mind to be a better Minnesota neighbor? Will I ever be able to look at anyone and not see differences and not internally discriminate? When I look at these questions as a whole, one main idea comes to mind. I am full of fear, fear if I can treat everyone the same and not use my privileges as a way to cause pain in others, fear if I have learned anything in this class, fear of the unknown, fear for my neighbors, fear for the government that sets the standards for discrimination, and fear for the future.”

And finally, another student, Christie Erickson wrote, “The Just Fair Lobby Day at the state capitol was an amazing learning and emotionally moving experience for me. It was useful for me to finally get a chance to see our classroom discussions as a part of the real world and be able to apply class material to my experience. It was also an opportunity for me to observe homosexual couples and families in an environment where they felt comfortable and safe, an environment much different from the world I live in from day to day. Even though this level of comfort and safety existed within the group of attendees, there still is much conflict between this group and those who are against homosexuality and gay marriage.” Further Christie says, “The event was an opportunity for me to expand my learning from within the classroom and engage myself in personal interaction and activism.”
Honoring Dr. Jan Hogan

On March 24th, faculty, staff, students, colleagues, friends and family all gathered to honor Dr. M. Janice Hogan for her contributions to Family Social Science and the College of Human Ecology. Dr. Hogan is retiring this Summer upon completion of her duties as Interim Dean for CHE.

The event took place in the Mississippi Room at Coffman Memorial Union. In addition to music provided by graduate student Jenet Jacob, attendees were entertained with stories from Dr. Hogan’s colleagues and students; both past and present.

Clockwise from top right: former students gather with Jan Hogan. Jan Hogan and Emeritus Professor Shirley Zimmerman, a slide from the presentation, flowers at the welcome table.

As you continue along your life’s journey...
May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face
The rains fall soft upon life’s garden
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

We welcome Sara Axtell

This past semester FSoS welcomed a new face to its hallways. Dr. Sara Axtell joined the department in the new position of Community-Campus Health Outreach Liaison. Dr. Axtell brings a decade of experience from the University of Minnesota Academic Health Center to Family Social Science. Her work with community engaged scholarship is founded on the principles of collaboration.

The position was created as a joint effort by Family Social Science, the College of Human Ecology, the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Academic Health Center-all who see the value of increased emphasis on community based education. The goal of the position is to maximize the assets of these programs in working with community leaders. In addition, this position will increase the U’s involvement in community engaged rural and urban health.

Dr. Axtell’s background in cultural studies and community health make her a natural fit for the liaison position. Her scholarly interests include community engagement, cross-cultural engagement, community health, systems change and faculty development.

Dr. Axtell received her B.S. in Special Education in 1989 from Illinois State University. She then came to the U of M and earned a Ph.D. in Psychology of Learning in 1994. After completing her post-doctorate fellowship in Disabilities Studies, General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health at the U of M Medical School, Dr. Axtell served as an adjunct professor at both the St. Cloud State Department of Human Relations and Multicultural Studies and the School of Public Health at the U of M. Before joining Family Social Science, she served as Associate Director of Educational Development and Research in the Medical School.

Continued on page 7
Collaborations (from page 3)

***

Dr. Martha Reuter is currently collaborating with researchers at the Minnesota Twins and Family Research Center (MCTFR) to identify environmental and genetic influences on children’s behavior and traits. Since 2003 Dr. Reuter has been an investigator on the Sibling Interaction and Behavior Study (SIBS) along with principal investigator, Dr. Matthew McGue, from the Department of Psychology. The SIBS is a study of 400 adoptive and 200 non-adoptive families. One aim of this study is to determine whether the behavior and attitudes of an older sibling are major sources of environmental influence on a younger sibling’s substance use and abuse.

***

In 2004, in partnership with Student Affairs, Dr. Virginia Zuiker developed an online course focused on the responsibilities of credit card use (FSoS 1301). Dr. Zuiker has now taught this course four semesters to increasing numbers each year. The course website was designed to have the same look and feel of the popular Public Health course: (1003) Alcohol & College Life. This course was initially offered to freshmen but has since been expanded to include advanced high school students and college sophomores.

***

Dr. Bill Doherty’s Community Engaged Parent Education Project works with Early Child Family Education (ECFE) programs and teachers in 19 school districts across Minnesota. The project helps parent educators learn to combine the public and private dimensions of parenting and to encourage citizen reflection and civic action by parents. The project is funded by the McKnight Foundation.

***

Dr. Catherine Solheim collaborates with several community agencies on the evaluation of financial literacy initiatives for immigrant and limited-resource families: Women’s Initiative for Self-Empowerment (a St. Paul-based organization that serves immigrant families and communities), FAIM (a statewide collaboration with the Department of Human Services), the statewide network of Minnesota Community Action Agencies and the Twin Cities United Way.

***

Dr. Katherine Rettig is part of a multi-state research team with members representing Florida, Montana, New Mexico, Wisconsin and Wyoming. The research will examine the changing landscape of women in America and how work, family and personal issues come together to affect quality of life.

The intentions of the group are to conduct focus group discussions in order to determine how a variety of factors may facilitate or inhibit struggles to achieve healthy work, family and personal lives.

***

Dr. Sharon Danes works with a variety of groups across campus to teach and conduct research focused on family businesses. Collaborations include the Juran Quality Center in the Carlson School of Business, the UMN Tourism Center, the Sustainable Agriculture Minor program and the 3rd Annual W.E. Peterson Symposium. Her off-campus collaborators include Minnesota Rural Futures, the St. Thomas Family Business program and New England Extension related to management transfer within family businesses. Her Rural MN Life website reaches out to family businesses across the state and consultants who work with family businesses. She also is working with Minnesota and Iowa Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) to develop an assessment of spousal support on venture start-ups to be used by SBDC counselors.

***

Over the past two years, Dr. Jodi Dworkin has been developing and teaching a course for parents of first year college students. The First-Year Seminar for Parents course was created in collaboration with the Minnesota Extension Service and the Office of Student Affairs’ Parent Program to address various issues that are of concern to parents and that contribute to student failure. This particular collaboration’s combined vision is to reduce student participation in
dangerous behaviors and to assist students in making responsible and healthy decisions. The seminar is an online course whose first module addresses alcohol use on campus. Colleges and universities across the country have expressed interest in a partnership to launch similar programs.

***

Since its inception in 1990, Dr. Hal Grotevant has played a key leadership role in the University of Minnesota’s Children, Youth and Family Consortium. The consortium builds bridges between the resources of the university and community in the areas of children, youth and family. In 2005 Dr. Grotevant chaired the Advisory Council as well as the planning committee for the Children’s Summit titled “Smart Policies, Strong Families.” This summit brought together 200 professionals from the U and communities across Minnesota to consider the intended and unintended consequences of policies formulated to benefit families. Dr. Grotevant also serves on the steering committee for President Bruininks’s Initiative on Children, Youth and Families.

***

These are just a few examples of the many collaborations undertaken by FSoS faculty. For more information on the research conducted by our faculty, visit http://fsos.che.umn.edu.

Visionary deans who provided leadership for the college from 1900-2006

Dr. Axtell (from page 5) the university, Dr. Axtell can analyze the gaps and barriers each unit faces. By looking at faculty, programs, student organizations, curriculum pieces or Extension educators that each unit may work with, Dr. Axtell helps create a core group of people who can perform work in communities more efficiently.

One benefit of the current transition effecting Family Social Science is that it will allow the Community-Campus Health Outreach Liaison to reach and work with a whole new group of departments and projects affiliated with the new College of Education and Human Development.

Dr. Marlene Stum continues ongoing collaborative partnerships with policy and planning professionals at the Minnesota Board on Aging at the Department of Human Services. This relationship is driven by the challenge of ensuring that Minnesotans address the risk of needing long term care as part of their overall financial planning. Work has included defining and conducting research to help inform policymakers and practice, recommendations to the state legislature, joint presentations and dialogue with community stakeholders and invited participation in State task forces and work groups.

***
News & Notes

Faculty News
This past December Dr. Jean Bauer was named a Fellow by the National Council on Family Relations. The recognition has been awarded based on Dr. Bauer’s contributions to the field of family studies through teaching, scholarship, outreach, professional service and leadership.

In January Dr. Cathy Solheim was named a recipient of the President’s Faculty Multicultural Research Award. The award supports research for two years and is sponsored by the Office of the Senior Vice President for System Administration and the Office for Multicultural and Academic Affairs.

In February, Dr. Jan Hogan was nominated for the National Bachtel Collegiate Advisor Award by the Phi Upsilon Omicron Education Foundation.

Dr. Wayne Caron appeared on WCCO-TV and Radio on February 14th to discuss the opportunities and risks of online dating. Caron also presented on the topic at a special lecture sponsored by the Office for University Women on February 16th.

On February 28th Dr. Jodi Dworkin appeared on WCCO Radio to discuss her online course and workshop for parents of college students on the issue of alcohol. Colleges and universities around the country have expressed interest in adopting the course. The Pioneer Press and Star Tribune also ran stories on the course.

On March 6th, Dr. Jodi Dworkin also was interviewed for a CNN story regarding her online course for parents of college students.

Paul Rosenblatt converses with graduate students during the Annual End of the Year Celebration picnic held in May.

On March 31st, Dr. Patricia Olson was interviewed for a FOX 9 story concerning the placement of holds on credit cards after authorizations at the gas pump.

Dr. Bill Doherty appeared on the NBC Today Show on Monday, April 24th to discuss the growing number of conflicts families face with the over scheduling of their free time.

Dr. Paul Rosenblatt has published his new book titled Two in a Bed. The book, published by SUNY Press, takes a look at the social experience of sharing a bed with another person.

Former FSOS faculty member Cecelia E. Sudia passed away peacefully at home on June 14. She was 83.
Alumni News
FSoS Undergrad alum Kimberly Towns has recently accepted a position at the Children’s Home Society and Family Services working with counselors in their Mental Health division.

FSoS alum Busi Nkosi has been named Senior Researcher at the Newcastle Satellite Office for the Amajuba Child Health and Well-Being Research Project. The project is a collaborative effort between the Center for International Health and Development, (CHID) at Boston University’s School of Public Health and HEARD at the University of KwaZulu Natal.

Student News
Tina Wiens has recently published a chapter in book series titled Military Life. The chapter—coauthored with Dr. Pauline Boss—appears in the first volume of the series dealing with the military family. It’s titled “Maintaining Family Resiliency Before, During, and After Military Separation.”

Undergraduate student Betsy Raguse has been accepted to the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs’ (HECUA) City Arts program. The program involves an exploration of the Twin Cities art scene while focusing on particular social issues and strategies for social change. For more information on the program, visit www.hecu.org.

Graduate student Heather Haberman appeared on KTLK Radio on February 23rd discussing issues surrounding online dating as well as families and technology. She was also quoted in a Bozeman, Montana newspaper in a similar story. Both Heather and Dr. Wayne Caron were also featured in a U of M News story on online dating.

Graduate student Aysem Senyurekli has recently had a paper published in the International Journal of Turkish Studies. The title of the paper is “A Profile of Immigrant Women from Turkey in the United States, 1900-2000.”

Undergrads Meredith Neumann, Angela Oleszko and William Marshall have all been awarded College of Human Ecology scholarships for Fall 2006.

The following Family Social Science students have been awarded Undergraduate Professional Experience Grants (UPEG) for Summer or Fall 2006: Mallory Geving, Sheila Hanschen, Erica Jensen, Cassandra LaBelle, Laura Porter, Latitia Smith Youmans and Olena Ruchko. UPEG awards range from $500 to $1,000.

The following FSoS undergrads have made the College of Human Ecology’s Dean’s List for Spring Semester, 2006 (Students must have a 3.66 GPA to qualify): John Barner Amanda Beardsley Jennifer Bradley Ralph Campbell III Jenna Egge Carly Emil Christie Erickson Carrie Fink Laura Goodman Jalane Gunderson Jennifer Gustavson Carla Hill Tara Hoff Jan Husby Joel Imrie Stephanie Jakoblich Jacob LaCoursiere Megan Lewis Elizabeth Lindwall

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

Our mission: to enhance the well-being of diverse families in a changing world through teaching, research, and outreach.