Letter from the Department Head

Greetings!

You are receiving this edition of Interactions as we close the books on the 2010-2011 academic year. It has been an exciting year – the features within this edition confirm that great things are happening for our department, faculty, students, and staff.

In addition to the features within, I want to let you know about initiatives we have begun to frame up in FSoS. The development of our Vision 2020 plan afforded us the opportunity to think about our future – what do we want to look like in the next five years? In the next ten years? Our plan was accepted by Dean Quam and members of her Senior Management Team and it is now time for FSoS to begin our work in earnest to accomplish the goals outlined in this planning document. We have begun work on three specific initiatives that will drive our departmental work in 2011-2012.

These three initiatives include the transition of the Family Education programs from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction to Family Social Science. We are excited about the opportunities that these new programs provide and look forward to having new colleagues in Family Social Science by Fall 2011. In addition, we will be moving forward with an undergraduate initiative focusing on curriculum opportunities around the University's Writing Enriched Curriculum, an initiative supported by the Bush Foundation. We will be examining the structure of writing across our curriculum to insure that our undergraduates are proficient writers regardless of the type of writing that might be required in their future employment. And third we have proposed a revision of our graduate curriculum to include coursework delivered in a variety of innovative ways, including on-line and distance learning opportunities, modularized courses within our campus coursework, and greater experiential learning opportunities.

I look forward to providing you with additional updates as these initiatives move along. My best wishes for a great summer!

B. Jan McCulloch
Department Head, FSOS
Putting a Face on the Foreclosure Crisis

With the economic downturn that began in late 2008, thousands of families faced losing their homes to foreclosure. The north side of Minneapolis was particularly hard hit, and residents began to ask, “Where’s the human element in all of this?”

“People want to see results,” said Dr. Shonda Craft, assistant professor in Family Social Science. “They are tired of being listened to over and over and having nothing done.”

Craft’s mental health background made her a good fit to get involved and develop a trial program. The Project on the Effects of the Foreclosure/Mortgage Crisis on Individual, Family and Community Health and Wellness is the first action research team through the Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center (UROC).

The project held a community forum in September 2010 to kick off its work. Community-based researchers surveyed 15 businesses and 120 community organizations which serve people who live in north Minneapolis. They also reviewed over 1200 articles on the foreclosure/mortgage crisis, looking for content related to health and wellness issues.

“There wasn’t a lot going on in terms of media coverage about the health and wellness aspect that accompanied the foreclosures,” said Craft. “Human interest stories would crop up in the news, but even they were rare.”

Though the action research team is wrapping up in May, Craft is ensuring that the hard work continues to do good for the community. She was approached by Habitat for Humanity to develop a support group for people who are in the process of home foreclosure.

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity's Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Program (MFPP) helps any Minneapolis homeowner at risk of losing their home to foreclosure. The program provides counseling, advocacy, and referrals free of charge to families who have fallen behind in their mortgage payments.

“Right now we are putting together a year-long trial – six-week long small group sessions with ten people each,” said Craft. “We’ll dive into topics like coping, stress, and resiliency. We also want to normalize the experience, and help group members understand and deal with feelings of guilt and shame they may be experiencing.”

Habitat for Humanity Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Program

The largest program of its kind in the city of Minneapolis, Twin Cities MFPP will serve close to 1,000 Minneapolis homeowners this year. The MFPP serves all neighborhoods and all income levels, and prevents about 60 percent of the families it serves from foreclosure. MFPP saved city taxpayers about $2.5 million last year. Since 1993 when the program started, MFPP has served over 5,000 families.

Habitat for Humanity wants to see their clients experience higher self-esteem, so that [Habitat for Humanity] can better help them with financial counseling.”

“I don’t really know what kind of themes will come up,” Craft said of the peer-led groups. “We’re going to let residents drive the conversation. I do want to be able to make sure that this is helpful in meaningful ways, to residents, community organizations, and other researchers.”

MFPP specialists analyze each homeowner’s financial situation and develop a realistic assessment of the homeowner’s ability to afford the home for the long term. MFPP also works with lenders to determine what options may be explored to retain a family in their home.

To learn more, visit the project online at: http://www.tchabitat.org/page.aspx?pid=301
A semester in Oslo, Norway connected Family Social Science senior Nicole Brooks to not only other countries, but also to the public policy of urban affairs and the plight of those seeking asylum.

Brooks transferred to the University of Minnesota after two years at Normandale Community College. She enjoyed her coursework but was looking for “classes that were more hard-hitting.” Her advisor, Mark Bellcourt, recommended that she check out the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA).

HECUA offers programs in both domestic and international settings, using community-based learning methods through member institutions to build academic-community partnerships for social change. Brooks participated in HECUA’s international program in Oslo, Norway, during the spring semester of 2011.

“The program was very rigorous and extremely challenging,” said Brooks of the academic experience. Her four student cohort lived at the University of Oslo in student village housing with other international students and had very structured weeks. In addition to the three 5-hour class meetings, the four student cohort would go on two field seminars, meeting with local organizations, NGOs, and political parties.

“We didn’t have any textbooks and only read case studies. Meeting with people in the community helped us connect what we were reading to what was actually happening.”

Each Wednesday was devoted to spending time at a volunteer internship, and Brooks worked with International Save the Children in Oslo, which helps unaccompanied minors and women and their children seeking asylum. She described the internship as “the highlight of [her] week” and was able to spend time with some of the youth on excursions.

The final two weeks of the program were spent in Hungary and Romania, examining what it would mean for the countries if they were to join the European Union. “Our professor, Margareta Dancus, is Romanian, and she was able to give us a broader perspective,” said Brooks. “We were able to meet with representatives from the UN Refugee Council in Hungary. We weren’t treated like just some college students; they really wanted to hear our ideas.”

“One of the best memories I have was spending time with unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia on a ski trip. I was terrible at skiing, but some of the Afghani boys were terrific! The kids were excited to be able to do something in the cold and have fun in the cold weather which they weren’t used to before they came to Norway.”

While the intensity of the program was a challenge, the experiences helped Brooks focus on her plans after graduation. “I was thinking about graduate school, but after

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**Dr. Yoav Lavee presented with CEHD International Alumni Award**

Dr. Yoav Lavee (Ph.D. FSoS, 1985) was honored by the College of Education and Human Development with the 2011 Distinguished International Alumni Award.

Dr. Lavee currently is an associate professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Haifa, Israel. He is also the head of the Center for Research and Study of the Family at Haifa, and serves on the Israel Council for Higher Education.

He visited Minnesota to accept his award in April 2011, and presented a special colloquium to FSoS faculty and students, “Distance Regulation in Couples Under Stress.”
Childhood art drawn by Paul Rosenblatt’s 25-year-old daughter, Emily, still hangs on the door of his largely unadorned office. “I didn’t want to take it down,” he said. Sadly, he’ll soon have to.

Rosenblatt, 72, will be honored at a retirement party celebrating his more than 50 years of teaching, the last 42 of them in the University of Minnesota’s Department of Family Social Science.

Despite authoring academic tomes such as “Metaphors of Family Systems Theory,” and the equally heady “Shared Obliviousness in Family Systems,” despite his awards for research and teaching, Rosenblatt never lost sight of how ordinary folks live, what we care about in our boots-on-the-ground lives.

How do we negotiate neighborhood disputes? How do we survive the loss of a child? How do we define intimacy and negotiate in bed around that intoxicating S word, sleep?

Twenty-six years into his second marriage and the father of three grown children, Rosenblatt appreciates nuance and shies away from absolutes when it comes to the quirky, complex territory known as human relationships. He’d rather ask questions than answer them.

I asked him about Arnold and Maria, anyway.

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‘Retired’ hardly describes U prof who’s charting his next chapter

by Gail Rosenblum
Originally published in the Star Tribune on May 12, 2011

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Writing Enriched Curriculum comes to FSoS Undergraduates

What does writing look like for the social sciences and what writing skills are in demand from graduates? Teaching Associate Professor and undergraduate advisor William Goodman is finding the answers to these questions, and working with other members of the University community to implement new standards for and new ways of thinking about undergraduate writing.

The University of Minnesota’s Writing-Enriched Curriculum (WEC) Project, launched in 2007 with generous support from the Bush Foundation, pilots a process for meaningfully infusing writing and writing instruction into all undergraduate curricula. A grant from the Bush Foundation enabled Goodman to spend an academic year focusing on undergraduate writing.

“We sent surveys to over 600 community affiliates where we’ve placed student interns – from Guardian Ad Lidem, to Hennepin County, to Planned Parenthood of Minnesota – as well as students, faculty, and graduate assistants. All of the groups were asked about what writing abilities and characteristics they wanted to see in Family Social Science graduates,” he said.

Four meetings with faculty were held to focus on the perspectives of the different groups. “The results were surprising in their discrepancies,” said Goodman. “Faculty placed a high value on scientific language in writing, while community affiliates ranked that very low.” Over 70% of community respondents rated using correct grammar, spelling, and mechanics as one of the most critical writing abilities to strengthen in students in the major, while less than 20% of faculty listed this as critical. “Grammar and spelling are likely ranked very highly among affiliates because they are commonly the first terms that come to mind when non-academics describe ‘good’ writing,” said Pamela Flash, Director of Writing Across the Curriculum and Associate Director of the Center for Writing.

The information gathered helped Goodman and Flash develop a writing plan with seven desired abilities for graduating seniors to have in their writing (box above).

He’ll still teach a few courses, off the payroll, and mentor students and faculty — welcome news to many.

“TWO IN A BED

Rosenblatt, cont.

courses now are almost nothing like what I taught 30 years ago,” he said. “The sense of reality is different.”

Rosenblatt’s legacy, though, likely will be his work around sleep. What is the effect on couples, he wondered, from spooning, snoring and sprawling? “It’s often not easy sleeping together,” he once told me, “but people keep doing it.”

Rosenblatt interviewed 42 couples and four individuals, and turned his findings into a 2006 book titled, “Two in a Bed: The Social System of Couple Bed Sharing.” He was inundated with more than 170 media requests, including two that stand out.

“It was really hard for them to understand me,” Rosenblatt said of Cosmopolitan and Redbook, grinning behind his wire-rimmed glasses. “They wanted, ‘How to Make Your Man Happy in Bed.’”

Two years ago, Rosenblatt shadowed Emily, who was working as a community organizer in Harlem. “I watched what she did, the energy of connecting with a community. I thought, I could do that.”

So he will. He isn’t sure what kind of activism he’ll chase, but he welcomes the freedom that retirement provides. “I’m really concerned about this country, this planet,” he said. “I’ve got to try to do something about that.”

He’ll still teach a few courses, off the payroll, and mentor students and faculty — welcome news to many.

“I took every class he offered,” said lecturer Lynn Von Korff, who came to the U after 20 years of nonprofit work. “He’s intellectually engaging, an outstanding writer and thinker. He’s such a driving force in the department, although he wouldn’t like the words ‘driving force.’

“His presence is exciting, palpable.”

Desired Writing Abilities for Graduating Seniors

1. Understand and use standard Academic English usage, structure, and organization; capable of writing clearly using language effectively in a written comprehensible manner, i.e. cohesive paragraphs

2. Communicate in different written mediums (i.e. research, reflective, evaluation) appropriate to the content, delivery mechanisms, and audience

3. Access, select, interpret, apply, and evaluate research and non-research based information

4. Use APA style when needed

5. Engage in a process of writing that utilizes revisable drafts

6. Write about complex systems levels

7. Write ethically: Demonstrate scholastic honesty, integrity, originality, and contextual sensitivity
Reflections on Caregiving: The Wayne Caron Family Caregiving Center

by Janet Yeats

For over a decade, the Wayne Caron Family Caregiving Center (WCFCC) has been providing support and psycho-education to families living with a dementia diagnosis. The Center was begun by Wayne Caron who had a commitment to providing assistance to caregivers. That assistance took a variety of forms: educating families on how to make decisions throughout the progress of the disease, providing therapy for individuals, couples and families, and through weekly support groups which met Saturday mornings. After Wayne died, the work and vision of the Center continued through the support of the FSOS department, staff and volunteers.

There is much more that can be said about the Center, its vision and work, but I would like to give you a personal perspective on how the Center has impacted me. Of course, when I speak about the “Center” I am referring to the people in it - the group members, staff, volunteers and interns - that's much more where my interest lies rather than in history and background!

For the past two years, I have had the privilege of working with the Center as the Clinical Administrator. I am intentional about using the word “privilege” as I talk about my work with the Center. It has not been an easy position to hold and there have been many challenges for me personally and professionally in these years. However, as is often the case, it is because of those challenges that I have developed new skills and have learned about myself in ways I would not have without this experience.

Dementia can be a difficult diagnosis to live with - it strips people of who we have come to know them to be. The losses pile up for a family living with dementia. The ability to live with ambiguity becomes paramount if caregivers are to maintain their own health and well-being through the course of the disease. To have been able to watch families cope and support each other, to see them laugh at the absurdity of dementia and cry at the fatigue of the daily life of the disease, to have been given the honor of bearing witness to their experience, this has been the privilege for me.

Often, group members would tell me how much they appreciated the Center, the staff and interns, me - and what a difference we all made in their lives. I never could figure out how to adequately express just how much they did for us - we were the beneficiaries of their experiences, of their breakthroughs and struggles. Families living with dementia have so much to teach us that we cannot learn in class or through literature reviews - they teach us that it is possible to live with pain and heartache and still love and respect and learn from their demented loved one.

Families teach us to be honest. For instance, they don’t want us to tell them everything will be fine, nor do they want us to throw them a lot of statistics and probabilities (not that I have anything against statistics and probabilities!). Rather, they want us to be willing to say “I’m sorry this is what you are experiencing,” without us trying to “fix” anything.

Those of you who know me know that I am interested in ambiguous loss and how people are impacted as they live with their experiences of ambiguity. The Center provided me a living laboratory of seeing how ambiguity affects families, how ambiguous loss can be a helpful lens by which to view dementia, and how important it is for us - mental health professionals, family researchers, human beings - to allow the process. Process works. And it is usually not quick nor free of difficulty, emotional wear, or something we naturally seek after. But when we allow for the process, we do have the opportunity to see growth, to become closer to one another through shared experiences, to truly be in community. I have been in a community for the past two years that has forever left its mark on me. I hope I’ve done the same for the people I worked for and with.

The Wayne Caron Family Caregiving Center closed a few weeks ago. On May 7, the staff, interns, volunteers and group members, came together for an event which honored the past and the present. We spent the morning together eating, reconnecting, sharing stories, taking pictures, hugging, and making future plans. I am happy to tell you that there is a future for the work; it does not stop because the Center closed. Many of the WCFCC group members have decided to re-form and are already meeting on Saturday mornings in a new location with a new structure that continues the old mission of support and education. I predict this group will be successful because they are committed to continue giving families living with dementia the support they received from the Center.

As for me, I continue my work with dementia but in different ways. I am grateful for the opportunity to have led this group, grateful for my own parallel process in living with ambiguity because of this work, and grateful for all the ways in which I have been touched and changed and loved by families living with dementia.
Research Displays: FSoS well-represented at college and university-level showcases of graduate research.

Family Social Science graduate students were out in full force this spring, displaying posters and sharing their research with the college at CEHD Research Day, on March 31 and with the University at the Graduate School Doctoral Research Showcase on April 5.

Tomoko Ogasawara presented “Transformation of Family Members’ Memories of International Wars: From personal experience to scholarly examination” 

Amanda Matzek with her poster “The Impact of Family and Non-Family Roles on Caregiver Health over Time.”

Kim Diggles’ poster “He Just Really Wanted To Know Why: How and What Middle-class Black Parents Tell their Children about Racism” was selected by attendees as the top poster in the Diversity and Globalization area. Diggles was awarded with $250 for professional development.

Above: Jessie Connell and Jen Doty present “A Digital Divide: How Parents’ Technology Use Differs by Income.”

Right: Jen Reinke talks with an attendee. Her poster title was “Parents of Children with Autism: What Do We Know?”
Prospective Grad Students Visit FSosS

Prospective members of the 2011-2012 graduate cohort braved one of the massive Minnesota blizzards in February to visit with department faculty and staff. Students were able to learn more about faculty research and interest areas, as well as ask questions about the program as decision deadlines neared in the spring. Look for highlights of our 2011-2012 graduate cohort in the next issue of Interactions!

Mohamed Mohamud, executive director of the Solami American Parent Association

Corey Yeager gave a presentation on relational diagnostic assessments.

Veronica Deenanath, Dung Mao, and Professor Zha Blong Xiong presented on the photovoice project and working with Hmong youth.
Congratulations to Spring 2011 Graduate Dissertation Defenses

**Amanda Matzek**
Date of defense: April 26, 2011
Dissertation title: “The Impact of Family and Non-Family Roles on Caregiver Health Over Time”

**Karen Kramer**
Date of defense: April 20, 2011

**Jessie Everts**
Date of defense: May 9, 2011
Dissertation title: “Minneapolis Public Schools Expanded School Mental Health Program: Outcomes from the First Four Years”

Congratulations to Spring 2011 Master’s Thesis Presentations

**Jessie Connell**
Date of presentation: May 5, 2011
Dissertation title: “College Students’ Individual Internet and Technology Use and Communication Technology Use with Parents”

**Stephanie Heuring**
Date of presentation: April 28, 2011
Dissertation title: “Overindulgence: Financial Implications for Young Adults”
Student News

Jenn Reinke’s paper entitled “Families with Children with Autism: Cultural Considerations” was accepted for presentation at the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Annual Conference, in June 2011 in St. Paul.

Max Zubatsky and Dr. Steven Harris were co-authors on a paper “A Caregiver Perspective of How Alzheimer's and Dementia-Related Disorders Affect Couple Intimacy,” to be published in Mental Health and Aging.

Undergraduate Ifrah Ahmed was awarded the Natalie Gallagher Scholarship for summer 2011.

Jason Wilde and Dr. Bill Doherty have co-authored an article “Intimate partner violence between unmarried parents before and during participation in a couple and relationship education program,” to be published in the Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy vol. 10.

Yaliu He has been selected as a Buckman Fellow for the 2011-2012 school year. The Buckman Fellowship provides “nuts and bolts” training in non-profit operations to people who come from outside the non-profit sphere.

Faculty and Alumni News

Ellen Freeman, FSOS grants coordinator, has been selected as a member of the President’s Emerging Leaders (PEL) Program for 2011-2012. PEL is a year-long program that supports new leaders in the University through educational opportunities and mentoring.

Jaerim Lee (Ph.D. 2009, advisor: Jean Bauer) was recently appointed to a tenure-track faculty position in the Department of Family and Housing Studies at Yeungnam University, South Korea.

Karin Lindstrom Bremer (Ph.D. 2007), had her critical review paper “Parental Involvement, Pressure, and Support in Youth Sport: A Narrative Literature Review” accepted to the Journal of Family Theory and Review for publication.

Dr. Liz Weiling gave the keynote address “Developing Systemic Interventions for Populations Affected by Mass Trauma” at the Family Process 50th Anniversary Conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on April 14th, 2011.

Dr. Cathy Solheim gave the keynote address at the Minnesota Jumpstart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy on April 26th, 2011.

Dr. Jan McCulloch was the invited guest speaker at the 2011 Gertrude Weigum Hinsz Lecture Series, presented by the Department of Human Development and Family Science at North Dakota State University. Her presentation was entitled “Elder Rural Women’s Health Decision Making: Do Concerns for Family Matter?”

Ramona Faith Oswald (Ph.D.1998) has been promoted to full professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the department of Human and Community Development.

Dr. Sharon Danes will give the keynote address at the International Family Enterprise Research Association (IFERA) annual conference on June 29, entitled “Family Constructs in Business Research: Present and Future.” She will also be speaking at the Family Consortium and Doctoral Student Consortium on June 28 before IFERA begins.

Dr. Jean Bauer was awarded the 2011 President’s Award for Outstanding Service. This award is presented each year in the spring and recognizes exceptional service to the University, its schools, colleges, departments, and service units by any active or retired faculty or staff member. Recipients of this award have gone well beyond their regular duties and have demonstrated an unusual commitment to the University community.

Do you have news? Let us know!

We would love to know about your latest accomplishments and goings-on to be included in future issues of Interactions. Send your news to Amanda Brown at asbrown@umn.edu

In Memory: Emma Haugan

Emma Haugan, Family Social Science departmental secretary for 23 years, passed away on May 29th, 2011. Her obituary and more information from the Pioneer Press can be found online http://z.umn.edu/3nr. Memorials can be made to the ESL Program at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church.
FSOS Undergraduate Roundtable Update

What’s new with the Roundtable (RT)? Co-President Melinda DeGroot has updates and highlights of the volunteer activities from spring semester.

Relay For Life
RT members joined in on the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life. We raised money through a bake sale and participated in the many activities at the all-night event.

Ice cream party and activities at Sharing and Caring Hands Homeless Shelter
The RT hosted an ice cream social and card making for the older group of young people at the housing facilities. Members also played pool and other games and just got to hang out and get to know the youth.

Roundtable Open House
The RT held an open house to get the word out at the University about what we do. The open house was very successful with about 60 people attending.

Carnival for Sharing and Caring Hands
The RT hosted a carnival for the younger age group at the shelter. Members organized seven activities including a photo booth with dress up costumes, a face painting booth, a treat walk (similar to a cake walk), football toss through hula hoops, fishing for rubber duckies, card making, and activities with Play Dough. The carnival was very successful with about 80 extremely happy and excited children and parents that attended. One mother exclaimed “Thank you so much, this is the best thing that’s happened to us in a long time. I had just as much fun as my kids.”

Roundtable will be continuing activities and volunteering throughout the summer. There will be an end of the year picnic for members, as well as volunteering at local organizations. RT meetings will resume in the fall, on Tuesdays at 4:30 in room 110 at the St Paul Student Center. All are welcome!

Make a difference

Your gift is an investment in our collaborative learning community and your support will help us keep our community vital. With your donation we can continue to educate and support families, train students of all disciplines, and reach out to connect with and train professionals in your community.

Together, we can make a difference.
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 Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (5816)
- FSoS Strategic Initiative (2748)
- Jan Hogan Fellowship (5734)
- Family Caregiving Program (5995)
- Neubeck/Maddock Scholarship Fund (2191)
- Wayne Caron Memorial Fund (1938)
- Ott International Student Fellowship (1883)
- David H. and Karen Olson Marriage and Family Fellowship (1920)
- Family Stress and Resilience Endowment (7645)

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,

[Signature]

Family Social Science

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