Present: Abdel-Motaleb, Boutin, Chandler, Douglass, Falkoff, Goldenberg, Gordon, Kolb (for Birberick), Li, Molnar, Shortridge, Than

Guests: Sherry Fang, Family and Child Studies Area Coordinator, School of Family, Consumer, and Nutrition Sciences; Beverly Henry, Associate Dean, College of Health and Human Sciences; Betty Montgomery, Textiles, Apparel, and Merchandising Area Coordinator, School of Family, Consumer, and Nutrition Sciences; Tom Pavkov, Chair, School of Family, Consumer, and Nutrition Sciences; Chris Parker, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Outcomes Assessment, Office of Assessment Services; and Josephine Umoren, Associate Professor, School of Family, Consumer, and Nutrition Sciences

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. by the assistant chair who led the meeting in place of the chair.

There was no quorum present, so the minutes were not approved.

Henry said that she was happy to be back at the meeting to discuss the program reviews, and the subcommittee did a lot of work reviewing these reports. Pavkov indicated that this review process has proven to be a valuable process for the school. The process allowed us to take some things we knew and put them into focus. The school will now sharpen what it is doing.

The meeting was turned over to Geoff Gordon for the presentation of the subcommittee report. Gordon thanked everyone for their participation in the review process. There are many degree programs in this school. As we went over time in the preliminary meetings, we will move quickly today through the strengths, ask some questions, and then state the recommendations.

There are many strengths mentioned in the departmental context section. The school encompasses many areas of study and appears to pay good and equal attention to each area. The Child Development Laboratory is one of only six centers in Illinois holding the highest quality rating. Ellington’s restaurant and the Kohl’s Merchandising Laboratory offer students good experiential learning opportunities. Faculty members are very active in local, regional, and national activities.

One discussion point is how are increasing class sizes, overloads, lack of advisors, and other factors contributing to limiting faculty research productivity and other goals of the school? One thing that is problematic about the unit is that even though everyone works very hard, we are stretched to cover our service on committees, and this also takes its toll on research productivity. Teaching assistants are doing course support instead of being involved in research. This limits our ability to focus on the nuances of the curriculum because we are busy doing other things. We are committed to our students and advising is an obligation. The school is the only unit in the college that does not have advisors who are not faculty members.
What tradeoffs need to be made to provide professional advisors to the school? I don’t know if we have anything to trade. If anything, we could convert a faculty line to advising, but we don’t have room to do this. We need more resources.

Should the school consider limited admission if there are inadequate resources? You are so stretched now. I looked at this question and the growth trajectory question, and I wonder why I put this in the report. As we have gone through the process, we have been evaluating what we can do with the resources we have. We need to evaluate the quality of students we have in our program. We would like to grow, but the economics don’t work in our favor. There are ways that we could grow, but we can’t spread people more thin than they already are. In thinking about the growth trajectory, has the college thought about the ways in which it wants to grow at the college or school level? We have talked about it at a variety of levels, we are looking at key areas where we have programs and provide services. We should look at growth from the other side—retention. We would like to see more students graduating in the fields of health and human sciences. The flip side of limited admission is where do students go when they can’t get into the programs? In some ways this is a good problem to have, but we need to think about these students that don’t have a place to go.

The school has a high number and percentage of female faculty; does this detract from the recruitment of male students to the programs? What efforts are being made to recruit male faculty members? The school presently has five positions it is searching to fill; four are active and another one has just been approved. We are targeting male applications in these searches because we want more balance. Historically, these programs have been female-dominated fields. We are very diversified in what we do. Bringing in more males certainly would help us. In the hospitality program the faculty student ratio is 1:55. We would like to grow the hospitality program.

There are several recommendations for the future. Consider limiting admission into the school’s programs if inadequate resources prevent the needed funding of existing programs. The school and college should continue to grow efforts aimed at recruiting and retaining male faculty members. Keep growing the amount of alumni and external engagement activities in order to increase this type of support. The lack of adequate and geographically contiguous facilities is an ongoing issue. Try to keep exploring a means to find and fund new facilities.

The B.S. in Family and Child Studies program has several strengths. The program is doing well in terms of enrollment stability and growth. Students have achieved a high level of recognition and honors. Faculty members and students are ethnically diverse. This is commendable. The program is cost effective with the school making maximum use of limited resources. The learning outcomes are clearly stated and well aligned with the design of the program.

One of the discussion points is that there are three emphases in the program; are any growing faster than others? Does the offering of three emphases lead to any resource allocation issues? We could grow the child development emphasis; we really need two more faculty members to bring down the faculty student ratio to somewhere around 1:40. We are searching for two more faculty members. This is a popular program, and we have a lot of demand for this program. Advising becomes an issue. We have hired extra help for advising.

Can you briefly explain the limited admission process? Students come into the program as pre-majors for the first two years, and then they apply to the program. They have to meet certain
requirements to be admitted to the program. This program has limited admission, so the requirements depend on what area students pick. We have limited spaces for internships and practicums.

Another discussion point is that it didn’t appear that there is competition from other Illinois state universities. Is this true, and is this a positive for our program? This is a CIP code anomaly. Western, Eastern, and ISU have programs like ours. We have a strong program with a strong reputation. We have people in the market place with a history with NIU.

Are the students not getting employment after graduation? We don’t have real good data on where our students are employed. We have anecdotal information from our alumni. We really need to work on this information. Is enrollment skewed towards females? Yes it is.

We have a few recommendations for the B.S. in Family and Child Studies program. Gather more information from employers of NIU graduates to determine how NIU faculty and staff have done at educating and preparing graduates for careers. Use this as a means to further differentiate NIU’s program from competitors and publicize why our program is better than competing programs. Increase the number of students gaining certificates and certification. Continue efforts to find and fund tenure-track faculty to teach in and promote the programs, especially males. Conduct your own survey of alumni and/or employers to better gauge the effectiveness of the program. Try to get alumni more involved in recruiting and placement efforts.

The next program for discussion is the M.S. in Applied Family and Child Studies. The program is flexible and well run. Faculty members, with limited resources are able to meet the needs of a variety of students seeking a good number of career objectives. There appears to be good student demand for the program. The program appears to promote and support students’ career aspirations in a variety of ways.

What percent of M.S. students go on to Ph.D. programs? Should the master’s program be more research- or more practice-oriented given where graduates end up? Does the program emphasize one option versus the other option? A small percentage of master’s graduates go on to Ph.D. programs. You would think that students would do research projects in this program, but for practical reasons, this is not the case. About half of the program curriculum is about teaching young people to be therapists. The applied family studies program provides training for students who want to work in family social services settings. Are there things that we could do to strengthen research? Yes there are. Historically, this is where we are at right now. The world does need skilled workers. We try our best to mentor students based on their strengths. If a student wants to do research, we mentor them on this.

Why does the program account for 100 percent of the state-wide enrollment? We might want to look at the CIP codes to see if the program is classified correctly. We are the only public university that has the specialization in marriage and family therapy.

Has the program ever considered working with the College of Law? You could cross list courses or have some kind of dual degree. Last spring we did have a conversation with an associate dean at the College of Law about building a bachelor’s to master’s degree. We indicated that we were interested in this, but we haven’t heard back from the college. This would distinguish us. Doing public interest and combining it with the area of child and family studies and advocacy would be good.
The first recommendation for the future is to decide whether growth is feasible given resource constraints. If so, continue to develop and implement plans for increasing overall and minority/male enrollments. Second, keep pairing graduate students with faculty as early in the program as possible. The objective of doing this is to improve research productivity for both students and faculty.

There are many strengths in the B.S. in Nutrition, Dietetics, and Hospitality Administration program. The program is doing well in terms of enrollment stability. Faculty members do a good job of engaging with industry representatives and with students in the classroom. The program does a great job of serving the university through its offering of a very successful and growing minor. The program is cost effective, and the learning outcomes are clearly stated.

One discussion point is what percent of nutrition and dietetics students complete an internship program and pass the examination without going on for a master’s degree? It didn’t appear that a lot of students were taking the examination. The master’s program prepares students to apply to a Dietetics Internship Program. Students earn the degree, but we don’t know if they will get into an internship program. The internship programs are very competitive. Students must have work experience, a high GPA (including science GPA) and GMAT score. Everyone applies at the same time across the nation. Only students who feel they are ready for the internship will apply. The internship is done after students complete the master’s program. There are not enough internship sites. You have students who complete the internship and students who don’t complete it. Can you explain what advantages there are in completing the internship? If students complete the internship satisfactorily, they become Registered Dietitians, and this makes them eligible to hold special positions. They could be a one-on-one counselor in a hospital who helps individuals managing diseases. Every student’s goal is to become a Registered Dietitian (R.D.), but students don’t apply for internships if they feel they are not ready to complete the internship successfully. Those who don’t pursue the R.D. work in community enrichment programs, wellness programs, school programs, etc. As long as there is one R.D. working in a program, non-R.D.s can work in these types of programs. Because of the limited number of students who get into the internship programs, we are trying to strengthen the program for the students who do not get into internship programs. If students obtain the R.D., they are more marketable. For clinical sites we only offer a tuition waiver. Students used to complete 900 clinical hours, now 1,200 clinical hours are required. For students who don’t get matched, we have a small individualized pathway. In order to increase the number of internship sites, we would have to look at using distance learning. Since we are outside of Chicago, we are dense in internships. Some students find out that don’t like science as much as they thought they did, so they don’t pursue an internship.

Can you talk a little bit about the emphasis in hospitality administration? Were there 33 hospitality administration graduates in 2011? Is enrollment increasing in this emphasis? Right now this emphasis is maintaining its own. This was started in 2002, and the numbers are still high. The future looks good in terms of the job market for these graduates. The Hospitality Advisory Board has helped us look at the prospects for growth in this area. We are trying to change the name of the emphasis, and we added faculty positions. There are strategies in place to increase growth, but they are constrained by resources. Do your students complete minors? Do students in other programs, such as public health and psychology, complete a minor in your program? Some hospitality students get minors in business. Minors in our program are from all over the place (i.e., public health, nursing, kinesiology, and physical education, etc.).
There are a couple of recommendations for the future. Keep working on a means to increase the number of students gaining nutrition and dietetics internships and certification. Increase efforts to recruit males into the program. Continue efforts to find and fund tenure-track faculty to teach in and promote the program.

The M.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics program has many strengths. The program is doing well in terms of enrollment stability. Faculty members do a good job of engaging with industry representatives. Students achieved a good variety of awards. The licensure pass rate is 92 percent, and the learning outcomes are well aligned with the design of the program.

What percent of Northern undergraduate students go on for their M.S. degree at NIU, which seems like a logical step? What are the advantages of going straight through? The number is not as high as you would expect. Students want to branch out and go elsewhere for the master’s. The advantage is that students apply because they want to pursue the Dietetic Internship. Our students can apply early to our program and then they don’t have to pay the matching fee, but they need to have a high GPA, GRE score, and science GPA. This has just recently been implemented.

What percent of master’s students go on to Ph.D. programs? Most go straight into the industry. What do you need to grow the program? We would need to find clinical sites and have another person help manage those sites. We could get more graduate students who already have the R.D., so they wouldn’t need the Dietetic Internship. We get one or two of these types of students a year. Is there demand for this program at other locations? Yes, we want to take a look at the market for an online program. This would be three to five years down the road.

The recommendations for the future include increasing enrollment and funding tenure-track faculty. Keep working on a means to increase the number of master’s students. Continue efforts to find and fund tenure-track faculty.

The B.S. in Textiles, Apparel, and Merchandising program has many strengths. The faculty members do a good job of engaging with industry representatives. Students have participated in many honors projects. The program does a great job of serving the university through its offering of a minor, and the learning outcomes are clearly stated and well aligned with the design of the program.

One of the discussion points is can you explain the apparel product development proposed emphasis? Talk about what it is and what resources are necessary to launch this. How would career options differ for graduates with this proposed emphasis versus the proposed merchandising emphasis? These students would be interested in fashion careers more broadly. We really could have two tracks: apparel product development and fashion design. The fashion design track would include more the practical application for working in the design industry. In order to engage students, we would need a product development laboratory. Our students currently look at garments, but they don’t develop garments.

Given limited resources, does the school desire to grow the program? If so, what steps are being taken to increase the number of students in the program? This is one area that we have some capacity to grow. We feel that this program has the best bang for the buck to increase enrollment. We are looking at our relationships with community colleges and high schools. Presently these
relationships aren’t the most efficient, but community colleges seem to be a new focus under the new president. We want to go out and visit places that we have not been to before or that we have not been to for some time. We also may look at some name changes for our programs. Our new advisory board will help us figure this out.

What positions do your graduates obtain? They work in design houses, at Target, Kohl’s, and any department store where they could be buyers, assistant buyers, assistant managers, retail marketing experts, etc. A lot of our students complete a minor in marketing. Is there an international dimension to this program? One of the areas we need to explore is a New York City type of opportunity. We have a lot of student interest in this. Getting students out of the state and beyond to the major places where this industry is robust would be good. Some of our students participate in study abroad.

Recommendations for the future include keep working with your advisory board and other external entities to improve employment prospects for graduates to increase the number of students in the program. This is a great degree for students to pursue.

The final degree for discussion today is the M.S. in Family and Consumer Sciences. As of fall 2012 there were only two students enrolled in the program. What decision criteria will be utilized to determine whether the program should continue or not? Could resources be better utilized elsewhere in the school? There are only a few students in the program, so there are no resource issues. This program has two specializations: apparel studies and family and consumer sciences education. We don’t see a future for the specialization in family and consumer sciences education because there is no credential associated with this. We are trying to explore if there is value added for someone who graduates with a B.S. and then works a couple of years and comes back for the master’s degree from us, maybe online. That is the question we need to resolve, but we are not there yet. We shouldn’t have a program on the books where we aren’t really serving anybody. We need to make decisions about this. The recommendation for the future is to determine whether the program is a viable one and proceed accordingly.

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of October 28, 2013, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Cradduck

Planning/APCMinutes/2013-2014/Nov4