School of Family and Consumer Science
Program Review Committee Report

The School of Family and Consumer Science prepared a self-study following review guidelines. A two-person external review team reviewed the self-study and other documents provided by the School. They interviewed unit personnel and university administrators, and submitted a written report. The Program Review Committee (PRC) read the self-study and the external report. A PRC committee representative solicited feedback at a meeting of the faculty as a whole and from the PACERS (program area) group. This document reflects the PRC’s findings and recommendations.

SUMMARY OF THE SELF-STUDY

The self-study covers the period from fall 1998 through spring 2003.

Mission and History

The mission of the School is “to promote intellectual engagement that prepares students for careers and advanced study involving application of principles and skills that foster the well being of individuals and families and to encourage the generation of new knowledge through research.” To fulfill its mission, the School emphasizes its educational mission, development of its faculty, and public service. As described in the self-study, these emphases interface well with the mission of the College of Education and Human Development and with the University as a whole.

Home Economics Education was one of the first programs offered when the University opened in 1914. In 1995 the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and Human Development was reorganized into a school, within the College, with five program areas.

Description of the Unit

Programs. The School has five program areas: Apparel Merchandising and Product Development (AMPD), Food and Nutrition (F&N), Health Promotion (HP), Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS), and Interior Design (ID). Within these five areas, the School offers six undergraduate degrees/majors and a Masters of Family and Consumer Science degree with two specializations. The designation of these programs as majors or degrees is internally inconsistent in the self-study. The program designations as currently on file in Registration and Records are summarized in the following table:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program area</th>
<th>Undergraduate degrees and majors</th>
<th>Graduate program - MFCS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMPD</td>
<td>Bachelor of Science in Apparel Merchandising and Product Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>F&amp;N</td>
<td>Bachelor of Science in Dietetics; Bachelor of Science in Nutrition Sciences</td>
<td>Food and Nutrition - specialization</td>
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<tr>
<td>HP</td>
<td>Health Promotion – major within the Bachelor of Science in Education degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDFS</td>
<td>Bachelor of Science in Child and Family Community Services</td>
<td>Human Development and Family Studies - specialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Bachelor of Science in Interior Design</td>
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Admission to the graduate HDFS specialization was unofficially suspended in April 2004; the reason given was low enrollments. (In the five year period from 1998 to 2002, 32 students graduated from the F&N specialization, and 12 students graduated from the HDFS specialization.) The School had co-administered the Early Childhood program, but that program is now the responsibility of the Division of Teaching and Learning in the School of Education and Intervention Services. For part of the period covered by the review, the School had offered a major in Family and Consumer Sciences Education, but admission to that program was officially suspended in 2000. The School also operates the Child Development Center, which serves as “a laboratory pre-kindergarten program.”

Currently there is a committee within the School that is looking into the future of the school’s structure and operation. This committee was brought to the PRC liaison’s attention during open meetings with the school’s faculty and program areas. Although the need to examine the school structure is identified in the planning section of the self-study, the PRC received little information about the committee or its work; such information would have been of great value to the program review process. Depending on the outcome of that group’s work, there may be actions taken to address the committee’s recommendations. One of the things this group is dealing with is the fact that there is one very large unit (HDFS) and a number of other, smaller units.

**Faculty and staff.** The faculty is composed of three full professors, eleven associate professors, ten assistant professors, two lecturers, two full-time instructors, and eleven part-time instructors. Each faculty member teaches five courses, with three courses being taught one semester and two courses the other semester. During their first or second year, probationary faculty members are given a four-course load, with two courses being taught each semester.

The school’s chief administrator is a director, who serves a five-year term and reports to the Dean of the College. The duties of the director include overseeing the unit’s budget.
and approving all expenditures. In February of 2003 the director returned to full-time teaching and the dean appointed an interim director from outside the unit. The School is conducting a national search for a new director.

Continuing staff resources in the School consist of two full-time classified staff members, one quarter-time classified staff person, and one administrative staff person. The full-time classified staff are an Administrative Assistant I and a Secretary I. The Administrative Assistant I pays bills, monitors budget accounts, and updates the director on budget issues. This person also works with the Program Area Coordinators (PACERS). The Secretary I serves as the secretary to the Graduate Program, manages all curricular modifications, and oversees all web pages. The part-time (10 hours) secretary is assigned to faculty who are housed in Eppler Complex. The administrative staff person serves as the head teacher of the Child Development Center (CDC) and both teaches and administers the academic program for young children.

An additional administrative staff position—funded through user fees generated by the CDC rather than as a continuing line through the College—serves as the CDC’s assistant. A temporary administrative staff person serves as the program director for both the Graduate Dietetics Internship and Undergraduate Dietetics program. In 2002-03, the School employed an undergraduate advisor, but due to financial constraints the advisor was eliminated in May 2003.

Instructors perform service at the department level; other faculty members are expected to conduct service for the department, college, university, and the external community, if possible.

Students. As of spring 2003, the School offered seven undergraduate areas of study serving a substantial number of students. The last two years of data reported in self-study tables show between 550 and 575 students enrolled in undergraduate programs. Of that number, AMPD enrolls the largest portion (approximately 36%, although numbers vary year to year); ID accounts for roughly 28%; CFCS for 17%; Dietetics for 11%; and Health Promotion 5%). Advising reports show somewhat higher total numbers: 1229 advisees in fall 2001, 1123 in spring 2002, 1236 in fall 2002, and 923 in spring 2003. The majority of undergraduate majors in the School have been female (ranging from 94% to 97%), white (ranging from 91% to 93%), and traditional college-student age (ranging from 91% to 95%). Most of them were full-time students (ranging from 91% to 95%), and residents of Ohio (ranging from 92% to 96%).

The number of students enrolled in the graduate program appears to have declined slightly over the review period, from 28 in 1998 to 22 in 2002. Enrollments in the HDFS specialization are reported to have been between 4 and 9, whereas enrollments in the F&N specialization have declined due to transition from a two-and-a-half year program to two year program. For admission to the master’s degree program the School prefers a combined quantitative and verbal GRE score of over 800. Students must have a 3.0 GPA to receive a graduate assistantship. The percentage of graduate students who received
their undergraduate training at BGSU has ranged from 25% to 44% over the period covered by the self-study.

Typical recruitment activities have included faculty and current students meeting with prospective students and their families at Preview Day and President Day events. All program areas have developed student-focused brochures. Factors that have impacted student recruitment initiatives include the number of students enrolled in the program, when students declare their majors, and admission requirements. The HDFS graduate specialization has experienced a lack of consistency in the recruitment of graduate students resulting in the present low enrollment (two) of first-year graduate students. Without a formal plan, recruitment efforts have varied. Presently, a committee is working to implement a comprehensive recruitment strategy, which includes a mailing to seniors at other universities in the Midwest. A personal contact will be made to potential students who express interest. Recruitment for the F&N specialization is assisted by having the program listed on the American Dietetic Association web site along with completion of an internship program.

Facilities. The School is housed in four different buildings, with faculty in Johnston Hall, the Family and Consumer Sciences Building, and Eppler Complex; labs are in Johnston Hall, Family and Consumer Sciences Building, and Commons. There are two textile/nutrition labs, three AMPD classrooms and labs, and one F&N lab. According to the self-study, the labs used for the AMPD and ID program areas are “outdated and require technology updates.” They restrict student learning opportunities due to inadequate technology. Both AMPD and ID have had increases in the number of majors, generating greater demands and use of the labs. The ID lab is located in premises with poor air control, high humidity, and mildew. Because of limited space, only two evening sections of classes can be offered, restricting the number of part-time ID professionals the program can hire.

Computer labs in the Education Building are available for use by School faculty. The computers in these labs were replaced during the summer of 2002 and the software updated in 2003. The need for appropriate facilities has expanded substantially as the number of faculty and students in the School has increased. For five years, the College has ranked the School’s capital improvement requests as the number one priority in the college’s capital improvement request to central administration. In fall 2001, the Board of Trustees prioritized the remodeling of University Hall to accommodate the School’s needs. A committee was set up in order to review the improvement possibilities and submit a building request to the capital planning office. The committee developed a report describing a capital request that would meet the School’s needs over the next fifteen years. Contingent on the budgetary situation in state funds, this project has been tentatively scheduled for an architectural feasibility study in 2005.

The School has access to the University library and its on-line databases, including OhioLink. The College of Education and Human Development Technology and Resource center is another source used by School faculty and students.
**Budget.** The total School budget in 2002-02 was $2,368,703, most of which ($2.2 million) is for personnel. The self-study reports a substantial increase in operating budget from 1998-99 ($94,178) to 2001-02 ($142,082).

**Self-evaluation**

**Quality.** Overall student course evaluations were very high during 2001-02 and 2002-03 (mean student evaluations = 5.93 on a seven point scale). The School is productive in research and other scholarly work and, according to the self-study, individual members have developed excellent reputations in their disciplines. Faculty members have published 79 peer-reviewed manuscripts from 1998 through spring 2003. One faculty member published 17 journal articles in prestigious peer reviewed journals since 2000, a substantial proportion of the School’s total output.

Several faculty members have been very successful with grant activity. Twenty external grants have been awarded to twelve faculty members, as either principal investigators or co-investigators during the time period of this review, receiving a total of $3,771,137. Ninety-three percent of the total external grant amount (PI & Co-PI) was awarded to two faculty members. One five-year grant accounted for 63 percent of the total external grants awarded to PIs in the School, once again a substantial proportion of the School’s total activity. Grant submissions have increased in recent years among probationary faculty members. The School’s Promotion and Tenure policy stipulates that evaluation of faculty will normally be based on distribution of effort of: 60% teaching, 25% research/creative activities, and 15% service.

**Demand.** Course enrollments have increased over the five-year period for all program areas and for both full-time and part-time faculty. Course enrollments for part-time faculty have increased over the period, from 1144 to 1298 students. Course enrollments for full-time faculty have increased from 2747 to 4484.

**Centrality.** The School maintains that it is central to the university’s mission by its commitment to Ohio and by striving to be the best unit in the nation. Students in the School’s program areas are exposed to curriculum from other school, college, and university program areas through coursework across many disciplines. Faculty members collaborate on cross-disciplinary research, providing students with opportunities to learn through research assistance and example.

**Comparative advantages.** The four-year undergraduate dietetics program and the graduate level internship program are the only ones of their kind to prepare students to become registered dietitians in northwest Ohio. In addition, the self-study claims program distinctiveness attributable to interrelationships with other programs at the University.

**Strengths and weaknesses.** For the undergraduate programs, overall, the self-study notes that all program areas have updated or are reviewing their curricula. While the self-study judges school faculty to be committed and productive, it also finds that there are too few faculty to meet “growing program needs.” It also finds problems with large class
sizes in HDFS, lack of uniformity in internship programs, inadequate laboratory space, and too few technology resources.

At the graduate level, the self-study notes that the HDFS specialization has not attracted a large enough applicant pool, despite recent modifications to the curriculum and a relatively large faculty in this area (10). Recruitment and program visibility will be a focus.

The self-study states that School programs have used assessment effectively. An appendix includes annual SAAC reports, but the self-study does not present an overview or analysis of these data.

**Unit Planning**

The self-study lists goals and strategies for the School as a whole, and for each program area separately. At the school level, the goals are specifically “not listed in priority order,” and no indication is given that these separate goals represent a coherent plan. Some of the items are simple statements of perceived needs (e.g., more faculty, greater access to technology, and a new facility); others are minor housekeeping issues (e.g., change the name of the master’s degree; update the form used for student evaluation; promote faculty to the ranks of associate and full professor); and others are vague statements of aspiration (e.g., enhance students’ exposure and sensitivity to diversity issues; increase visibility of the School’s programs; increase student opportunities to engage in research; and determine the future of the education program). In general, the goals are presented without rationale or specific strategy.

The goals and strategies at the level of individual programs are not presented in detail, either. The AMPD program, for instance, has goals of recruiting more faculty, improving access to technology, implementing new learning outcomes, developing a new graduate program, and cultivating undergraduate inquiry. The “strategies” identified to achieve these goals are brief and general. The F&N program has goals for creating several new programs (e.g., distance dietetics internship, F&N graduate certificate program; undergraduate and graduate food science degrees). HDFS has a goal of completing revision of the undergraduate curriculum. It will also develop enrollment growth plans for both undergraduate and graduate programs. The goal of developing on-going assessment activities is laudable, but the strategy does not focus on student learning outcomes, which seems to be a serious disconnect. Many of the HP program goals emphasize the need to increase the number of majors. The ID program lists four brief goals, including greater connection with the design industry, building relationships with the local community through service projects, developing a new design-based computer course (which would require hiring a new faculty), and expanding the studio facilities.

**RESULTS OF PREVIOUS REVIEWS**

This is the first cycle of the academic program review for the School of Family and Consumer Science.
SUMMARY OF THE EXTERNAL REPORT

Dr. Jim Moran, of the University of Tennessee, and Dr. Gwen O’Neal, of Kansas State University, visited campus January 26 – 28, 2004. They met separately with university administrators; School faculty; probationary faculty; administrative and classified staff; program coordinators; graduate students; undergraduate students; a liaison from the PRC; the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs; and the Dean of the College of Education and Human Development.

Unit Overview

The external reviewers concluded that the School clearly has strengths on which to build. They found faculty, as a whole, competent, committed, and dedicated to students. The reviewers noted that the School’s faculty have identified field experiences as being critical to student learning, which has led them to require practical applications of theoretical concepts. The external reviewers suggested that the School undergo a “shift in perspective” with more emphasis on “working together across disciplinary areas.”

Reviewer Recommendations

The external reviewers noted that the self-study was primarily descriptive and that vital information was not included. In the planning section, they found that the School’s “strategies … were not well defined or linked to those of the College or University.” Like the self-study, the external reviewers did not prioritize eleven areas needing attention, as follows:

1. The external reviewers faulted the self-study for failing to prioritize its needs, with the result that “the plans we reviewed appear more like ‘wish lists’ than planning documents.”
2. It is possible that the programs in the School are better than people realize. Therefore, the external reviewers saw a need for improved marketing of the program.
3. Enrollment management strategies are needed to deal with both low enrollment and over-enrolled programs.
4. “Each program should identify a focus in which to develop excellence.”
5. A permanent director is needed. The external reviewers emphasized the need to develop a substantial pool of applicants in order to find a highly qualified director.
6. Space needs must be prioritized; this prioritization must be “based on a realistic assessment of actual available square footage.”
7. Increase attention to fundraising and industry connections.
8. The professional development of faculty is needed to facilitate promotion from associate to full professor. The reviewers noted anxiety and morale problems because of the lack of successful candidates for promotion and tenure.
9. The School should improve its strategy for recruiting and retaining graduate students, “with a clear eye on … the potential market for increased students.” Increased scholarship is important to building a vigorous graduate program.
10. Some faculty appeared to be unaware of existing incentives for grant activities, such as the return of indirect costs to faculty who are successful in garnering external funds. Awareness and communication of these policies could be improved.

11. The external reviewers found that improved clarity and consistency of expectations relative to merit and promotion/tenure is needed. The current merit document is complex in terms of the amount of dollars to various components (and that may be unique to BGSU) but the most important feature is “what counts” as “merit”.

Program Potential for Distinctive Regional or National Stature

The external reviewers found that each program area had the potential to achieve a broader level of distinction. In all cases, earning that increased distinction would require “extension of departmental influence beyond the boundaries of the campus through scholarship or outreach.”

*Apparel Marketing and Product Development.* For this area to reach prominence, it will have to increase scholarship. Improvements in facilities, technology, equipment, and dedicated space are all needed. The program must also deal with high enrollments. The external reviewers find that an additional faculty line is justified to deal with enrollments. Changes to the curriculum could add a global perspective. The reviewers found this to be a relatively high-functioning area, but that lacked campus visibility.

*Interior Design.* The external reviewers were strong advocates for FIDER accreditation (Foundation for Interior Design Education Research) as a necessary step for this program. They found that both the curriculum and faculty scholarship were diffuse (“an amalgam of disparate viewpoints and philosophies”). They also saw needs in the areas of studio space; curriculum revision to include CAD technology; enrollment management and regular schedule of course offerings; and a more efficient leadership structure.

*Nutrition.* The reviewers find this program to be operating at a high level. Faculty and graduate students have notable publication success. “However, national prominence without sufficient numbers of graduate students to offer graduate courses and sustain a viable graduate program is unlikely.” They also learned that “outside constituencies” have offered encouragement “to direct [the] program towards food science, esp. areas such as food safety.” Improved laboratories are necessary for the program to take this step.

*Health Promotion.* The potential for this area to achieve national prominence is limited. The undergraduate program lacks focus, and the number of students served is small.

*Human Development and Family Studies.* The movement of the Early Childhood program to a different school has created uncertainty about the future of Human
Development and Family Studies. Also, the graduate program appears to lack both direction and the necessary numbers of students. The external reviewers also noted “morale issues” in the program, most likely related to the immediately preceding problems. They note that faculty in this area have potential as scholars and teachers, but “need to coalesce around selective foci of excellence.”

**MEETING WITH THE DEAN**

On April 26 the Dean of Education and Human Development met with the subcommittee of the PRC to present his reactions to the draft report. He told the subcommittee that he had asked the previous director to step down and had assumed a significant role in administering the unit. He said there are two candidates that are viable to be chosen as director and that a new director could be on board as early as July 1, 2004. He confirmed that the Home Economics bachelor’s degree will be ended this summer, pursuant to its suspension in 2000. He also addressed the HDFS freeze, telling the PRC that he has appointed a 3-person faculty committee to develop a new master’s degree in “early childhood and family studies.” He also told the group that he has hired an external consultant from the National Association for the Education of Young Children to “craft” the new program. He also said that the F&N program was making food safety a priority area of emphasis. He alluded to the facilities issue and its being second on the list of university priorities for a new building, but was unable to do anything to speed up the process, given the financial situation in the state.

The dean expressed the view that a lot of the newer faculty, mostly in HDFS, look competitive and that he hoped to close the “revolving door” in which people have not been receiving tenure in recent years. He mentioned one faculty member who will go up for tenure one year early. Regarding workload, he stood by the School’s allocation of effort (60:25:15); he did not see that the relatively low allocation to research (25%) might contribute to the School’s poor record of tenure decisions in the past. He said that the school has a mentoring program in place and that this program goes outside the school to engage senior faculty to mentor junior faculty in the school.

The PRC asked directly about other possible organizations for the units currently in the School. PRC members volunteered that we had learned of other universities where programs like those currently in the School were being relocated to other areas of the university. The dean responded that such a suggestion did not offend him. In this vein, the dean expressed a preference for working with deans in other colleges to build cooperation among units with similar missions, without undertaking structural reorganization.

**PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The School of Family and Consumer Science has a dedicated, conscientious, and hard-working faculty. The School includes some active and productive scholars, as well as several programs that have the potential to achieve regional and national distinction.
However, the PRC concurs with the external reviewers that there are a number of areas of concern. Primary among these concerns is the lack of coherence among the School’s five program areas. Despite the bold statement of unity in the School’s mission (“the School links diverse program areas with a common history, vision, mission, and commitment to interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship”), the PRC found little evidence of common purpose among the disparate areas represented in the School. We understand that this kind of diversity of mission is not uncommon in schools similar to Family and Consumer Sciences at other universities; nonetheless, the diversity of programs and faculty expertise is an important piece of context necessary to understand the challenges facing the School. It is significant that most of the external reviewers’ comments were ones that addressed the strengths, needs, and potential of each program in isolation of the others.

The self-study gave little information about the problems in the HDFS graduate specialization that led to the unofficial suspension of admission. The dean told the subcommittee that he has appointed a three-person faculty committee to develop a new master’s degree in “early childhood and family studies.” He further disclosed that he has hired an outside consultant to “craft the program” according to professional standards. Late in the review process, faculty in the School told the PRC liaison that a committee was discussing issues of school structure. Information about the appointment of that committee and its charge would have been valuable to the PRC much earlier in the process.

As mentioned in the context of the summary of the self-study, the plans for the School are little more than a collection of loosely connected and general ideas, unsupported by rationale or specific strategies—or, as the external reviewers characterized it, a “wish list.” Overall, the self-study creates the troubling impression that the School has not been comprehensive in its reporting. We report the following specific findings and recommendations.

1. Program Quality

*Findings.* The PRC believes that there are fundamental quality issues in the School of Family and Consumer Sciences. These will be explored individually in findings on strategic planning, research productivity, curricular coherence, space, and communication. The quality issues are also fundamentally related to the question of configuration—also to be taken up in a separate finding—in the sense that the current configuration of the School is very likely a significant barrier to improvements in quality of its constituent programs. The PRC believes that improvement in quality should be the benchmark by which the School is evaluated in the future, regardless of particular decisions about configuration, curriculum, planning process, etc. Without evidence of improvement in quality, the PRC does not believe that investment in the School of Family and Consumer Sciences is warranted.
Recommendations. All future decisions about resources to be committed to the School—whether personnel, space, equipment, or budget—should be contingent on clearly benchmarked improvements in quality.

2. Configuration

Findings. The School should consider whether the current mix of programs constitutes a school with a common purpose. In this vein, the external report suggested that for the School to build on its strengths it needs “some shift in perspective and in working together across disciplinary areas.”

The PRC believes, however, that the programs within the current School are fundamentally heterogeneous and disconnected: no common academic purpose can be found. Indeed, other schools of this kind—at other universities—are undertaking reconfiguration in recognition of the disciplinary heterogeneity. For example, Food and Nutrition and Health Promotion have close relationships with programs in the College of Health and Human Services; Interior Design has kindred interests with Architecture; the HDFS area has historical links to programs in the College of Health and Human Services; and Apparel Merchandising and Product Development might develop synergies with programs in the School of Art or the College of Technology. Such a large-scale reconfiguration would create many challenges, not least of which would have to do with space. However, the programs in the School already have space issues that must be dealt with, and the proposed solutions involve major capital improvements. Given that the University is at the cusp of making such major decisions about space for the School’s programs, this appears to be an optimal time to consider reconfiguration of the programs themselves.

An alternative general approach to this issue also frankly acknowledges the heterogeneous nature of the School’s program areas. This approach would entail creating priorities and making difficult choices about the number and diversity of program areas that can be effectively managed in a single school. In this approach, the programs would be reduced in number rather than redeployed in other areas.

Recommendations. The provost should develop a process for exploring possibilities for reconfiguration. An explicit decision should be made—at a date to be determined by the provost—whether to a) affirm the current structure, b) eliminate some of the programs, but retain the school structure; or c) redeploy the programs to other existing areas.

All the findings and recommendations below should be pursued within the chosen configuration. That is, if the programs are redeployed to other areas, they still must be held accountable for strategic planning, curricular reform, research productivity, etc. Alternatively, if the programs continue in a single school, the programs and the School must attend to these same issues. For sake of simplicity only (it is not our recommendation), we will refer to the “School” in the following findings and recommendations.
3. Strategic planning

Findings. The School’s strategic planning is inadequate. As the external reviewers stated, it is more of a wish list than a cohesive unit plan. In fact, it is five separate wish lists rather than a prioritized statement of direction and resource needs.

Recommendations. The School should rewrite its strategic plan and present that plan to the dean for review and approval by April 2005. The revised plan must include prioritization among all items that require resources—it cannot represent every need equally, as the self-study did.

4. Curriculum and assessment

Findings. There is little information about the curriculum itself in the self-study or the external report. The self-study does provide helpful information about assessment, but that information is not consistently connected to curriculum review or revision.

The self-study states that assessment “is based on participation in classroom discussions, examinations, projects, papers, and practica and internships experiences.” It furthermore states that “program area faculty conduct assessments of student learning outcomes annually.” However, the self-study gives no details about what program area faculty have learned from these activities, but refers the reader to the annual SAAC reports in the appendix. The SAAC reports reveal that assessment is uneven across program areas. Some are using assessment to inform curriculum modification and to understand in detail how the students are experiencing the curriculum. What is absent from the reports and the self-study is an overview and evaluation of assessment practices in the School.

Given the progress made to date, the School faculty would benefit from an overall review of assessment practices in the School. The review of assessment practices should have the goal of identifying the assessments that have 1) been effective in distinguishing degrees of student success in achieving the various program learning outcomes, and 2) been used to inform curriculum revision. Some approaches to assessment of student learning will be found to be more effective than others. Obviously, the more effective approaches should be shared and propagated within the School.

Following the review of outcomes assessment, the faculty should undertake a comprehensive review (and possible revision) of the curriculum. The curriculum review should be directly informed by the assessment review. One aspect of the curriculum review is directly connected to the issues of configuration (item 2, above). If the School has a common academic purpose, it should be possible to identify a core set of coursework required of all majors. If such a common curriculum cannot be found, that would argue against the existence of a common purpose for the School’s programs.

Recommendation. The School faculty should undertake a comprehensive review of assessment practices in all program areas. The results of this school-wide review of
assessment practices should be included in the next annual report to the SAAC (June 2006).

The review of curriculum should be informed by the assessment results, and so should be undertaken immediately after, or in coordination with, the review of assessment practices. A report on the curriculum—including plans for revisions—should be prepared for the dean’s review and approval by the end of spring semester 2007.

5. Research productivity

Findings. With a small number of notable exceptions, the research productivity of the faculty is inadequate. Given that current standards for teaching loads are at five courses per academic year, faculty should be able to be productive in research. Indeed, some are. However, there appear to be structural changes that could support improvements in research productivity.

- The School’s merit documents are in need of revision, to ensure that research is valued and rewarded. For example, there are differing interpretations of how refereed articles and presentations are counted since both are “bolded” items in the current merit document. One interpretation is that two presentations are equivalent to one refereed journal article; another is that the two cannot be equated.
- On another level entirely is the fact that all five programs share the same allocation of effort to research, at only 25%. Twenty-five percent is inappropriately low, particularly for the programs that have master’s degrees. For all programs, this low allocation of effort to research puts too little weight on research and may contribute to problems in the tenure process. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that all five programs have the same potential for success in grant-funded research and publication. Indeed, the self-study makes the unevenness in grantsmanship and publication very clear. In contrast to the current situation, a successful planning strategy should differentiate programs in terms of their allocation of effort to research in a way that reflects real differences in mission and potential.
- Mentoring of new faculty should be structured to ensure an increased emphasis on research (see recommendation 7).

Recommendation. School documents for merit and for promotion and tenure should be reviewed and revised where necessary to better align rewards and recognition with research productivity. The PRC strongly recommends that the School consider differentiated allocation of effort across program areas, so that those areas with the greatest potential to achieve national recognition through grant-funded research, for example, have higher allocation of effort to research. The review and revision should be completed by the end of spring semester 2006.
6. Space, equipment, and technology

Findings. The School has space issues in terms of quantity, quality, and location. The most acute needs have to do with laboratory space. There are also immediate issues related to the periodic flooding and attendant mold and mildew problems in labs in the basement of Commons. Overall, however, it is difficult to evaluate the space needs in the School because they are all presented as separate and equal. None are related to program or curricular planning and all are presented without prioritization. For instance, the laboratory needs in the Food and Nutrition area might depend critically on a programmatic decision to emphasize food science, as suggested by the external reviewers, or food safety, as suggested by the dean. The needs of the HDFS area also depend critically on decisions about program continuity and numbers of students. The relationships between the graduate and undergraduate programs are also important considerations not addressed in the self-study. Finally, no comparisons or judgments are made that would help to prioritize the needs of relatively small programs, like Health Promotion, in relation to the needs of relatively large programs, like Apparel Merchandising and Product Development or Interior Design.

Recommendations. Following directly from the strategic plan, requests for space, equipment, and technology access should be enumerated and prioritized. Rationales for the prioritization should be closely linked to issues of enrollment and faculty productivity. These priorities should be prepared in a written report for review and approval by the dean by the end of spring semester 2006. In the near term, a hold should be put on renovations of the School’s spaces (specifically, the School’s possible move to University Hall) until issues of strategic planning, research productivity, curriculum, and configuration have been addressed (see recommendation 1).

7. Faculty development

Finding. Given the large proportion of untenured faculty in the School, mentoring and support of junior faculty is an important consideration.

Recommendation. The School should assess its mentoring program in order to ensure the success of probationary faculty and faculty seeking promotion from the rank of associate to full professor. A plan for faculty development should be presented to the dean for his review and approval by the end of spring semester 2005. One of the goals of the plan should be improvement of the research productivity of the faculty.

8. Accreditation for Interior Design

Finding. The ID program is not accredited. Accreditation by FIDER would increase the stature of the program. However, it is not necessary for graduates who sit for the NCIDQ exam (National Council for Interior Design Qualification) to have graduated from an accredited program. At the same time, different states have standards that might require graduation from a FIDER-accredited program. Going through accreditation is time-consuming and entails considerable resources (viz., additional faculty).
Accreditation is much more substantial than simple “marketing” of the program, although it could help the program’s identity and image issues, and would send a clear message about expectations of scholarship within the program. However, as part of its strategic planning process, the School has to decide whether the reallocation of resources required to obtain accreditation would be worth the cost. In the absence of an infusion of additional resources, going for FIDER accreditation would mean taking resources away from other activities in the School. This sort of decision about priority is essential for the School’s long term success.

Recommendation. FIDER accreditation should be one of the many decisions that are addressed in the revision of the strategic plan. This is a weighty decision, with many pros and cons, and one that will undoubtedly affect other programs in the School through resource commitments necessary to attain accreditation.

9. Enrollment management

Findings. Enrollment management is a school-wide issue. The interim director has told HDFS that it cannot admit any graduate students for 2004-2005 because it did not have “critical mass.” The lack of faculty involvement and due process in making this decision is causing dissention within the School’s faculty. What constitutes critical mass is an issue that needs to be explored and faculty need to be involved in discussions regarding the curtailment of programs. Health Promotion seems to attract few students. Interior Design and Apparel Merchandising and Product Development attract a large number, and create substantially different kinds of demand concerns for studio space and technology.

There is also concern about the high enrollment in some programs and in particular courses from a pedagogical perspective. Faculty are concerned about balancing the desire to admit more students against pedagogical concerns resulting from large class sizes.

The PRC finds the external reviewers’ suggestions about enrollment caps to be very worthy of consideration. The School needs to develop enrollment policies that are sound from both a financial/resource and a pedagogical point of view. Balancing these conflicting goals will require a careful evaluation of faculty resources and student needs.

Recommendation. A plan for addressing enrollment management should be prepared for the dean’s review and approval by May 2007.

10. Communication and collegiality

Findings. The PRC has found it difficult to conduct this review because neither the School nor the College has been open and straightforward in providing relevant information. For instance,

- It was very late in the review process that the PRC was informed that a committee is reviewing the structure of the School. In addition, the dean’s understanding of
this review was different from that of the program faculty. The PRC does not as yet fully understand what changes in the structure of the School are being proposed; this compromises the work of the PRC.

- The self-study did not include the information that the graduate program in HDFS had been “frozen.” This information was only obtained by chance; it was subsequently confirmed by the School’s interim director. In view of the ongoing program review process, it is troubling that this action was not stated in the self-study, nor disclosed to the PRC in the meetings the PRC liaison had with the School faculty, nor discussed by the PACERs group, nor introduced by the School’s director. Given that the program suspension was “unofficial” rather than being implemented by established procedures (e.g., Registration & Records was not informed, so the program continued to be listed as “active” in their files), the School should have taken the initiative to explain this unusual circumstance in the course of program review.

- Similarly, the PRC only learned that a committee has been created and an external consultant hired to revamp the master’s program into an “early childhood and family studies” master’s degree at the meeting with the dean, which occurred late in the program review process.

- Finally, the PRC has become aware that the communication in the School is poor, creating stress for faculty and administration (of the School and College). There is not complete enough information on this topic for the PRC to make a detailed finding. Much of what the PRC has learned has been through unofficial channels. However, there is enough information for the PRC to raise a concern about openness of communication.

**Recommendation.** In future dealings with the PRC, the administration, and the university faculty governance process, it is strongly recommended that the School make a more diligent effort to provide full and comprehensive information. Decisions such as “freezing” programs and creating new ones should follow procedures that allow for faculty input and discussion. Information about the creation of committees to review fundamental issues—like reorganization of school structure and creation of a new master’s degree program—should be shared in a timely and collaborative spirit. The Provost is the only person in a position to investigate claims of inappropriate behavior and/or poor communication, and the PRC recommends that he do so. At the time of the next program review, the School should be in the habit of being more forthcoming and timely in terms of providing pertinent information for the review process.

*The School of Family and Consumer Sciences should report annually to the Dean of Education and Human Development, with a copy to the Provost, on the implementation of these recommendations.*