Graduate Program Review
Texas Tech University

Program Reviewed: Family & Consumer Sciences Education (FCSE)


This review prepared by: Roger Hill (external reviewer)

Name of Reviewers
Internal:
Lydia Thompson School Director Art
Mark Gring Associate Professor Media and Communication
Jeffrey Mosher Associate Professor History

External:
Jan Bower Dean SUNY Oneonta, School of Education and Human Ecology
Roger Hill Professor University of Georgia, Department of Career and Information Studies

I. Academic Unit Description and Strategic Plan
   Please evaluate the following by marking an X in one of the blanks for each item:

   Vision, Mission and Goals
   ___ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

   Strategic Plan
   ___ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.

The departmental strategic plan and goals are well delineated and consistent with what might be expected of a program of this type. The vision statement includes a strategy to achieve the vision (… FCSE requires additional resources …) that is somewhat narrow and does not encompass the full range of possibilities for accomplishing the mission and vision.

One of the elements in the unit description that is frequently cited is the uniqueness of the program in being the “only doctoral program in the nation that is specific to FCSE.” This might be a bit misleading in that there are other programs in the country that provide doctoral degrees where students focus on FCSE, have advisors and committee members with doctorates and research streams that focus on FCSE, and are achieving high levels of competence in the field as they participate in graduate studies within more comprehensive Career and Technical Education programs. It is fine for this identity to be noted but the program needs to be sure to focus on the substance of high quality research and graduate education as a basis for building national recognition.
II. Program Curriculum

Please evaluate the following:

**Alignment of program with stated program and institutional goals and purposes**

___ Excellent     _X_ Very Good     ___ Good     ___ Needs Improvement

**Curriculum development coordination and delivery**

___ Excellent     _X_ Very Good     ___ Good     ___ Needs Improvement

**Program learning outcomes assessment**

___ Excellent     ___ Very Good     _X_ Good     ___ Needs Improvement

**Program curriculum compared to peer programs**

___ Excellent     _X_ Very Good     ___ Good     ___ Needs Improvement

**Please evaluate the following by marking an X in one of the blanks for each item:**

The program curriculum is consistent with what would be expected for a graduate program in FCSE. Content and specializations within this degree area are provided by departments outside of FCSE in peer universities and the TTU courses being offered are appropriate for a unit of this type.

There are areas for potential growth and expansion if some of the courses being offered were opened up to graduate students outside of FCSE. A course, for example, that might focus on proposal preparation and publishing of research in professional journals would possibly be attractive to a wide array of graduate majors. The benefits of including a broader spectrum of students and the possible interdisciplinary collaboration that might be stimulated could enhance the course for all involved.

One additional area that holds potential for improvement is the assessment of learning outcomes. In particular, the mechanism being used for the written portion of the doctoral preliminary examination is quite traditional and one that is no longer used at some research-intensive university programs. An alternative model provides for a preliminary meeting where the doctoral student presents a brief overview of planned research; receives written questions from committee members in the areas of theory, research, foundations, and practice; prepares written responses to these questions over a 30-day period of time, and then submits the written examination for review by the committee before proceeding to the oral examination. Questions are developed with the intended research project in mind and the writing for the exam can contribute to the materials needed in the proposal – especially the literature review section. This mechanism provides good opportunities to evaluate student readiness to proceed toward candidacy but also enhances the value of time spent on the examination. Among the strengths of this approach is the opportunity to evaluate writing quality as well as content mastery. Since the examination is prepared under conditions similar to dissertation work, if problems are noted in the quality of the writing, the committee can identify those issues along with any others and make appropriate recommendations as the student moves on to the dissertation phase.
III. Faculty Productivity

*Please evaluate the following by marking an X in one of the blanks for each item:*

**Qualifications**

___ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

**Publications**

___ Excellent  ___ Very Good  _X_ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

**Teaching Load**

___ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

**External Grants**

___ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

**Teaching Evaluations**

_ X_ Excellent  ___ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

**Professional Service**

_ X_ Excellent  ___ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

**Community Service**

___ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

*Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement.*

The TTU Family & Consumer Science Education faculty are to be commended for their hard work and dedication to the field and the advocacy and support for their students. They are all working diligently to fulfill assigned responsibilities.

Faculty productivity is good overall but uneven across faculty members. Not all faculty members are publishing as much as desirable at a research-intensive university and not all are actively pursuing grants and external funding. It was noted that efforts are being made to encourage increased research productivity and new strategies are being explored to leverage strengths and talents of faculty.

IV. Students and Graduates

*Please evaluate the following by marking an X in one of the blanks for each item:*

**Time to degree**

___ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

**Retention**

_ X_ Excellent  ___ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement
Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement

The onsite review provided opportunity to speak with a group of graduate students at both the Master’s as well as doctoral levels. Comments were very favorable about the program, the faculty, and the overall experiences being provided. There was also some diversity within the group and men as well as women were represented.

Student comments supported the perspective that FCSE faculty workloads are heavy. Especially in the area of advising for doctoral students, one faculty member is doing most of the work. Students would benefit from additional research-focused doctoral faculty members. This would provide a greater range of expertise and scholarship to inform advising, doctoral research, and pursuit of grants and research funding.

V. Facilities and Resources

Please evaluate the following by marking an X in one of the blanks for each item:

Facilities
___ Excellent  _X_ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

Facility Support Resources
_X_ Excellent  ___ Very Good  ___ Good  ___ Needs Improvement

Financial Resources
Please comment on the positive components and suggested areas of improvement

Facilities for instruction and faculty research appeared adequate. The faculty offices are not in contiguous spaces, but they are not far from each other within the building. Classroom equipment and technology resources were very good and appropriate for the types of instructional delivery models being used. Faculty have adequate technical support and funding has been provided for them to participate in research conferences and professional development activities.

Staff resources are being shared and there was some indication that greater support was needed in this area. Graduate students share in the support for the program through their assistantship assignments and employment to work with funded projects.

VI. Overall Ranking

Please provide summative conclusions based on the overall review.

The summative conclusions for this overall review were that the TTU FCSE graduate program is a viable and important component of the College of Human Sciences. An outstanding faculty member, who is research-active, dedicated, and hardworking, is providing leadership for the program. Support for the program is evident from the Dean’s Office and students in the program are satisfied and positive in their comments about their programs of study. The program has a strong national reputation and is meeting an essential need for preparation of FCSE teachers and teacher educators.

It is clear that an additional faculty line to increase support for the doctoral program is needed. It is also clear that gaining approval for such a line will be challenging. Efforts are being made to increase undergraduate enrollments as well as to continue growing graduate enrollments. These initiatives are supported by the Dean’s Office and have the potential to result in higher student numbers that would in turn support requests for a new position. In the near term, however, collaborative strategies should be further explored that would enhance support for this program and its graduate students.

Please provide summative recommendations based on the overall review.

The summative recommendations are enumerated below:

1. The College of Human Sciences has three research clusters related to obesity, recovery science, and retirement planning and living. The FCSE program area has potential to contribute within all three of these clusters by providing an education component that would guide application and benefits of the research being conducted as well as to participate in and contribute to that research. FCSE faculty have broad expertise with regard to content areas and can provide valuable perspectives to focused scholarship on obesity, recovery, and
retirement issues. It is recommended that the Dean facilitate inclusion of FCSE faculty in the research cluster initiatives and that the FCSE faculty seek an active role within these groups. While extension education or the Curriculum Center might be playing some role already with the research clusters, it is important for the FCSE faculty to be involved so that mainstream channels to school programs can be facilitated.

2. FCSE faculty should seek additional opportunities for collaboration both within and across colleges. Partnering with the early childhood program might allow for creating efficient mechanisms for handling all that is involved in field and student teaching placements and other teacher certification processes. Connections with engineering, a field that has a growing interest in K-12 engineering education, might result in opportunities to seek NSF funding focused on STEM initiatives where FCSE faculty contribute career development expertise and research. The key point in this recommendation is that until additional faculty resources are provided, expanding the base of faculty support for the FCSE program through collaboration with other TTU faculty is a prudent strategy. There comes a point when working harder is not feasible and creatively seeking synergy with other units becomes essential.

3. Involvement with the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance should be continued. This innovative program appears to be meeting the needs of students and is providing enhanced opportunities for graduate coursework that would not otherwise be available.

4. Development of the FCSE Advisory Committee should be continued and supported. This group might be expanded to include other Human Sciences faculty who have either degrees or experience related to FCSE. Strategies should be considered that would enhance the role of the group, providing them with not only opportunities to advise, but to truly engage and develop a sense of ownership with the program.

5. As the doctoral program in FCSE increasingly adopts an online delivery model it is recommended that a face-to-face component be maintained. This might consist of a summer workshop or seminar or other opportunities for in-person interactions during the academic year. The TTU FCSE faculty exhibit excellent people skills and maintaining some face-to-face elements can help distinguish this degree program from others that are totally online.