

CANADIAN INTERNSHIPS IN FAMILY SCIENCE: CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

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ABSTRACT. This is a descriptive study of internships in Canadian family science undergraduate programs. In addition to a document review of 18 baccalaureate and certificate-level family science programs in Canada, faculty members representing eight Canadian academic institutions participated in interviews. Thirteen (72.2%) academic programs offered required or elective student placements. While similarities existed in the purpose of placements between academic institutions, various structural components of placements varied, including the type of placements offered, student-placement process, academic requirements related to the placements, student supervision, and faculty resources required. In addition, similarities and differences existed between the results from this study and results from previous studies conducted in the United States. Future research questions are identified. A family policy alternatives education approach (Bogenschneider, 2002) is used to identify seven possible directions for the future development of internships in family science.

Pre-professional experience has many names and many purposes. Internships, practica, field experience, cooperative programs, experiential learning, community-based learning, service learning, part-time employment, and volunteer work are among the numerous ways that students can gain practical experience during their undergraduate studies (Bayley, 2004; Gronski & Pigg, 2000; Karasik & Berke, 2001; O'Malley & Wilson, 2004; Shumer & Belbas, 1996; Sproles & Sproles, 1996). O'Malley and Wilson (2004) define the practicum as a hands-on experience where students can apply the knowledge gained through their courses, and it is often the student's first hands-on experience. In contrast, the internship is a supervised field experience of advanced students characterized by a large investment of time and a leadership role in various organizational tasks. In this paper, we focus on internship placements that allow family science

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students to link theory and practice and to build professional skills that qualify as the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) internship requirement (NCFR, 2002).

Prior researchers (e.g., Steinke & Buresh, 2002) found numerous benefits arising from placements for undergraduate students, such as enhanced learning. Students also refine personal values through placements. Batchelder and Root (1994) found that placements increased complexity in thinking about social problems. Students can become more empathetic to the misfortunes of others (Giles & Eyler, 1994), and there can be long-term effects such as increased motivation, enhanced personal development in terms of self-knowledge, and improved self-efficacy and altruism (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Students reported a greater sense of connectedness with the community (Eyler & Giles, 1999) and a greater sense of empowerment (Astin, Sax & Avalos, 1999). When placements are linked with academic course content, there is the potential that a life-long commitment to volunteering will be instilled in students (Astin et al., 1999). Students also learn to collaborate with professionals, both within and outside the student's discipline, as well as with community members (Gronski & Pigg, 2000). Finally, and very importantly, students explore occupational identity issues (Batchelder & Root, 1994), and the future employability of graduates appears to be enhanced through participation in placements (Cantor, 1995).

Many researchers have tried to identify the characteristics of successful placements (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Driscoll, 1998; Eyler, 2000; Eyler & Giles, 1999). A relatively comprehensive list of these characteristics is presented by Zlotkowski (1998), such as support for students in the field, a continuum of volunteer opportunities, establishment of an advisory body, and financial resources. In addition, Bringle and Hatcher (2002) emphasize that reciprocity in the relationship between the campus and the community is essential in designing the learning

objectives of the course and the service needs identified by the community. The importance of, and respect for, the role of staff in community-based agencies as co-educators must also be recognized.

How to best incorporate these beneficial opportunities for students in undergraduate degrees is a current topic of importance in the scholarship of teaching and learning in family science and to the development of the discipline. In order to qualify for accreditation or licensure in many professions, including family life education, new graduates need to demonstrate that they have participated in applied learning outside of the traditional classroom setting (Cantor, 1995). In fact, one could conceptualise a professional training program as the prescribed inclusion of specific theoretical and practical elements relevant to that profession or discipline.

In some disciplines, placements are incorporated into undergraduate professional programs of study that require students to complete course work and experience in specific areas of competency. Social science and health-related disciplines such as social work, education, dietetics, and nursing have institutionalised standardized placement requirements in their academic programs (Bailey, Carpenter, & Harrington, 2002; Caspi & Reid, 1998; Dreuth & Dreuth-Fewell, 2002; Kim & Canfield, 2002; Swick, 1999). Other disciplines, such as psychology and gerontology, frequently include out-of-classroom experiences in undergraduate degrees, but these requirements may vary between institutions and there is no regulatory body enforcing required standards (Reifsteck, 2002; Von Dras & Miller, 2002). At the present time, there are no institutionalised internship requirements for all family science graduates. We first examine the current knowledge and practices of incorporating placements in family science undergraduate programs.

Structure and Function of Internships

Although there are well-developed standards for in-class course content for students to become a Certified Family Life Educator through the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) (Bredehoft, 1995; Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2003; Powell & Cassidy, 2001), there is a gap in our knowledge of how to effectively link course work and placements in order to prepare students for professional practice in family science (Olson & Montgomery, 2000; Smith & Morgaine, 2004). However, this gap is beginning to be addressed, such as through the publication of O'Malley and Wilson's (2004) handbook for family studies practicum and internship experiences, designed to bring greater consistency to the training of family life education students in practicums and internships settings.

The relatively recent requirement of a practicum or internship so that academic programs can attain and maintain program approval by NCFR provides us with an opportune time to examine current academic practices surrounding internships and how we can improve them in the future. Our current knowledge can be divided into two broad categories including the structure (e.g., hours required, timing during degree, location of placements) and the function (e.g., purpose, desired student outcomes) of internships.

Structure

The structure of placements varies greatly between institutions, and no one structure is currently widely practiced. We expect that the diversity of internship opportunities available to family science students stems from the nature of our discipline, which is grounded in both liberal and professional studies and is inherently interdisciplinary (Smith & Morgaine, 2004).

Smart and Berke (2004) recently studied family science programs in the United States, and found that the majority of programs provided opportunities for community-based learning experiences for their students, although great variation existed in areas such as hours of

experience completed, when these experiences occur during the degree, administrative support and the types of placement locations. In a qualitative study of students enrolled in a semester-long family and consumer sciences internship course, including family science majors, Olson and Montgomery's (2000) results pointed to the value of pre-placement academic preparation such as observation or interviewing professionals. Smart and Berke (2004) emphasize that pre-professional preparation, such as some coursework, is crucial before sending students out into the community. Sproles and Sproles (1996) contend that an internship should be completed within the last two years of a degree and last between 10 and 16 weeks. The current NCFR requirement does not specify when the out-of-classroom experiences need to occur during the student's program of study, only that the minimum of 3 semester-hour credits or 125 clock hours of actual direct practice is completed. Finally, Keim (1990) argued that more full-time placements be made available to family science students.

Function

The function of placements also currently varies greatly, but the inclusion of out-of-classroom experiences in most family science programs points to a central philosophy in this applied social science discipline that skill development and experiential learning are valued and can enhance student's comprehension (Sollie & Kaetz, 1992). A positive value is placed on the integration of classroom content with practical learning in the community (Karasik & Berke, 2001; Smart & Berke, 2004). However, Giles and Mize (1990) point out that just offering placement opportunities is not enough, and that we need to strive for high quality internship programs. They found that high quality internships can provide students with knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of family and human services professionals, increase confidence relating to clients and professionals, and contribute to personal growth and career goals.

Often, placements in family science are oriented towards student learning, including the student's personal and professional development, as opposed to a more work-based orientation, such as completing tasks related to the needs of the organization (Montgomery, 1999). Many family science students complete service-learning placements where learning goals also include developing a sense of community and civic responsibility (Friesen, Whitaker, & Piotrowicz, 2004; Paulins, 1999). Because of the purpose of service-learning experiences, these can be effectively used in introductory courses and may be helpful in aiding students to gain practical experience and select specific in-depth placements later in their degree.

Olson and Montgomery (2000) collected data from seven students about expectations of an internship and an actual internship experience. For some students, there was a fit between expectations about what would happen in the placement and what actually happened in their professional roles, such as in the types of activities the student's engaged in. For other students, the placement exceeded their expectations in terms of personal development and growth and/or the development of professional skills. Finally, other students found their expectations and the actual internship experiences did not match, such as instead of working directly with youth, the student completed fund raising tasks. More data is needed from students to ensure that placements in family science are meeting their needs as learners and as future professionals.

From what we currently know about the structure and function of out-of-classroom experiences in family science, we can conclude that great diversity exists in the United States, especially in the structure of internships. There is no literature currently available that examines placements in family science programs at Canadian Universities and Colleges. The first purpose of this study was to contribute to our current knowledge by conducting a study of Canadian family science undergraduate programs and examining similarities and differences between

practices in the two countries. Our second purpose was to draw upon the prior research conducted in the United States, and the results of our study, in order to examine the possible directions for the future development of internships in family science.

Methods

We identified a total of 14 Canadian Colleges and Universities offering family science (i.e., family studies, family social sciences, family relations) baccalaureate programs through the programs listings in *Graduate and Undergraduate Study in Marriage and Family: A guide to bachelor's and master's and doctoral programs in the United States and Canada* (Hans, 2002) and through an internet search. In addition, we identified four certificate programs that comprised of 8-10 courses, or the equivalent of 24-30 semester hours. These certificate programs can be completed as stand-alone programs or as part of a degree. We completed an analysis of publicly available documents via the internet (e.g., academic calendars, program requirements, course descriptions) from each of these 18 institutions. We identified the title, purpose, length of the placements and/or credit awarded, and whether the placements were elective or degree requirements.

In addition to the document review, the Research Coordinator contacted the head of the academic units identified via e-mail. She informed the faculty members of the purpose of the research and asked them to facilitate contact with someone from their academic unit who could provide information on the course(s) involving placements. Arrangements were made for a semi-structured telephone interview with a total of eight faculty who responded. Information requested included logistical information about the placements, information on student and faculty activities and workload, and certification of graduates as a family life educator. The complete list of interview questions is in Appendix A. The Research Coordinator took extensive notes during

and following each of these interviews. The eight interviews completed lasted between 20 and 55 minutes each, and averaged 35 minutes. Faculty from the remaining institutions did not participate because they did not offer placements or a suitable respondent was not identified. In addition, we did not include our own institution in the interview component of the study.

Results

We first present results of the document review, followed by the results of the interviews, focusing on the structure and function of the placements provided to family science students.

Document Review

In Table 1, we present a summary of the characteristics of Canadian family science placements currently available. The document review showed that the purpose of the placements tended to focus on helping students to develop linkages between theory and practice, enhancing the professional skills of students, and learning about the operations of the placement site. In addition, the purpose of several placement programs included the enhancement of employment options of students.

Of the 14 baccalaureate level family science programs identified in Canada, three programs are currently approved by NCFR, which permits graduates to apply for status as a Provisional CFLE upon graduation. However, students can complete some form of placement in a total of 11 of the 14 (78.6%) degree programs and in nine of the 14 degree programs (64.3%), students are required to complete a placement. In the four certificate-level programs identified, students can complete a placement in two of the programs. The length of the placements ranged from a minimum of one semester-hour to 1000 hours of placement experience during the program of study. Most of the placements occurred during the last two years of study.

Interviews

Analysis of the data from the interviews with faculty members resulted in content related to the purpose of the placements and various structural components of placements including type of placements offered, the student-placement process, academic requirements related to the placements, student supervision, and faculty resources required. It appeared evident that the purpose or function of the placements was to provide a wide range of academic and community experiences to extend and enrich students' perspectives on families. Certification has not been a priority within the various family studies programs. None of the programs were able to indicate whether graduates go on to become certified as a family life educator after graduation.

Although we did not collect data on the types of specific sites where students completed placements, respondents indicated a trend for movement away from structured lab school placements to a greater variety of placement opportunities in community-based agencies. All of the respondents indicated that the identification of placement sites was made either through previous experience with the organization or through student suggestions. None of the respondents indicated that personnel approached faculty directly in search of students to be placed in their organization. More than half of the respondents utilized a process in which students applied for out-of-classroom experiences in order to gather information about the students and to help faculty with the process of matching students with an appropriate placement site.

The academic aspect of the placement experience was paramount for all respondents. The respondents reported the inclusion of course credits and graded assignments with placement experiences. Only two faculty members reported that courses including placements operated on a pass/fail system. A key element for faculty involved helping students to develop the skills of

reflective practice, that is incorporating reflection about their experiences in the placement with theory and principles taught in their academic courses. One assignment common in all programs included the requirement that students complete a reflective learning journal of their experiences. Respondents from 6 programs also incorporated some form of contact time for students with the course instructor and other students completing placements, either through face-to-face seminars or through a computer-based medium such as WebCT.

We found that several academic units and placements sites required formal placement agreements for liability and/or insurance purposes. Placement programs, especially those involving hospitals, often required very formal legal agreements dealing with a host of additional issues such as confidentiality. Respondents from 4 programs indicated that they regularly utilized some form of a learning contract between the student and placement site.

Day-to-day supervision of the students was the responsibility of the field supervisor at the community agency. In some cases, the field supervisors had input into the students' grades. There appeared to be a trend of moving away from having field supervisors assigning grades for student performance; however, their involvement in other aspects of the evaluation and feedback process for the students continued to be valid and valued.

The various logistical and coordination functions needed for effective placements presented significant demands on human resources. The number of students involved per year in each institution ranged from two students in one university's new field experience course, to approximately 60 students. Most of the respondents reported providing placements to 12-30 students per year. The respondents reported that students required a great deal of instruction and support, especially at the beginning of the placement, and with various placement issues including confidentiality, ethical behavior, interaction with staff and worksite policies.

Four of the respondents indicated that they have a coordinator position that is not always a tenured or tenure-stream faculty member. In two of the programs, the coordinator also completed program advising responsibilities. A full-time faculty member coordinated field placements in only two programs. In one program, a part-time coordinator, along with faculty instructors, supervised students, but the faculty member reported that this will change with the anticipated development and implementation of a new curriculum. Some faculty received course relief when they taught placement courses.

Discussion

This study is a descriptive study of all known family science undergraduate programs in Canada. Although the small sample of faculty participating in the interview component of our study limits the generalizability of the data generated through interviews with faculty, through this process, we learned a great deal of in-depth information about placements in these eight academic programs.

Our results indicate similarities with programs in the United States in that most academic programs currently offer students the opportunity to complete a placement during their degree (Smart & Berke, 2004). In addition, the purpose or function of placements for undergraduate family science students appears to be similar in the two countries, such as to applying theoretical concepts and preparing graduates for the workplace (Giles & Mize, 1990; Karasik & Berke, 2001). Differences appear in the name used to describe the placements. In Canada, the placements were typically called practicums or field placements. Internship was not used in any Canadian programs, although this term is commonly used to describe placements in United States (Smart & Berke, 2004). It is evident that from the literature available on family science programs in the United States and the results of our Canadian study, that great diversity continues

to exist between colleges and universities in the structure of placement opportunities and requirements for family science students, such as the length of placements (Smart & Berke, 2004).

Providing students with the opportunity to apply conceptual and theoretical frameworks in professional settings can be a challenge for many students, and requires a great deal of faculty resources (Smith & Morgaine, 2004). Based on the data we collected from faculty in Canadian academic programs, we conclude that it is beneficial to designate permanent placement coordinators who are then able to provide the student support, serve as a community liaison and monitor and mentor students. These activities are critical to providing meaningful and successful experiences for students. Permanent coordinators are also able to initiate and maintain relationships with personnel in community agencies that are contributing valuable resources by supervising students placed with them. However, we found that permanent coordinators are not always available in Canadian programs. Smart and Berke (2004) found that field liaisons include tenure-track faculty, part-time or adjunct faculty, and in some cases, there is no field liaison. Limited faculty resources are a reality in higher education today, and a great deal of administrative support is needed for institutions to add resources that allow for a permanent placement coordinator. In 1990, Giles and Mize emphasized that sufficient time needs to be available for student supervision. However, how much faculty time that is needed to complete monitoring, evaluating and mentoring activities critical to maintaining high quality placement experiences is currently not clear. Future research could help to identify best practices and future standards related to faculty resources.

In addition to the examination of the structure and function of placements, we also suggest that the content of family science placements also needs to be examined. Should there be

specified stages or levels that family science students complete during their degree? Could these follow Doherty's (2003) Levels of Family Involvement model in which students become increasingly skilled at working with individuals and families over time? Could students advance over time through the lower levels to develop the skills to be able to lead groups dealing with feelings and support (Level 3) by graduation? The content of placements could also draw upon the competencies for family life educators developed by Buck, Campbell, Chatelaine and Merrill (2003). These authors identified skills and abilities matched to each of NCFR's 10 substance areas for family life educators. Should students be required through their coursework and placements to achieve these skills and abilities by graduation? In addition, it is not known how much time should be dedicated to gaining experience in specific content areas or in developing a specific skill.

There is little or no research on quality indicators for placements in family science (Smart & Berke, 2004). While NCFR is attempting to fill this gap with the recent publication, *Pathways to Practice* (O'Malley & Wilson, 2004), this remains a critical issue to be addressed as family science programs develop and continue to promote community-based experiences as part of the academic preparation of students. In addition, we are lacking systematic and rigorous evaluation of placements (Karasik & Berke, 2001; Smart & Berke, 2004). Including a diverse group of stakeholders in this evaluation process, such as current and former students, and personnel in the organizations that supervise students during placements hire students after graduation could be advantageous. Identifying the value placed on student placements by community agencies, academic institutions, the broader community could also be beneficial. Research involving the investigation and development of best practices for internship experiences for family science students is sorely needed.

Communication between different professional organizations would also be useful. Family Service Canada certifies professionals as Certified Canadian Family Educators (CCFE's) (Family Service Canada, 2004). This certification program began in 1993 as part of the organization's activities to promote excellence in services provided to families. One difference in the Canadian certification process is that the required 150 hours of practice of delivering family education programs (i.e., delivering a 2 hour workshop equals 2/150 hours) can be completed during and/or after completing training in the content areas. Thus, students can apply placements completed during their degree towards their practice hours. Family Service Canada does not currently have the capacity to approve academic programs, and thus, three of the Canadian programs received approval by NCFR. We suggest that information and resource sharing between NCFR and Family Service Canada would be advantageous for both organizations, and in further developing internships.

In order to contribute to the dialogue of how policymaking organizations, such as NCFR and Family Service Canada, and faculty and administrators in individual institutions of higher education, may choose to proceed in developing internship requirements for family science students, we applied Bogenschneider's (2002) family policy alternatives education approach that is designed to inform the policy making process. Central to this approach is identifying the potential consequences of various alternatives to a specific problem or question.

In Table 2, we summarise our application of this approach to internships in family science. We found it useful to anticipate the possible advantages and disadvantages for students, faculty, and the organizations where students are placed when conceptualizing each of the seven alternatives and the potential consequences. We emphasize that we are not proponents of any one of these options, but we believe that it is useful to have a debate about the feasibility of these

alternatives.

The question of whether or not diversity in placement opportunities for students in our discipline should be celebrated and encouraged remains. Smart and Berke (2004) pose the following question “Are family science or family service undergraduates at a disadvantage for employment without a mandated internship experience, or, at the minimum, some other out-of-classroom mandated experience” (p. 120). The time appears right to critically examine placement requirements for undergraduate family science students and to determine the effectiveness of current practices. We hope that this paper will contribute to the future development of internships for undergraduate family science students in the United States, Canada and elsewhere.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

Curriculum Information

1. What is the name of the diploma, degree, and/or certificate(s) awarded to students in your academic unit?
2. Please describe how experiential learning is incorporated into the curriculum in your academic unit (e.g., courses, practica, internships, assignments, co-op work terms, field placements, rotations, stages).
3. How do you determine where experiential learning opportunities can take place?
4. Please describe formal agreements, if any, that are established with placement sites for students.
5. Is the provision of experiential learning opportunities a priority in your academic unit, faculty, or University/College?
6. Are these experiential learning opportunities volunteer or paid positions?
7. Are there course credits or graded assignments associated with these experiential learning opportunities?
8. Are experiential learning opportunities degree requirements or optional assignments?
9. What, if any, special recognition of student participation in experiential learning opportunities exists in your academic unit?
10. Is there a formal application process for students to participate in experiential learning opportunities? If so, please describe.
11. Is there some overall body (such as a curriculum development committee) that oversees experiential learning opportunities within your academic unit?
12. Please describe the development and ongoing evaluation of experiential learning in your academic unit.
13. Have you accessed instructional development grants in the process of developing curriculum that incorporates experiential learning? If so, please describe.

Student Information

14. How many students are involved in experiential learning opportunities in your academic unit?
15. What stage, year, or level are students at in their academic program when they participate in experiential learning opportunities?
16. What feedback have you received from students who participate in experiential learning opportunities?
17. How do students incorporate reflection on their experiential learning and theory taught in their courses?
18. Do experiential learning opportunities influence student graduation dates (i.e., add additional time required to complete a degree)?

Faculty Information

19. Who provides the following functions for students participating in experiential learning opportunities: finding and assigning, coordination, support, supervision, and evaluation?
20. What is the impact of student experiential learning opportunities on faculty workload?

Certification

21. Do you offer the course-work necessary for students to become a Certified Canadian Family Educator or a Certified Family Life Educator?
22. Do you offer the required number of hours and types of practical experience for your students to qualify as a Certified Canadian Family Educator or Certified Family Life Educator upon graduation?
23. Is certification something that students in your academic unit are interested in obtaining?
24. Are your students encouraged to apply for certification?
25. If known, how many of your graduates obtain certification as a family educator?
26. If known, how long does it take your graduates to obtain certification as a family educator after graduation?

Supporting Documentation

27. Please list typical organizations, agencies, or businesses that your students have been placed with.
28. Please provide us with any additional supporting documentation (e.g., syllabi, guidelines, handbook, reports).

Other

29. Other respondent comments.
30. Interviewer comments.

Table 1

Characteristics of Canadian Family Science Undergraduate Internships

Institution, Name of Experience	Purpose or Description	Required or Elective/ Year	Hours/ Credits
Bachelor's Degree Programs			
University of British Columbia: Practicum	Supervised practicum in an assigned human service setting	Elective 4 th Year	3 semester hours ^a
University of Prince Edward Island: Practicum and Field Placement	Experience in areas of professional practice, integrate theory into practice through practical use of the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom, test attitudes and abilities to work with people, grow in self-awareness, learn and develop helping and administrative skills through observation, practice, and reflection	Required 3 rd and 4 th year	192 hours, 9 semester hours
Heritage Baptist College: Educational Theory and Practice, Professional Field Education	Practical methodologies suited to the student's career aspirations, integrate past learning with current practice, assist the student in developing a professional persona, assist in determining vocational direction	Required 2 nd to 4 th Year	8 semester hours
University of Alberta: Practicum	Students gain hands-on knowledge and skills, forge strong connections with professionals, learn the industry, enhance employability	Required 4 th year	200 hours, 3 semester hours
University of Manitoba: Field Experience	Gain practical experience in a community setting under the guidance of an onsite field experience supervisor and a field experience coordinator; integrate theory, knowledge and skills, develop a sense of identity as a professional, and develop linkages with professionals in the field	Elective 4 th year	120 hours
University of Guelph- Humber: Practicum	Foster the development of transferable skills that can be adapted to any community or organization, take part in the day-to-day operations of a social services agency, be a professional in training, performance expectations increase according to semester	Required 2 nd to 4 th year	1000 hours

Institution, Name of Experience	Purpose or Description	Required or Elective, Year	Hours, Credits
University of Guelph: Practicum	Demonstrate the application of theory studied earlier in the program, provide opportunities for working directly with people, examine role of the professional and program implementation	Required 3 rd and 4 th Year	2 units (12 semester hours)
St. Jerome's University: Practicum	Unpaid apprenticeship in a human sexuality or family studies setting	Required 4 th year	.5 unit (3 semester hours)
Mount Saint Vincent University: Practicum	Students attain professional experience, become familiar with the purposes, methods, problems with the agency they are assigned to, learn about policies and procedures, apply theoretical understandings to practical settings, build upon entry-level competencies in the first practicum	Required 3 rd and 4 th Year	1 unit (6 semester hours)
McGill University: Practicum ^b	Enable students to become practitioners in the field, theoretical principles will be applied	Required	6 semester hours
University de Moncton: Stage	Observation and work experience related to family science with an organization or government department under the supervision of a professional (Effective May, 2008)	Required 4 th year	1 semester hour
Certificate Programs (24-30 semester credits)			
Ryerson University: Practicum	Practicum will relate to the student's personal and professional interests, students will integrate knowledge gained in previous courses	Required Final year	3 semester hours
Concordia University: Fieldwork Practice	Opportunity for students to integrate theory into practice in the design, facilitation and evaluation of small group process, students take the lead in a task in the placement	Required Final year	3 semester hours

^a can be completed for more than 3 semester hours

^b 30 semester-hour certificate completed after an earned degree

Table 2

Policy Alternatives Analysis

Issue: There is currently great diversity in the structural requirements for out-of-classroom learning experiences in undergraduate family science programs.	
Alternative	Potential Consequences
A. Create required standardized internships for all undergraduate students in family science programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased professional recognition of graduates. 2. Increased employment opportunities. 3. Increased resources required to train students. 4. Costs for students may increase. 5. Lack of faculty and administrative support. 6. Resources required to monitor and enforce policies. 7. Potential for conflict for community organizations in terms of providing service to clients versus professional learning opportunities for students.
B. Create required standardized internships for students in undergraduate family life education specialization within family science programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased training resources required. 2. Lack of faculty and administrative support. 3. Confusion due to graduates from an academic unit having divergent experiences and skills. 4. Resources required to monitor and enforce policies.
C. Develop voluntary standards for internships.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Graduates from various programs will have divergent experiences and opportunities for skill development. 2. Universities will be able to develop curriculum that meets the needs of their students. 3. Conflict will be avoided.
D. Require all internship requirements to become a family life educator be incorporated into undergraduate family science programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhanced job opportunities for graduates. 2. Increased number of certified family life educators. 3. Modifications required for the certification process. 4. Increased training resources required. 5. Reduced time available to focus on course content. 6. Availability and willingness of appropriate community organizations to participate.
E. Remove internships from undergraduate family science programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduced employment opportunities for graduates. 2. Reduced resources required to train students. 3. Increased time available to focus on course content. 4. Impact on students' ability to incorporate theoretical

	concepts into practice.
Alternative	Potential Consequence
F. Create a formal post-graduate internship program graduates to become certified family life educators.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased time available to focus on course content in undergraduate training. 2. Not enough internships available for all graduates. 3. Resources required to implement internship program. 4. Increased chance of becoming certified for those who complete an internship. 5. Reduced time working before becoming certified for most graduates. 5. Increased job opportunities for graduates. 6. Cost to students who will be delaying entry into the work force.
G. Do nothing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Graduates from various programs will have divergent experiences and opportunities for skill development. 2. Academic units will be able to develop curriculum that meets the needs of their students. 3. Resource needs will not be required to change. 4. Conflict will be avoided.