

## Introduction to the Special Issue

Welcome to this special issue of *Family Science Review* devoted to Advancing the Discipline of Family Science and Family Science Programs! We were pleased with the number of submissions we received from university faculty members across the United States—so many that we will publish a second issue. Our hope is that each of the papers in this collection will offer ideas, insights, and information which can strengthen the family science discipline, as well as our academic programs in family science.

As an Academic Dean and Director of The Ohio State University at Mansfield and Professor in the College of Education and Human Services at The Ohio State University, Columbus, Dr. Stephen Gavazzi offers an administrator's perspective in his article on the sustainability of family science programs. Using marriage as a metaphor, Dr. Gavazzi examines departmental mergers and reorganizational activities in higher education. He also employs “prescriptions for failure” to help those of us in family science to think long and hard about what we need to do to keep our programs vital, including becoming more intentional about training family science faculty to be effective leaders and administrators.

Recognizing the growing demand to document performance, Dr. James Deal, Department Head and Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at North Dakota State University, provides two important sources for national departmental evaluation data: the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the National Research Council (NRC). While not perfect, both resources provide useful productivity information which can be helpful when assessing family science programs. Deal, also suggests some new options for gathering comparative data and the National Council on Family Relation's potential role.

Several papers provide us with some great new data on family science programs.

Kathleen Walker and Maureen Blankemeyer, faculty members in the Human Development and Family Studies Department at Kent State University, present empirical findings from an online employment survey they conducted with their human development and family science alumni relative. Their findings offer great insights relative to the types of positions and job functions of HDFS graduates and has important ramifications for family science academic programs.

With increasing expectations for comprehensive assessment within higher education, Sharon Ballard and her colleagues in the Department of Child Development and Family Relations at East Carolina University propose employing the THINK, VALUE, COMMUNICATE, LEAD (TVCL) model for curricular and programmatic review. The authors describe the TVCL process, including how the central question used by the model-- “What do we want an FCS graduate to look like?”— shapes the assessment activity.

Using a sample of family science professionals, Paul Schvaneveldt and his colleagues in the Department of Child and Family Studies at Weber State University report the core competencies deemed as most necessary to adequately prepare undergraduate family science students for professional pursuits. They also address the implications of the findings for family science curricula.

How do we encourage undergraduates to consider pursuing graduate work in couple and family therapy? Christopher Belous from Mercer University in Atlanta, along with Michigan State University colleagues Jessica Topor and Samantha Gorton describe an innovative internship program in which graduate students mentor undergraduates into a COAMFTE- Accredited Couple and Family Therapy graduate program. They also offer evaluative data on the effectiveness of the internship program for helping undergraduates to explore couple and family therapy as a graduate option.

Finally, recognizing the desire for more diversity within the family science curriculum and in order to enhance our students' cultural competence and employability, Olena Nesteruk in the Department of Family and Child Relations at Montclair State University outlines her ideas for an Immigrant Families course. The article includes course objectives, content, activities, possible required readings, and many other resources for developing a similar course.

We hope that these papers inspire our readers to further discussion and action. The future of family science and the strength of family science programs depend on it.

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