



FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

AAFCS

CO-BRANDING TOOLKIT



Customized key messages for AAFCS members and units  
for the field of family and consumer sciences

August 2011

## Introduction Letter

Dear AAFCS Colleague,

True to form for our association's brand essence of "being a leader in the field of family and consumer sciences," AAFCS has been the catalyst in bringing together FCS-related organizations for the purpose of leveraging each individual group's limited resources for maximum positive impact for family and consumer sciences. In 2006, AAFCS invited organizations that address the integrative nature of our field and include our multiple content areas to join the FCS Alliance.

At the 2010 FCS Alliance meeting, we identified the many initiatives on which we are each focused. And from that list, we prioritized the initiatives by interest and need. The number one priority identified was that of developing a brand for the field of family and consumer sciences! We wanted to have a symbol for the field of family and consumer sciences that was as recognizable as the caduceus is for the field of medicine or the scales of justice is for the field of law.

In the fall of 2010, 9 FCS-related organizations decided to join AAFCS in the Family & Consumer Sciences Branding Initiative. AAFCS partnered with Quixote Group, a research, marketing, and public relations firm, to guide us through this initiative. Because we live in such an over-communicated society, one of our primary goals was to develop messages that more clearly convey the value that family and consumer sciences professionals provide to individuals, families, and communities.

In this Co-Branding Toolkit, you will find tools that can help us consistently communicate to the public, legislators, and key decision makers what the field of family and consumer sciences is and the value it provides, as well as who AAFCS is and our role in the field of family and consumer sciences. With all AAFCS members and units using the messages consistently, we will improve the understanding of and visibility of family and consumer sciences and AAFCS.

We thank you in advance for your efforts to increase recognition of family and consumer sciences and AAFCS' role in the field!

Sincerely,

*Carolyn Jackson*

Carolyn W. Jackson, CFCS  
Executive Director

## FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES BRANDING INITIATIVE

The objective of the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Branding Initiative is to develop an overall communications and branding strategy for the FCS field, which would include the following:

- A set of FCS-related key messages, as well as a recommended key message architecture
- A common FCS brand story that helps tell the history, heritage and evolution of the family and consumer sciences field
- An overall brand essence
- A recommended logo that can be used with permission by participating associations and organizations

The overall goals of the branding program are to:

- Create a common brand for FCS, including a consistent set of key messages
- Elevate FCS as a science – reinforce that the foundation for the curricula and programs is research and evidence based
- Increase awareness and recognition for FCS – both within internal and external audiences
- Focus on the value of the field rather than the definition of the field

In order to develop the key messages and branding recommendations, Quixote Group conducted stakeholder interviews with the following individuals to gain insights on the issues and challenges facing the field of family and consumer sciences, as well as the their perspective on the unique role the field plays in today's society.

Name	Organization
Caroline Crocoll	<b>USDA, NIFA (National Institute of Food and Agriculture)</b>
Bana Yahnke	<b>FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America)</b>
Gearldean Johnson	<b>CAFCS (Council of Administrators of Family &amp; Consumer Sciences)</b>
Mary Warnock	<b>International Federation for Home Economics - U.S.</b>
Leslie Watkins	<b>ACTE FACS Education Division (Association for Career and Technical Education)</b>
Diane Klemme	<b>NATEFACS (National Association of Teacher Educators for Family &amp; Consumer Sciences)</b>
Karen Bergh	<b>FCSEA (Family &amp; Consumer Sciences Education Association)</b>
Janis Meek	<b>NASAFACS (National Association of State Administrators of Family &amp; Consumer Sciences)</b>
Cherie Mingus	<b>NATFACS (National Association of Teachers of Family &amp; Consumer Sciences)</b>
Jan Bowers	<b>FCSEA (Family &amp; Consumer Sciences Education Association)</b>
Debra DeBates	<b>NATEFACS (National Association of Teacher Educators for Family &amp; Consumer Sciences)</b>

These stakeholder interviews provided additional insights into the 15 stakeholder interviews and benchmarking of seven FCS-related organizations conducted by Quixote Group in May 2009 on behalf of AAFCS as part of its overall branding initiative.

The stakeholder interviews identified several key issues and challenges that are being faced by the family and consumer sciences field. Key issues related to declining financial, human, and educational resources include:

- Declining, or in some cases a lack of, funding for FCS programs.
- FCS professionals have fewer resources to be trained or join professional associations and organizations, which has put a strain on membership and has made it more challenging for the professional organizations to offer resources to FCS professionals.
- Smaller FCS-related departments are being swallowed up by bigger ones, or being eliminated altogether. As a result, some FCS programs stand the potential of being less visible to interested students.
- There is a shortage of people going into FCS teaching, which may have long-term implications for the field.
- Several states no longer have universities that offer programs that lead to certified FCS teachers.

However, there were issues and challenges that were surfaced, which can be addressed by a clear and consistent set of FCS-related key messages. Examples of these include the following:

- The broad diversity of content makes FCS difficult to communicate and comprehend. Therefore, the priority should be to communicate the benefit of FCS, rather than attempting to communicate what FCS is.
- The perception that FCS education should be regarded as optional electives, not core elements of any curriculum, impacts funding and administrative support. This perception is much like the one faced by music and art, and these are all important components to a well-rounded education. To counter this perception, FCS must be seen as vital to the advancement of knowledge and skills that are critical to current and trending societal issues.
- Many in the field, including teachers, still refer to family and consumer sciences as home economics, which causes and perpetuates confusion.

To gain insights into the role that FCS plays in today's society, respondents were asked to talk about their perspective on what FCS does or provides. Responses included the following:

- Basic life skills
- Knowledge
- Education and experiences
- Applied knowledge, skills, and experiences
- Hands-on skills and experiences
- Content and experiences
- Helps solve issues
- Helps solve problems for others
- Helps meet human needs
- Transforms individuals and families
- Affects and/or changes lives
- Provides tools to become critical thinkers and problem solvers
- Provides the foundation of knowledge and skills

The above themes should be addressed within the FCS key messages and brand essence. However, it is important that those in the FCS field consider a change in how they articulate the role that they play in enhancing the life skills of individuals and families. Stakeholders referred to these skills as *basic* life skills, which may tend to undervalue the knowledge and experience provided by FCS organizations and professionals. We would recommend that FCS refer to them as *essential* life skills, which is a more accurate description of the focus that FCS provides on critical areas, including health and wellness, family and community living, and economic and consumer issues.

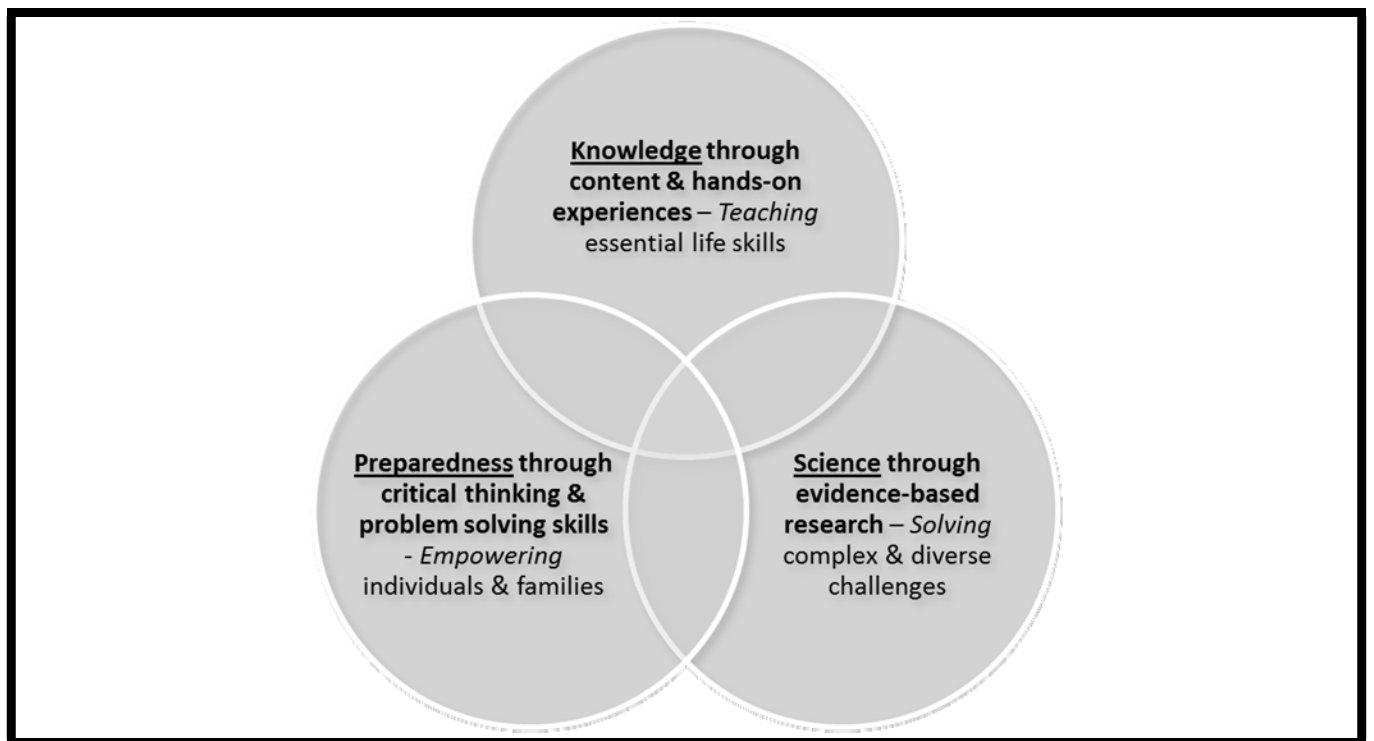
To better understand and articulate the benefit of FCS, respondents were asked to discuss their perspective on what individuals, families, and communities want or value from the work done by FCS organizations and professionals. Responses include the following:

- Improved or enhanced quality of life
- Better life
- Personal growth
- Improved or strengthened families
- Healthy communities
- Being prepared for the future
- Successful and sustainable society
- Helping individuals and families be the best they can be
- Helping individuals and families reach or realize their potential
- Helping people create the best life for themselves, their families, and their communities
- Empowers individuals and families across their life span to live and work in a diverse society

***The features and benefits of family and consumer sciences.***

Combining these two ideas – the role that FCS plays in today’s society and the benefits it provides – allows us to begin to articulate a set of features and benefits.

- FCS provides knowledge, the benefit of which is the teaching of essential life skills to today’s individuals and families.
- Using evidence-based research, FCS provides the science that results in helping to solve the complex and diverse challenges faced by today’s families.
- And by better preparing individuals and families through critical thinking and problem solving skills, FCS empowers them to pursue improvements to their quality of life.

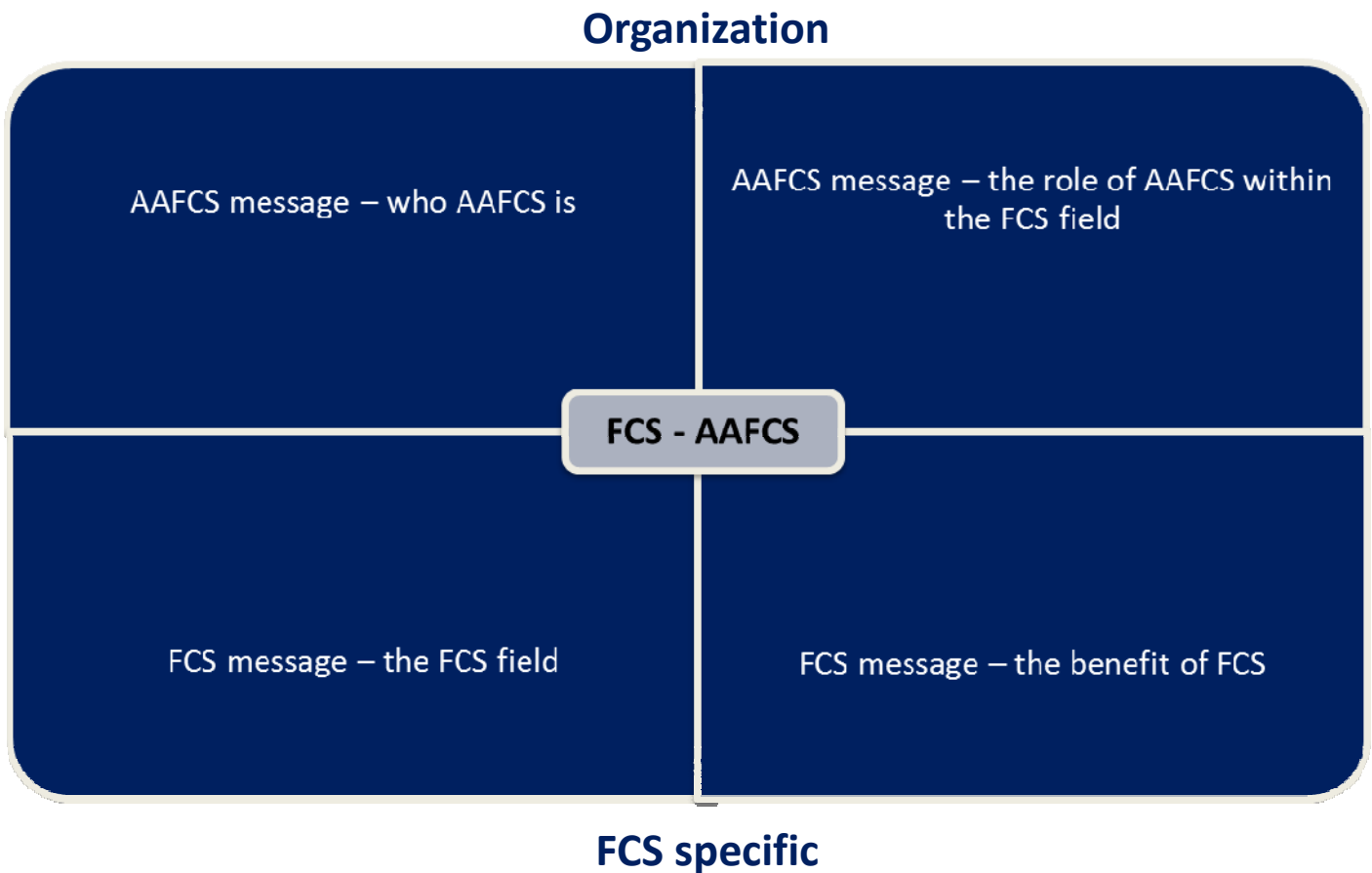


## KEY MESSAGE ARCHITECTURE FOR AAFCS MEMBERS AND UNITS

For the most part, AAFCS members talking about family and consumer sciences will need to accomplish two specific tasks:

- Communicate what FCS is and the benefits it provides
- Communicate the value of AAFCS and its relation to FCS, such as who AAFCS is, its specific role within the field of FCS, and what makes it unique or different from other FCS-related organizations.

The key message architecture helps AAFCS members in the FCS field be better prepared to deliver the most important key messages for speeches, interviews, presentations, brochures, or any other marketing or communications materials.



## FCS-AAFCS INTEGRATED KEY MESSAGE ARCHITECTURE

Together these key messages will help support the essence of both the FCS field and AAFCS as an organization. They are meant for use in conversation, presentations, letters, and any additional communications where it may necessary to provide positioning of not only AAFCS as an organization, but also for the field of FCS.

- The messages across the top of the graphic are the recommended AAFCS messages - one highlighting what AAFCS is and the other demonstrating the unique relationship of AAFCS to the FCS field.
- The messages on the bottom express what FCS is and the value offered by the field.

Essence of **AAFCS**: Leading the field of family and consumer sciences.



Essence of **FCS**: Creating healthy and sustainable families.

## FCS BRAND ICON

To further enhance the unity of the FCS brand, a new icon for the field of family and consumer sciences has been developed. The icon is designed to capture the essence of FCS – to create healthy and sustainable families. The design of the new icon embodies the connection experienced between all individuals touched by FCS, while the use of various silhouette figures depict the diversity that accompanies today's representation of family. Vibrant colors found in the icon bring to life the physical, emotional, and mental energies shared among individuals, families, and communities impacted by FCS.

Through consistent use of this icon, FCS will experience increased brand awareness and recognition both internally and externally, creating a clear, unified voice within the field as well as today's complex society.

For more information regarding the use of the FCS icon, please refer to the *FCS Graphic Standards Manual* and other information posted at [www.aafcs.org/aboutus/FCSbrand.asp](http://www.aafcs.org/aboutus/FCSbrand.asp).





## FCS BRAND STORY

### The Story of Family and Consumer Sciences

The story of family and consumer sciences begins with the story of Ellen Richards, one of the leading figures in the emergence of home economics as a profession. After growing up in modest circumstances in the small town of Dunstable, Massachusetts, Ellen defied the conventions of her times by leaving home to attend the newly founded Vassar College, from which she graduated in 1870. She then went on to be the first—and for many years the only—woman to earn a degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Richards and her followers believed that the application of science to domestic issues could help save society from the social disintegration that was taking place at the turn of the century. Beginning in 1899, Ellen Richards helped organize a series of ten annual conferences that became known as the Lake Placid Conferences. At the first conference, participants agreed on the term *home economics* to define the broad range of disciplines and scientific studies being discussed. The die was cast and a movement took shape.

In 1909, Richards founded the American Home Economics Association (AHEA), which became the most influential professional association for home economists. Richards and AHEA believed that students who chose home economics as a field of study would not only be better prepared to manage their own homes, but would also be better prepared for careers focused on people and their environments. At the federal level, Congress enacted the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 to embed home economics into the U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension and Land Grant University System. In 1963 the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act was passed and has been consistently updated to support career and technical education. Students and teachers across the nation benefit from Perkins funding through FCS curriculum and participation in Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), the student organization for family and consumer sciences.

As times have changed and become more complex, so have the issues that impact our quality of life. Our workforce is more diverse than ever, the definition and makeup of today's families are more varied than previous generations, and our neighborhoods, communities, and cities are facing an increasingly complex set of challenges. Widespread concerns such as obesity, divorce, unemployment and underemployment, homelessness, and the credit crisis have affected nearly everyone.

While the Internet has made a massive amount of information available to us all, access to information alone does not provide the necessary tools and skills to become the critical thinkers and problem solvers that we must be for individuals and families to reach their fullest potential. Lasting solutions to today's complex issues require a comprehensive and integrated set of knowledge, skills, and experiences. Now more than ever, people are looking for tools and resources to help them make more informed decisions to enhance their overall health and well-being.

Home economics transformed the family by helping generations of people become more prepared to build better lives for themselves and their families. But as society continued to present more complex issues and the concept of family became more diversified, it was clear that people needed a more comprehensive array of skills to function successfully on personal, family, and professional levels.

In 1994, home economics-related organizations and programs decided to change the name of the home economics field to family and consumer sciences to more accurately reflect the complexity of the field. Evolving with the cultural norms, *home economics* was repositioned as *family and consumer sciences* to better serve the needs of individuals and families. Today, family and consumer sciences continues to evolve and provides an even broader foundation of essential research-based knowledge and skills to help today's generation of families be better prepared to live, work, and succeed in an increasingly complex and diverse society.

Through the generations, family and consumer sciences has moved beyond the technical homemaking skills taught in home economics toward a holistic focus on the knowledge and skills required to solve the interrelated challenges posed by personal, family, societal, and workplace issues. Today's family and consumer sciences represents the intersection at which content and context cross; the place where research and concepts gain deeper meaning through applied knowledge and skills.

The family and consumer sciences field draws from a broad range of disciplines to help achieve optimal and sustainable quality of life for individuals, families, and communities. This interdisciplinary approach is essential because the challenges of everyday life are not one dimensional. The ability to connect professionals across multiple practice settings and content areas to share knowledge, research, and experience is one of the strengths of the family and consumer sciences field, and helps create more integrated solutions to today's critical social and economic challenges. It truly is the perfect applied science for helping people engage and thrive in our complicated world.

Professionals in family and consumer sciences work to improve the quality and standards of individual and family life by providing educational content and programs, offering leadership opportunities, influencing public policy, and conducting research. They provide research-based knowledge and skills about the topics of everyday life, including human development, personal and family finance, housing and interior design, hospitality and tourism, food science, nutrition and wellness, textiles and apparel, and consumer issues. These same core skills and information provided by family and consumer sciences professionals also nourish professional development, acting as the catalyst that helps cultivate career and technical education (CTE). CTE lays the foundation for tomorrow's chefs, dietitians, designers, child care educators, and many more vital professions.

You will see family and consumer sciences professionals in all walks of life—they are early childhood, elementary, secondary, university/college, and Extension educators, administrators and managers, human service professionals, researchers, community volunteers, business people, and consultants who address the issues most important to our quality of life. The knowledge, research, and experience of these professionals help people create the best life for themselves, their families, and the communities in which they live.