May 4, 2015

Dr. Andrew Hugine, Jr., President
Office of the President
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Dr. Lloyd Walker, Dean
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Dear Dr. Hugine, Dr. Walker, and Dr. Smith:

In its April 23, 2015 meeting, the Council for Accreditation of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences voted to grant accreditation to the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at Alabama A&M University. This action followed careful review and consideration of the Self-Study Report, the report of the site visit team, and the institution’s response to the site visit report.

The Council for Accreditation commends the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and faculty members for providing high quality Family and Consumer Sciences programs. The following strengths are particularly noteworthy:

1. The Unit Chair is well known and respected on campus, in the community, and in the profession. She has excellent rapport with her colleagues and serves as a role model for new and emerging administrators as indicated by other chairs.

2. Faculty members are student-centered and committed to creating a warm, nurturing environment conducive for intellectual growth and professional development of the students. Students, alumni, and advisory board members expressed appreciation for the supportive environment created by the faculty members. The program has produced alumni with national acclaim who have given back through financial gifts, mentoring of students, and speaking engagements.
3. The Unit is to be commended for successful efforts in obtaining internal and external funding for professional development and scholarly pursuits.

4. The Unit’s experiential learning component, requiring 500 hours of practical work activities provides students with a rich array of real world experiences that support the Unit’s commitment to the outreach arm of Alabama A&M University as a Land-Grant Institution.

5. The College and University are to be commended for providing facilities that are spacious and suited for future growth. The classrooms and laboratories are well-equipped with teaching and learning technology to support academic excellence and scholarly pursuits. Faculty members from supporting disciplines and alumni commented on the opportunities to use the facilities for events that promote collaborative partnerships.

6. The history of the Unit is well documented and provides students, alumni, and other constituents with an understanding of and appreciation for the Unit’s strong foundation, accomplishments, and contributions to the university and the profession.

The Council for Accreditation makes the following recommendations to strengthen compliance with accreditation standards and to assist in further enhancement of the programs in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences:

1. Create a process for a new Unit strategic plan that is in concert with the University’s 2015-2025 strategic plan. Identify a vision for the future of the Family and Consumer Sciences Unit. Involve Unit faculty members, staff, students, and other internal and external constituents. Ensure that the new plan has recognizable and measurable long- and short-range goals. Use current Unit assessment results to inform and implement the plan, mission and vision statements, and measurable goals. [Criteria 1.1(5); 1.2(2); 1.2(3); 1.2(4); 1.2(5); 1.2(6)]

2. Update the Unit organizational chart so that reporting line(s) are clearly identified. [Criterion 1.3(2)]

3. Coordinate assessment processes so that data may be used effectively in curriculum planning and updating and sharing of the results with a variety of publics. [Criteria 1.2(6); 2.2(1); 2.2(3)]

4. Align the duties and responsibilities of Program Coordinators as described in the Unit’s Operations Manual with those listed in the University Faculty Handbook. [Criterion 1.4(2a-f)]

5. Develop an assessment plan that links the student learning outcomes (curriculum goals) of the core curriculum with assessment strategies (i.e., mid-level exam, exit exam, etc.) so that students and faculty members are well-grounded in the Family and Consumer Sciences Body of Knowledge. Collect data annually, summarize in a formal report, and use to make informed decisions regarding curriculum and program improvements as well as to inform the public. [Criteria 2.2(1); 2.2(2); 2.2(3); 2.3(2)]
6. Update on an annual basis the approved plan in which reliable information on the
Department of Family and Consumer Sciences aggregated student
achievement/performance data and other measures are provided to the public in a timely
fashion. [Criteria 2.2(1); 2.2(3)]

7. Revise the Unit’s curriculum goals, program goals, objectives, student learning
outcomes, and assessment materials in the core courses to ensure that a consistent
message is communicated to internal and external publics. [Criteria 2.2(1); 2.2(2);
2.2(3)]

8. Enhance the Unit’s distance learning efforts through the continued development of
online courses. [Criteria 2.4(1); 2.4(2)]

9. Strive for balance in filling full-time and part-time faculty positions in all concentrations to
allow opportunities for tenure-track faculty members to enhance scholarly productivity
and to strengthen program stability. [Criteria 4.2(2); 4.2(3); 4.2(4); 4.2(5)]

10. Enhance the Unit’s stability by filling vacant positions, especially the Director of the Child
Development Center, with highly qualified candidates. [Criterion 4.3(1)]

11. Develop and implement a faculty hiring plan (balance of full- and part-time faculty) that
promotes staffing stability and is supportive of student growth. [Criteria 4.3(1); 4.3(2);
4.4(3)]

12. Implement an aggressive recruitment and retention plan using contemporary methods to
continue to increase enrollment and improve student retention. [Criteria 4.4(1); 4.4(3)]

13. Appropriately disseminate evidence of Unit retention and progression of students’
throughout the program to stakeholders and the public. [Criterion 4.4(3)]

Actions taken in response to these recommendations are to be described in the Unit’s first
interim report which shall be submitted in year three (2018) of accreditation. You will receive
notification of the specific date the report will be due to arrive in the Office of Accreditation for
consideration in the Council for Accreditation’s subsequent meeting.

Accreditation is granted by the Council for Accreditation for a period of ten years. Any extension
and/or provisional accreditation periods are counted as part of the ten year period. Therefore,
this accreditation expires Spring 2024. The next Self-Study Report will be due February 1, 2023.

When accreditation is granted, the Unit is eligible to use the AAFCS Seal of Accreditation. This
seal indicates that the Unit has been found to meet or exceed stated criteria and can be used in
all communications, both print and electronic. You will be sent an electronic file containing the
seal graphic with protocol for use.
Members of the Council for Accreditation join us in congratulating you and the faculty on the quality of programs offered by the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. This comes with our good wishes for continued success of the programs.

With best wishes,

Billie J. Collier, Ph.D.
Chair, Council for Accreditation

Gay Nell McGinnis, CFCS, Director
Credentialing, Professional Development, and Research