October 28, 2019

Dr. Mark E. Keenum, President
P.O. Box 6018
Lee Hall, Suite 4000
Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Dr. George Hopper, Dean
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
P.O. Box 9680 Mailstop 9680
Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Dr. Michael Newman, Director
School of Human Sciences
120 Lloyd-Ricks-Watson Building
255 Tracy Drive
Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Dear President Keenum, Dean Hopper, and Director Newman:

In its October 24, 2019 meeting, the Council for Accreditation of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences voted to grant accreditation to the Fashion Design and Merchandising and Human Development and Family Science Programs in the School of Human Sciences at Mississippi State 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 Fashion Design and Merchandising and Human Development and Family Science faculty members for providing high quality Family and Consumer Sciences programs. The following strengths are particularly noteworthy:

1. The Director of the School of Human Sciences is highly respected by University administration, faculty, alumni, and students and is commended for his ability to maximize the use of available resources and encourage and support faculty in seeking funding to meet the instructional, research, and outreach mission and goals of the School.

2. Faculty members are dedicated to providing excellence in the field of human sciences as evidenced through their teaching, generating new knowledge through research, and their outreach efforts.

3. Faculty members provide quality academic and career advising and demonstrate their caring nature to students as role models and mentors.
4. The internship preparation process is an excellent mechanism in the facilitation of student success in their internships and beyond.

5. School of Human Sciences faculty members are commended for their collaboration with faculty from other disciplines at Mississippi State University in sharing resources, broadening the knowledge base, and providing outstanding experiential opportunities for students.

6. The Student Services Coordinator is highly respected within the school and across campus for her ability to connect students with resources to aid in their success and for her caring attitude.

7. Alumni and professionals representing business/industry and community services are exceedingly supportive of the programs and provide valuable human, financial, and laboratory resources to aid in the success of students.

The Council for Accreditation makes the following recommendations to strengthen compliance with accreditation standards and to assist in further enhancement of the Fashion Design and Merchandising and Human Development and Family Science Programs in the School of Human Sciences:

1. For the two program areas (Fashion Design and Merchandising and Human Development and Family Science), develop and implement specific assessment plans that are tied to the School’s mission and goals. In the assessment plan, include measurable goals, benchmarks, identification of assessment tools, a timeline for routine collection and analysis of data. Results of assessment should guide program improvement to complete the assessment cycle. [Criteria 1.2(4); 1.2(6)]

2. Continue to advocate for an elevator in Moore Hall in order to provide appropriate accessibility and comply with ADA requirements. [Criterion 1.5(7)]

3. Incorporate relevant Family and Consumer Sciences Body of Knowledge (i.e. core concepts, integrative elements and cross-cutting themes) in courses throughout the curriculum to reinforce learning in the core courses. Review Family and Consumer Sciences Body of Knowledge annually with all faculty members so that they are prepared to effectively integrate the core concepts, integrative elements, and cross-cutting themes into courses across the curriculum. [Criteria 2.1(1); 2.1(2); 2.1(3)]

4. For each concentration, continue developing measurable student learning outcomes and implement an assessment plan that includes benchmarks, identification of assessment tools, a timeline for routine collection and analysis of data, and a strategy for ongoing use of findings for program improvement. [Criteria 2.2(1); 2.2(2); 2.2(3)]

5. Update at least annually the public reporting of reliable Fashion Design and Merchandising and Human Development and Family Sciences aggregated student achievement/performance data and other outcome measures and ensure it is no more than two clicks from the home page. [Criteria 2.2(1); 2.2(3)]

6. Regularly assess the effectiveness of online courses through student evaluations and other methods to make improvements as needed to ensure rigor and excellence in course offerings using this method of delivery. [Criterion 2.4(4)]
7. Increase the opportunities provided to undergraduate students to participate in professional organization conferences particularly for students in Human Development and Family Science. Additionally, encourage greater engagement of both students and faculty in AAFCS. [Criteria 3.2(6); 4.4(7)]

8. Monitor the teaching load of tenured and tenure-track faculty to ensure faculty assignments are commensurate with workload policy and provide an appropriate balance between their teaching, research, and extension/outreach appointments. [Criterion 4.2(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 (2023) of accreditation. You will receive notification of the specific date the report will be due 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 2029. The next Self-Study Report will be due February 1, 2028.

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 Fashion Design and Merchandising and Human Development and Family Science Programs in the School of Human Sciences at Mississippi State University. This comes with our good wishes for continued success.

With Best Wishes,

Ani Yazedjian, Ph.D.
Chair – Council for Accreditation

Lori Myers, Ph.D., CFCS
Senior Director: Credentialing,
Education & Research