

Family and Consumer Sciences CREDENTIALING CENTER

ASSESSING AND RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE SINCE 1971

May 3, 2011



Dr. Martha D. Saunders, President
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The University of Southern Mississippi
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-001

Dr. Ann Blackwell, Interim Dean
The College of Education & Psychology
118 College Drive #5023
The University of Southern Mississippi
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Dr. Charles West, Chair
The Department of Child and Family Studies
118 College Drive #5035
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Dear President Saunders, Dr. Blackwell, and Dr. West:

In its April 15, 2011 meeting, the Council for Accreditation of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences voted to grant accreditation to the Department of Child and Family Studies at the University of Southern Mississippi. This action followed careful review and consideration of the Self-Study Report, the report of the site review team, and the institution's response to the team's report.

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

1. The College and University administrators are to be commended for their support of the Department's commitment to meeting the needs of individuals, families and communities.
2. The Chair's leadership style is commendable and reflects his productive, professional relationship with administrators, faculty members, and students.
3. The success of faculty members in external funding, securing grants, and scholarly activity is highly commendable.



4. Fall 2010, the Department showed the greatest percentage of positive change in overall student retention in the College of Education and Psychology and received the President's Strategic Initiative Funds for departmental use. The Department is commended for this achievement.
5. The University Priorities Committee confirmed the value of the Department's initiatives and rated each initiative as Tier 5 or the highest quality. The Department is commended for this achievement.
6. The Department's extensive integration of the Body of Knowledge in the curriculum is commendable.
7. The Department is to be commended for the development of productive community partnerships and high quality internship opportunities which lead to significant culminating experiences in each Emphasis Area.
8. The faculty is to be commended for their commitment to high quality teaching, advising, and mentoring.
9. The Department is commended for its commitment to the use of continual assessment designed to improve programs.

To assist in further development of the programs in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences, the Council recommends the following to strengthen compliance with accreditation standards:

1. Assure a formalized method of involving the program's constituent groups in the assessment and planning processes. [Criterion 1.2(5)]
2. Allocate additional financial resources for program support, technology, and human resources as the department continues to successfully recruit and retain increasing numbers of students. [Criterion 1.5(2)]
3. Work toward a higher degree of diversity including cultural, educational institutions, and professional experiences as opportunities become available to employ or fill full-time tenure track faculty positions. [Criterion 4.3(2); 4.3(3)]

Actions taken in response to these recommendations are to be described in the unit's next report. You will receive notification of the date the report will be due to arrive in the Office of Accreditation for consideration in the Council'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, 2021. The next self-study report will be due February 1, 2020.

Members of the Council for Accreditation join us in congratulating you and the faculty on the quality of programs offered by the Department of Child and Family Studies. This comes with our good wishes for continued success of the programs.

Best Wishes,



Patricia Murphy Stevens, Ed.D., CFCS
Chair, Council for Accreditation



Gay Nell McGinnis, CFCS, Director
Credentialing, Professional
Development, and Public Policy