

I. Unit Overview

A. Mission

The mission of the Department of Housing and Consumer Economics (HACE) is to provide excellent instruction, research, and outreach programs focusing on the family as a producing and consuming unit. Departmental programs are concerned with both *internal* and *external* aspects of the family's economic environment. The former involves family economic decision-making, resource management, household production activities, and selection of and adaptation to shelter. External elements relate to market activities that affect consumers and public policies affecting consumers, particularly those policies that influence consumers' housing choices. Understanding and responding to consumer needs and issues is an important component of the Department's mission.

B. Historical Background and/or Focus within the Discipline

The Department of Housing and Consumer Economics (HACE) currently has the largest undergraduate enrollment in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS). The Department offers four undergraduate majors: Housing, Consumer Economics, Family Financial Planning, and Consumer Journalism. In addition, the Department offers an emphasis in Residential Property Management (RPM) and minors in Consumer Economics and Housing. The Department offers both the M.S. and the Ph.D. degrees through its graduate program. In Spring 2007, a Master of Science with a non-thesis option was developed. Since Fall 2006, a major in Consumer Economics and an emphasis in Family Financial Management have been offered at the Griffin Campus. This program is the fastest growing program presently offered at the Griffin Campus, which is located approximately 35 miles south of the Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson Airport.

C. Progress since the Previous Review

Since the last review in 2002, HACE has accomplished the following:

- Stabilized enrollment
- Established the Family Financial Planning major
- Added three faculty members in Family Financial Planning
- Created the Residential Property Management emphasis and hired one faculty member in that area. (These two items were a result of support from the Georgia Apartment Industry Education Foundation)
- Recruited and employed a tenure-track housing specialist and a tenure-track financial management specialist with the Cooperative Extension Service
- Established the Consumer Economics major at the Griffin Campus
- Enhanced the professional development of faculty and graduate students by providing funding to attend conferences and purchase statistical software
- Enhanced the graduate programs by providing the Master of Science non-thesis option with a Family Financial Planning emphasis
- Increased graduate enrollment from 20 to 31 students
- Enhanced diversity of faculty and students
- Received recognition for high quality research internationally, nationally, and regionally (See Appendix C)
- Increased external funding levels
- Increased international opportunities for students and faculty
- Developed comprehensive logic models for the outreach delivery system in the areas of Housing, Consumer Economics, and Family Financial Planning
- Enhanced the visibility of the Department through the creation of an active Board of Directors for the Housing and Demographics Research Center (HDRC)

- Creation of the Financial Planning Advisory Board
- Implemented the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program in the UGA/Athens community that has saved members of the Athens low-income community in tax preparation fees and provided a service-learning experience for students
- Received recognition for student and faculty teaching, service, and research at the Department, College, University, and national levels
- Significantly increased the number and quality of research publications and presentations
- Improved the air quality and health conditions in the Housing Research Center and the Consumer Research Center
- Enhanced technology by providing wireless connectivity in departmental areas, with the exception of Hoke Smith Annex
- Received undergraduate and graduate student recognition from national student competitions and professional organizations, scholarships, and fellowships
- Provided travel awards to attend conferences, and scholarships at the university and national levels for graduate students
- Experienced a dramatic change in faculty from mostly senior in 2002 to mostly junior today
- Increased credit hours generated from a total (undergraduate and graduate) 5,548 to 15,575
- Created a more diverse curriculum with the development of Family Financial Planning major and the Residential Property Management emphasis. Twenty-four undergraduate and graduate courses were created. (See Appendix B)

D. Current Strengths, Opportunities, Challenges

Strengths

The current strengths in the Department are numerous:

Enrollment. Enrollment has increased and is now the highest in the College at 366 majors; in addition, there are 52 Consumer Economics minors and 14 Housing minors for the Fall 2009 term. The number of credit hours generated has increased 181% since 2002 (from 5,548 to 15,575).

Students. HACE students are competitive in the job market. Internships are offered in Consumer Economics, Family Financial Planning, Housing, and Consumer Journalism that provide students with practical work experience in their potential career areas. Many students secure jobs prior to graduation. (See Appendix H)

Faculty. Dedicated faculty provide students with new learning experiences within the traditional classroom setting, develop service-learning opportunities in the U.S. and abroad, and mentor undergraduate and graduate research. HACE faculty members have been recognized at the Department, College, and University levels for excellence in teaching, advising, and outreach.

Faculty members maintain successful research programs and are increasingly successful in publishing research in peer-reviewed journals and presenting research at national and international conferences. The HACE faculty in Consumer Economics, Family Financial Planning and Housing are building and maintaining strong relationships with business and industry.

Opportunities

Building on the departmental tradition of responsiveness to societal and economic trends, the Department will continue to identify emerging opportunities. Changing demographic profiles in the United States offer opportunities for expanded research on lifecycle issues related to consumer and housing topics.

HACE has expanded in two rapidly emerging fields: Family Financial Planning and Residential Property Management. As these programs grow at the undergraduate level across the country, more demand for faculty members can be anticipated. As a national leader in these emerging fields, the HACE department has the opportunity to develop graduate students into the future faculty members who will provide leadership in the fields for years to come.

There is a need to expand the Department's partnerships with industry. It is important that the Department always attempt to make sure research priorities are not determined solely by the source of funding, but add to the existing body of knowledge in a given field. By increasing the Department's network, funding sources will be expanded as well as opportunities to showcase HACE students through case studies, job shadowing, internships and new-hires.

A public university with a mission of teaching, research and service will always face challenges of how to balance the increasing complexities of doing all three aspects at a high level. This admirable goal can only be achieved when faculty utilizes every resource possible. Whether it be embracing new technology or reaching out to retired faculty for mentoring and coaching, HACE faculty members need to explore every resource imaginable to leverage time and talents. HACE faculty members have a very broad base of experiences, and creating a resource repository will be helpful in the years to come.

Research collaborations with international colleagues, other departments within the College of Family and Consumer Sciences, and other colleges will broaden the scope of HACE research and create opportunities to procure funding, both external and internal. The Department is currently working with the Dean of the College to develop a consumer economics or family and consumer science learning community.

Challenges

Space. One of the greatest challenges faced by the Department continues to be the division of personnel into four different buildings. There is an urgent need for more space in the Department. It would be beneficial if the Department could be housed under one roof. Graduate assistants located in greater proximity to faculty supervisors is an immediate need. The increase in external funding has created the need for additional office space. The present arrangement of faculty and staff offices has been workable with the aid of computer and network technology. The scarcity of adequate space for research, public service outreach programs, and faculty offices has been triggered by the growth in enrollment, the development of new programs of study, and the allocation of several new positions to the Department (all of which are positive, but pose the aforementioned challenges). In addition, there is a desperate need for classrooms large enough for growing classes.

Curriculum. As the next generation of students enter the classroom, student engagement is vital as HACE prepares students to deal with the challenges and opportunities of a complex and fast-changing world. The greatest challenge will be to broaden the curriculum without losing the focus and rigor of a top-tier program. Students need opportunities for experiential learning, including more international programs and exposure to a global marketplace. It is the goal of

the Department to find ways to optimize the learning experience because in the end, it's the quality of students that defines HACE.

Staff. Although the faculty has increased from 13 positions in 2002 to 23 in 2009, the number of office support staff positions has dropped from a high of 5 in 2005 to 4 in 2009, including the loss of an Administrative Associate I position due to budget cuts. The current office staff were rearranged and reassigned, but there remains a need for an additional Administrative Associate.

Faculty. As the Family Financial Planning program grows at the graduate level an additional faculty line is needed to support graduate courses and graduate student development and research while maintaining program-required undergraduate courses. Continued growth at the graduate level without the necessary faculty resources and specialization could restrict growth both at the graduate and undergraduate level. Demands on faculty time to manage large classes and time devoted to curriculum revision and new course development limit time available for research and grant seeking.

Graduate Assistants. An inadequate number of graduate assistantships means a graduate assistant's time is typically divided between two or more faculty members, often among several courses. This division of graduate assistants' time often causes problems with continuity and timeliness of completing assignments. Ideally, Graduate Assistants should work with one or two (at the most) faculty. Since the last Program Review, the departmental graduate assistantship allocation has decreased while the graduate assistantship cost has increased. Thus, the number of graduate assistants has been reduced (from a maximum of 10 departmentally funded graduate assistants in 2001-02 to 8 in 2009). Given the increased number of faculty, this decrease in graduate assistantships has been difficult to manage. See Table 1 for more detailed information.

There is a need to give Ph.D. students more opportunities to be the teacher of record. Graduate students would benefit from having opportunities to be research assistants on a state-funded assistantship instead of spending all of their time helping with classes as Teaching Assistants.

Table 1. Departmental Graduate Assistant Allocation

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Dept. Allocation	\$91,786	\$74,963	\$85,291	\$69,685	\$85,291	\$85,291	\$79,733	\$85,026	\$86,301
Graduate Student Cost									
M.S. (33%)	\$9195	\$9494	\$9494	\$9494	\$9494	\$9494	\$10,042	\$10,495	\$10,654
Ph.D. (33%)	\$10,031	\$10,357	\$10,357	\$10,357	\$10,357	\$10,357	\$10,854	\$11,350	\$11,515

Graduate Program. The completion time and rates of students in the program, especially the Ph.D. students, is an issue that needs more attention. More focused mentoring of graduate students and additional support for assistantships could ameliorate this problem.

E. Support of School/College Goals

Support of School/College Goals: 5-year Program Plan

The Five-Year Program Plan for the College of Family and Consumer Sciences includes three themes: Building the New Learning Environment, Maximizing Research Opportunities, and Being Competitive in the Global Environment. The goals of the HACE Department are consistent with these themes and their respective and specific strategies to accomplish these goals. In 2004, the Department faculty worked to develop strategies that would assist the

Department in obtaining goals within the five-year period. HACE's five-year program plan can be found in the Appendix A.

Support of University Goals

The Department of Housing and Consumer Economics is strong in teaching, research, and service. It has been successful in supporting the goals of the University of Georgia: building the new learning environment, maximizing research opportunities, increasing diversity, and competing in a global economy through the accomplishment of the Department mission statements. Faculty members are dedicated to excellence in teaching and are continuously engaged in evaluating curriculum and revising courses to provide challenging projects and up-to-date information. In addition, faculty have developed technology-based courses, courses that provide specialized leadership training, and new study abroad programs and have participated in other study abroad programs. A new major in Family Financial Planning and a new emphasis in Residential Property Management provide students with opportunities needed in the current job market. The Department of Housing and Consumer Economics continues to welcome diversity. Seventeen percent of the undergraduate students enrolled in the Fall of 2008 were minority, compared to 9% in the College. The graduate students represent diverse backgrounds as well as origins. Of the Ph.D. students, 45% are African-American or international, while 29% of the Master's students are African-American or international. The faculty members in the Department believe in enriching the learning environment with diversity. All of these activities support both the goals of creating a new learning environment and competing in a global economy.

The Department has also steadily increased its research productivity. Faculty with research appointments in the Department publish in the top-rated peer-reviewed journals in their fields, present their research findings at national and international conferences, and submit proposals for both external and internal grant funding. The HACE faculty members have been effective in receiving external funding from state government agencies and industry for their research. Most faculty members are involved in professional organizations at the regional, state, national, and international levels. Several faculty members have received international, national, and regional recognition for their research. (See Appendix C)