

## **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT and FAMILY STUDIES**

### **Academic Plan for 2008-2013**

#### **HDFS Mission Statement**

The mission of the Division of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of California, Davis is to pursue research, teaching and outreach that promote the capacity of individuals to adapt successfully to life's challenges by minimizing risks and maximizing resilience throughout the lifespan. HDFS focuses primarily on aspects of cognitive and social-emotional development with attention to the biological substrates as well as the cultural, familial, educational and community contexts that influence successful adaptation and well-being.

#### **Overarching Theme and Areas of Excellence**

The excellent scholarship of HDFS is demonstrated in two primary areas:

##### Social-Emotional Development and Well-Being

HDFS has established an internationally renowned program of excellence on the social-emotional aspects of human functioning that influence individual success and adaptability. Various faculty members in this area pursue research on the ways in which individual dispositions, temperament, or personality affect the ability to succeed in minimizing risks and maximizing resilience in multiple domains of life. Similarly, faculty scientists study social contexts such as family, culture or community that either promote individual success or undermine well-being. Of special interest are the processes that promote resilience to difficult life situations and that allow individuals to prosper even in the face of major challenges such as economic disadvantage or involvement in abusive social relationships.

##### Cognitive Development and Well-Being

HDFS also supports a cluster of excellence on cognitive development that is experiencing growing national and international recognition. Faculty expertise in this area centers on cognitive functioning that promotes individual successful adaptation. Our research programs, ranging from neurocognitive development, memory processes, executive function, reading comprehension, to cognitive strategies, focus on issues of how neurodevelopmental processes interact with experience to shape cognitive development, and address central questions concerning how cultural and environmental factors influence children's thinking, and how knowledge, memory processes, and cognitive strategies play a role in maintaining optimal cognitive functioning in normal adult development and aging as well as in Alzheimer's disease.

#### **HDFS Academic Senate Faculty**

HDFS currently has 11 academic senate faculty members (including the cognitive neurodevelopment position, currently under recruitment). We project 4 retirements within the next 5-7 years. The number of faculty members remaining in each area after considering retirements during the planning period is 7 (as presented in Table 1): in Socio-emotional Development: Early Childhood (0); Middle childhood - Adolescence (2); Adulthood/Aging (0); in Cognitive Development: Early Childhood (1); Middle childhood - Adolescence (1, note that the cognitive neurodevelopment position

might bridge early childhood and adulthood phases); Adulthood/Aging (2); General Quantitative Methods (1).

### **Achievements and Challenges**

HDFS faculty members are nationally and internationally known, and have been productive in obtaining extramural grants and in publishing articles in major journals. For example, HDFS faculty generated \$2.5 million in extramural funds for the 2006-07 fiscal year, and currently have \$10.6 million in active extramural funding (including 3-, 4-, and 5-year grants). In 2007 a study reported by the Chronicle of Higher Education ranked the UCD Graduate Group in Human Development (for which HDFS serves as the core academic unit) as third in the nation for university programs granting a doctoral degree in human development or family studies. Programs were ranked in terms of faculty scholarly productivity which was measured by five factors: books published; journal publications; citations of journal articles; federal-grant dollars awarded; and honors/awards. GGHD was ranked higher than similar graduate programs at many leading research institutions including the University of Wisconsin (Madison), the University of Chicago, Cornell University, and Harvard University. However, HDFS also faces serious challenges in fulfilling our mission in research, teaching, and outreach. The HDFS program, as the only Human Development department in the UC system, is substantially smaller than the norm for similar programs/departments in the nation. We thus propose moderate growth in faculty FTE to meet the challenges in our research, teaching and outreach programs.

### **Proposed Increase in HDFS Target FTE**

We propose an increase in target senate faculty FTE from 11 to 13 over the next five years.

#### Research

- Increasing target FTE will ensure that we can continue on the path of building our social-emotional development and cognitive development clusters of excellence to sustain a nationally- and internationally-recognized excellence as a lifespan and interdisciplinary research program.
- Having a larger number of strategically-placed faculty members with diverse, interdisciplinary approaches is consistent with the continuing wave of the future (see recent articles in *Nature*, *Science*, and the *New York Times* regarding the value of interdisciplinary research and education).
- This increase is important in maintaining a critical mass of faculty in each of the three broad "phases" of the lifespan, overlapping with a critical mass of faculty who conduct longitudinal research across multiple phases of the lifespan.

#### Teaching

- The target allocation of faculty FTE to HDFS is inadequate (even with Unit 18 FTE) for our undergraduate program (currently 381 registered undergraduate Human Development majors). Student credit hours and teaching load are very high. HDFS' student-to-I&R (including Unit 18 FTE) ratio is 39, one of the highest such ratios on campus and within CA&ES. Increasing the

target FTE will help improve the quality of our undergraduate program (e.g., teaching classes, sponsorship of internships, and opportunities for training undergraduate researchers in labs) and decrease the reliance on unit 18 lecturers.

- As the only UC Human Development department, maintaining a high-quality HDE major is important to CA&ES, UCD, and the state of California (our students go on to graduate programs and then into careers in education, health sciences, social services, government, etc.).
- The current target allocation of HDFS faculty FTE is inadequate for our Human Development Graduate Group (HDGG): HDFS provides the core coursework and administrative support for the HDGG.

### Outreach

- Increasing target FTE would also enable us to do a much better job of addressing our outreach needs across the lifespan. We are the only academic "home"/resource for the statewide county advisors in need of assistance and/or collaboration for their work with children, youth, families, and the elderly.
- The proposed positions for academic senate faculty as well as Specialist in CE in the targeted emphases will strengthen the support and collaborations with the 4-H Center for Youth Development (CYD) and the Center for Child and Family Studies (CCFS) that HDFS administers. The mission of CYD is basic and applied research and program evaluation that deepens our understanding of youth in the contexts of family and community so that recommendations for optimal outcomes can be made to those who care for, mentor, and supervise youth. The CCFS serves as a laboratory for the development of experimental programs for children and families, and as an observation site for UC Davis students and community members. There is a strong commitment to integration of research, teaching, and outreach programs.
- HDFS, via its two centers and affiliated ANR workgroups, and individual faculty gets far more requests for outreach/service activities than we can handle. Examples of "hot" topics (spanning the phases of human development) include: universal preschool, youth violence, youth well-being, marital distress, separation and divorce and the baby boomer aging crisis (re: health, cognition, care giving, etc.).

### **Strategies for Achieving the Goals**

HDFS has a strategic plan for building a prominent research, teaching, and outreach program in multidisciplinary lifespan development. The strategies for placing new faculty positions are:

#### Maintaining/Strengthening Excellent Areas/Programs

Social-emotional development, in middle childhood - adolescence, is the strongest HDFS area with 4 senate faculty members. This area has established national and international prominence with unique and promising research projects on culture, family, school, and neighborhood influences on social/emotional development in children and their families from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Especially important is an ongoing longitudinal study of 650 Mexican origin youth and

their families that will continue from late childhood into the adult years. This ongoing study will have a major influence on social policy and community outreach in the coming years. Two of the current faculty members in this area plan to retire within the next 5 years. We plan to bring in new faculty with similar research directions after the retirements in order to maintain the critical density of the expertise and to preserve prominence in this area.

### Developing A Critical Mass for Each Research, Teaching, and Outreach Area

In order to have a coherent research portfolio, dovetail with our CE Specialists, and cover our undergraduate and graduate curricula, we need to ensure that we continue to have at least 3 academic senate faculty whose focus is on each of the following three general phases of lifespan development: infancy and early childhood, middle childhood - adolescence, and adulthood - aging. Within each phase, at least one faculty member's expertise will focus on either social-emotional or cognitive development. HDFS offers graduate and undergraduate coursework in cognitive and socio-emotional development at each phase; thus, it is essential that our faculty expertise enables these offerings to continue.

As noted above, taking the future retirements into consideration, we would have 7 remaining senate faculty members: 1 in early childhood (cognitive), 2 in middle childhood - adolescence (socio-emotional), and 2 in aging (cognitive), and 1 in research methods across the life-span. Thus, HDFS proposes to add 6 new positions: 2 positions in early childhood so there is a total of 3 faculty members in this phase (both in social-emotional and cognitive), add 2 in middle childhood - adolescence (in social-emotional) so there will be 5 total faculty in this phase, and add 1 in social-emotional adult development and aging so there will be 3 total faculty in the adult development and aging phase. In addition, the remaining 1 position will be allocated to research focused on transitions or across phases. The strategy for adding future positions during the plan period is presented in the attached table.

Consistent with our mission, we will continue focusing our research on the cultural, familial, educational, and community contexts that influence successful adaptation and well-being with an emphasis on the theme of prevention and intervention. We will also be looking to enhance the methodological expertise by recruiting new faculty who utilize advanced quantitative methods in their cognitive or social-emotional development research. Given the interdisciplinary nature of our program, the research programs of our new hires will have significant connections to those in other departments/centers on the campus and within the college such as sociology, psychology, neuroscience, education, nutrition, the Center of Mind and Brain, and the M.I.N.D. Institute.

### **Projected Resource Needs**

The most significant resource challenges that HDFS faces are space and start-up funds. HDFS requires additional space for faculty offices and research labs. We also need to generate up to 6 start-up packages for the proposed hires during the planning period.

### **Summary and Goals**

Human Development and Family Studies has an outstanding (albeit small) group of faculty, who have been doing an impressive job of garnering extramural research funding, and of publishing in the best journals in the field, while covering the teaching and advising for a large undergraduate major, as well as providing the core curriculum and advising for the Human Development Graduate Group. With the addition of these key faculty positions according to our strategic plan, our goal is that

Human Development and Family Studies at UCD will be able to become one of the top interdisciplinary departments/divisions in the nation. Furthermore, HDFS will become increasingly known for “the place” for research in the area of social-emotional development in adolescence.

**Table 1**

**An increase in target faculty FTE from 11 to 13:  
Remaining faculty after retirements and proposed new positions  
within the next 5-7 years**

	Infancy - Early Childhood	Middle Childhood - Adolescence	Adulthood - Aging
Social-Emotional Development	<b>0 – remaining 1 – new position</b>	<b>2 – remaining 2 – new positions</b>	<b>0 – remaining 1 – new position</b>
Cognitive Development	<b>1 - remaining 1 – new position</b>	<b>1* – remaining 0 – new position</b>	<b>2 – remaining 0 – new position</b>
<b>1 - remaining faculty member, a quantitative methodologist, whose research does not focus on particular phases.</b>			
<b>1 – additional new position will be allocated to research focused on transitions or cross phases.</b>			

\* We anticipate that the cognitive neurodevelopment position currently under recruitment will be primarily in Mid Childhood - Adolescence, though it might bridge early childhood and adulthood phases.