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	Journal Name				Manuscript No.					Author Received:	No. of pages: 16	ME: Varma

Family Relations, 55 (January 2006), 29–44. Blackwell Publishing. Printed in the USA.
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Preparing Future Faculty and Family Professionals

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Abstract: The Department of Family Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, developed a Preparing Future Faculty and Family Professionals program to enrich the graduate education and professional development of its doctoral students. This article describes key elements of the program, including informing students about the responsibilities of faculty positions at diverse institutions, fostering faculty-student mentoring relationships, visiting partner colleges/universities, examining requirements of nonacademic family science careers, and preparing students for the job search. Student and faculty evaluations of the program are summarized, and recommendations are made for graduate educators in family science.

Key Words: career development, innovative methodologies, professional development, professional development of students and new professionals, program evaluation.

A large percentage of graduate students who earn the doctorate, including those in family science, pursue careers in colleges and universities (Sanderson, Dugoni, Hoffer, & Selfa, 1999). Yet, research reveals that many current graduate programs fail to prepare adequately doctoral students for the demands of academic positions (Austin, 2002; Olsen & Crawford, 1998). A majority of the family science faculty who educate and mentor doctoral students work in large research universities where the requirements for a successful career vary markedly from institutions offering the most jobs—specifically, master’s granting universities, smaller liberal arts colleges, and community colleges (Gaff, Pruitt-Logan, & Weibl, 2000). Moreover, many graduate programs are not addressing recent trends that will affect the next generation of assistant professors, including the growing diversity of the student body, the impact of globalization, and the use of instructional technologies (Newman, Couturier, & Sessa, 2002).

Nationally, the number of PhDs awarded increased 33% in the past 20 years (U.S. Department

of Education, 2003), accompanied by a similar rise in the number of doctoral recipients in family and consumer sciences (Food and Agricultural Education and Information Systems, 2003). Today, many of these recent doctoral graduates are facing keen competition for tenure track positions in colleges and universities (Adams, 2004). Decreases in funding for higher education have caused many institutions to reduce permanent positions, cut campus funds for research, and impose higher faculty workloads (Finkelstein, Seal, & Schuster, 1998). Although the job market for new faculty has improved from the poor market of the 1990s, few disciplines are confronting a shortage of PhD faculty (Syverson, 2002). Additionally, with the increasing national focus on family policy issues (e.g., welfare reform, marriage) and human services, many family science doctoral recipients are seeking positions in government, nonprofit agencies, and the private sector. Such graduates would benefit from systematic, developmentally appropriate guidance and experiences that educate them for a range of potential careers. The purpose of this study is to describe

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a departmental program designed to prepare family science doctoral students for the responsibilities of faculty members in varied academic institutions, as well as equip them with knowledge and skills for positions outside the academy.

Preparing Future Faculty and Family Professionals Program

The Department of Family Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, developed a Preparing Future Faculty and Family Professionals (PFFFP) program to enrich the graduate education and professional development of its doctoral students. Family Studies has a relatively new PhD program, launched in 2000, which includes 26 students. Prior to 2000, the department operated a joint doctoral program in family studies and public and community health. The Family Studies PhD program currently focuses on family policy, family stress and coping, ethnic families, high-risk families, and programmatic interventions for family problems. The department also offers an accredited master's program in marriage and family therapy and an undergraduate program in family studies.

Our department began its initiative to strengthen doctoral education in 2003. The chair collaborated with faculty and students to develop a program that was modeled after the national Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Council of Graduate Schools (Gaff et al., 2000). This national initiative introduces students who are seeking academic positions to key issues in college teaching, research, service, and faculty life at diverse institutions. PFF institutions partner with nonresearch-intensive colleges and universities and organize campus visits to these institutions to familiarize students with their different missions, student bodies, and faculty expectations. Other core elements of PFF programs include seminars on teaching and professional issues, faculty-student mentoring, and preparation for the job search. Originally supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the National Science Foundation, and the Atlantic Philanthropies, PFF currently involves 43 research universities that have partnered with more than 250 liberal arts colleges, comprehensive universities, historically Black institutions, and community

colleges. Although the University of Maryland is not one of the 43 research universities involved in a campus-wide PFF initiative, our chair worked with representatives of the Council of Graduate Schools to develop a departmental program with all elements of the national PFF program.

Following an evaluation of our first-year PFF initiative, the Family Studies Department expanded its program to address the interests of PhD students who were seeking both academic and nonacademic careers. The renamed PFFFP program prepares students to enter both academic and nonacademic positions as well-informed, competent professionals. Our PFFFP program is guided by a steering committee that includes the chair, the graduate director, and two doctoral student leaders. Most PFFFP activities extend and enrich doctoral coursework, rather than being embedded within existing courses. The University of Maryland program has five major goals:

1. To inform PhD students about the work required in faculty positions at diverse academic institutions, including differing expectations for teaching, research, and service.
2. To educate students about the responsibilities and demands of nonacademic careers in family science, such as positions in public policy, research, and program administration.
3. To equip students with the skills, competencies, and experiences, they will need to succeed in both academic and other professional positions.
4. To prepare students to secure positions in the types of institutions and agencies where they want to work.
5. To develop PhD professionals who can address recent trends affecting higher education and society and can contribute to positive change in the 21st century global community.

Underlying Pedagogy

Maryland's PFFFP program is grounded in inclusive pedagogical practices that actively engage doctoral students in the learning process and focus on education of the whole person (Darder, 1996; Hooks, 1994; Howell & Tuitt, 2003). Inclusive teaching and learning principles are implemented in all major programmatic areas of PFFFP, with the goal of fostering an effective learning environment and sense of community. Doctoral students are viewed as individuals having complex lives, backgrounds, and

experiences, with diversity recognized as a valued component of the learning process. Characteristics of inclusive pedagogy include, but are not limited to, building faculty-student relationships, facilitating dialogical professor-student interaction, sharing power for learning, listening to student voices, and using personal narratives to foster insight and intellectual growth. Programs that adopt inclusive pedagogical practices encourage faculty and students to share the responsibility for learning by speaking in multiple ways about a range of subjects, personalizing topics with examples from one's life, and seeking connections between ideas learned in academic settings and other life experiences (Howell & Tuitt, 2003). Flexible, fluid, reflective pedagogical practices enable professors and students to construct new knowledge about academic and nonacademic careers in family sciences through dialogue, social interaction, mentoring, collaboration, and processing of information in both academic and informal, out-of-classroom environments.

Program Elements

Positions in Academic Institutions

One important role of graduate education is to socialize graduate students for academic careers (Austin, 2002). This socialization process involves learning about academic values, attitudes, knowledge, skills, and expectations (Staton & Darling, 1989). PFFFP students learn about academic culture through faculty-student mentoring relationships, interactions with faculty in formal and informal settings, and peer experiences. Such encounters help students understand the broader aspects of a faculty member's personal identity, including being a professional, a member of a discipline, and a balanced person (Austin, 2002). Peer experiences, such as brown-bag lunches involving only doctoral students, offer opportunities for students to interpret their observations of departmental culture, share advice and support, and sort out how their own interests fit with the demands of particular academic careers (Austin, 2002). PFFFP activities enable students to observe and directly experience faculty work in the areas of teaching, research, and service—the traditional triad of faculty responsibilities at most institutions.

Teaching Teaching is the responsibility that requires the most time and energy of new faculty

(Boice, 1992). Today, many academic institutions expect new faculty to have far more teaching experience than the traditional graduate student tasks of leading laboratory/discussion sections or grading papers. A growing number of departments require new hires to be “teaching ready” and familiar with the new pedagogies of teaching and learning (Adams, 2004). Yet, in one recent national survey, new faculty and their department chairs agreed that doctoral programs do not do an adequate job of preparing their graduate students for college teaching positions (Seidel, Benassi, & Richards, 1998). As a consequence, many new faculty members are uncomfortable with the number and variety of courses they are expected to teach (Boice, 1992).

University of Maryland's PFFFP program seeks to prepare students for their future role as teachers through education, mentoring, and direct teaching experiences. Monthly brown-bag seminars taught by departmental faculty and colleagues from the University's Center for Teaching Excellence introduce students to course basics, such as creating a syllabus, developing and grading writing assignments, using course technology (e.g., WebCT), managing the classroom environment, and assessing student learning. PFFFP students learn about recent curricular innovations, such as problem-focused learning, service learning, use of multicultural curricula, and simulations structured around real-world problems, such as poverty, overpopulation, disability, and discrimination. Students also become familiar with the teaching of the Cooperative Extension Service through assisting our Extension faculty with curriculum development, design of instructional media, and teaching in community settings.

Our department attempts to build PhD students' teaching expertise through a sequence of increasingly more independent and complex teaching assignments. Most students begin this process as a teaching assistant for several academic courses and then identify undergraduate courses they would like to teach. After receiving a course assignment, students spend the next full semester attending the class and observing how it is taught by a department professor. PFFFP expanded our department's previous training of doctoral instructors by assigning each student instructor a faculty “teaching mentor.” Teaching mentors now meet with doctoral instructors to define their mentoring relationship, prepare the course syllabus, discuss learning activities, and plan class observations. Mentors attend as many as three

of the doctoral student's classes, taking notes on the student's performance and meeting later to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the student's instruction. Faculty-student pairs often schedule coffee or lunches to discuss new teaching ideas and challenges of faculty life, including balancing work and family roles. Most PFFFP instructors teach the same undergraduate course several times, always teamed with a mentor, and some teach two or three courses prior to graduation. International students also participate in PFFFP teaching activities, working closely with faculty to plan and deliver presentations to undergraduate classes as they build their English skills.

Faculty-student mentoring relationships often begin somewhat hierarchical, with mentors passing on wisdom to mentees, but become increasingly collegial and egalitarian over time. Consistent with the goals of inclusive pedagogy, students and faculty work together to enhance student learning through sharing of disciplinary knowledge, teaching experiences, and innovative instructional techniques. For example, in 2003, our PFFFP students received a University Center for Teaching Excellence grant to attend the annual meeting of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, which focused on practicing liberal education. This conference stimulated ongoing, reflective, faculty-student dialogue about collaborative learning, social justice education, and technology, including how to foster greater class participation of international students and the impact of instructional technologies in the classroom.

One of the challenges that will be faced by teachers in the next decade is the growing diversity of the undergraduate student body. Predictions are that 37% of the student body will be persons of color by 2015 (Carnavale & Fry, 2000). As leaders of campus diversity initiatives, Family Studies faculty actively prepare PhD students to address the needs of students with diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and levels of ability. Doctoral courses and PFFFP seminars seek to educate students to be culturally competent teachers, skilled in presenting material that examines multiple dimensions of diversity and in creating an inclusive classroom environment. All PFFFP students attended a university training program on Intergroup Dialogue, learning how to facilitate interaction groups that involve people from two or more social or cultural identity groups (e.g., Black/White, Muslim/Jewish, Lesbian and Gay/Heterosexual). PFFFP students participating in our

cultural immersion course on human services in Oaxaca, Mexico, also became proficient in fostering cross-cultural conversations about family issues with both international students and human service providers.

Research. Faculty in almost all academic institutions are expected to engage in research. This expectation may range from staying current with the latest research in one's field at a community college to initiating a major, grant-funded scholarly program at a research university. Faculty in liberal arts colleges are often expected to collaborate with colleagues on interdisciplinary research (Adams, 2004). Although most PhD graduates earn their degrees at research universities, new faculty members often discover that research conditions in their first positions differ markedly from those at their doctoral-granting school (Austin, 2003).

University of Maryland's PFFFP program attempts to inform doctoral students of the varying expectations for research productivity at different types of institutions. Students learn that if they do not pursue or obtain employment at a research university, they may have to organize their research time around their primary responsibility of teaching. As new faculty members, they may also need to consider new areas of research that demand less funding, space, and graduate assistant help than were available at their doctoral institutions.

The PFFFP program recognizes that PhD students benefit from conducting research in varied settings, just as they profit from multiple teaching experiences. All Family Studies doctoral students complete a research internship where they select a "research mentor" who is generally not their dissertation advisor but who shares an area of research interest. Unlike most elements of PFFFP, this faculty-mentored experience is embedded within our curriculum as a required, three-credit internship course. Research mentors help students to define a short-term project (usually involving a faculty research program), develop a data analysis strategy, and complete a writing project. Mentoring relationships expose students to a variety of departmental research activities, including clinical interventions, community research, and projects using large national data sets. Because many of our research teams include undergraduates, doctoral students learn how to engage undergraduates in their scholarship. Faculty mentors also assist their mentees in exploring journals, professional conferences, and

funding agencies that may be interested in the student's research. Finally, all doctoral students must submit a journal article or a grant proposal at the conclusion of this semester-long research internship.

The PFFFP program encourages doctoral students to obtain experiences that will extend their research expertise beyond the narrow area of their dissertation. For example, students may take an elective course on research methods in family policy, learning to analyze data sets they can tap in future academic positions where they may not have resources to collect their own data. Some doctoral students assist faculty in conducting evaluations of extension programs and other community interventions, with recent projects addressing child care, parenting, family financial management, nutrition education, and support for children in foster care.

Lunchtime research seminars enable faculty and students to engage in frank discussion of research issues within the academy, such as the research/scholarship requirements at different institutions, the challenges of human subjects reviews, and the merits of junior faculty investing time in writing grant proposals. Faculty help students acquire broad research experience by collaborating on papers, posters, and journal articles; critiquing students' presentations; and nominating students for national research internships, fellowships, and awards. The department fully funds doctoral students to present their scholarship at one professional meeting each year, viewing this activity as an essential element in the development of future faculty.

Service. Service is the third area of traditional faculty responsibility, but doctoral students often have little understanding of how service is evaluated in faculty performance and promotion/tenure reviews (DeNeef, 2004). PhD graduates who accept nontenure track positions may receive little or no rewards for engaging in service activities (Adams, 2004). In addition, research reveals that many doctoral students are naive about the inner workings of academic institutions, including the roles of chairs, deans, and administrators; faculty governance; and the hierarchy and demands of various departmental committees (DeNeef, 2004).

The PFFFP program attempts to inform students about department, campus, and professional service responsibilities in varied academic positions. At our own research university, students may attend selected faculty meetings where they obtain greater understanding of particular service assignments.

Our doctoral students serve on a number of university, college, and departmental committees, including the President's Commission on Women's Issues; the President's Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues; the University's Diversity Initiative; college and departmental search committees; and the department's undergraduate and fund-raising committees. PhD students also gain important professional experience by serving on national boards or committees of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) and the American Association for Family and Consumer Sciences, reviewing journal articles and conference papers, and participating on federal grant review committees.

PFFFP seminars and informal faculty-student conversations examine the valuing of service activities at diverse institutions, addressing such issues as the unique demands for service that affect faculty of color (e.g., extensive student mentoring, multiple requests to serve on campus committees) and the heavy advising loads of many junior faculty (Adams, 2004). Students have opportunities to discuss these topics with faculty and their peers and to reflect on how to handle the many requests for service they may receive as assistant professors.

Personal concerns. As doctoral students consider the multiple tasks of teaching, research, and service, some question whether or not they will have time for a private life (Austin, 2002). Parenthood is a central concern of many PFFFP female students who ask, "When is the best time in your career to have a baby?" Two PhD students and our graduate director reviewed a national study, "Do Babies Matter?" (Mason & Goulden, 2004), and surveyed NCFR members about their career trajectories and child-bearing experiences (Leslie, McClintock-Comeaux, & Kuvalanka, 2004). They then shared their findings in a PFFFP seminar and a NCFR symposium, which included presentations by junior faculty from diverse institutions who were also parents. This project not only provided a faculty-mentored research experience but also enabled PFFFP students to consider how they might combine academic responsibilities with their goals of a balanced personal and family life.

Institutional Partnerships

To provide doctoral students with a concrete picture of faculty life outside the research university,

participants in the national PFF program establish partnerships with colleges/universities that have varying missions, student bodies, and faculty expectations (Gaff et al., 2000). Doctoral students and faculty advisors then take field trips to these different institutions, which include comprehensive universities, liberal arts colleges, historically Black colleges, community colleges, religious colleges, and single-gender institutions. Visitors meet with faculty members, department chairs, and campus administrators to discuss characteristics of students; teaching, research, and service expectations; tenure and reward systems; and the functions and governance of academic departments. They also examine the physical layout of the department and campus, observing faculty offices, classrooms and labs, instructional technology, recreational facilities, and the demographics of students, faculty, and staff.

During the previous year, students in Maryland's PFFFP program visited four diverse institutions to enrich their knowledge of faculty members' professional lives. In a visit to Howard University, a historically Black research university in Washington, DC, students met with a panel of eight faculty from social science disciplines that study family issues. Discussion centered on the pros and cons of post-doctoral appointments, teaching and research workloads, external funding activities, expectations for community service, and personal life as a Howard faculty member.

A second PFFFP visit to Towson University, a public comprehensive university granting master's degrees, enabled students to meet with the Family Studies chair, a full-time instructor, and the college dean. In addition to exploring faculty roles, workloads, salaries, and tenure requirements, students questioned administrators about the qualities and skills they seek in new hires. PFFFP students learned about how the unit was implementing its Certified Family Life Education program and about opportunities for teaching adjunct courses.

In a third visit to Trinity University, a Catholic, liberal arts institution in Washington, DC, PFFFP students spent an afternoon meeting with six faculty, the dean of arts and sciences, and the vice president for academic affairs. Students learned about teaching in departments that address family issues, such as psychology, sociology, economics, and philosophy. Trinity faculty discussed life at a small college, describing their courses, student profiles, workloads, interdisciplinary scholarship, and strategies for

engaging undergraduates in research. Administrators addressed questions about the role of religion at their institution and explained the university's expectation of active faculty involvement in campus and community service.

A fourth visit to Montgomery College, a Maryland community college, enabled PFFFP students to meet with a social science chair and a faculty member who had formerly taught as an adjunct professor in our department. Students benefited from the faculty member's comparisons of the two institutions, which revealed that the community college had a more diverse student body, heavier faculty teaching loads, smaller classes, greater use of classroom technology, and lower expectations for research. Prior to the visit, few PFFFP students had considered tenure track positions at community colleges, but the group learned that approximately 50% of enrollments in higher education are in 2-year colleges and only 20% of community college faculty hold the PhD degree (Adams, 2004). Thus, these institutions offer excellent opportunities for doctoral students who have identified teaching as their primary interest.

PFFFP visits to partner campuses have played an important role in expanding students' awareness of faculty careers at a wide array of institutions. Students asked a number of questions about faculty work and lifestyles, tenure expectations, mentoring, salaries, and department politics that they would have been reluctant to pose if engaged in an actual job interview. Visits increased students' knowledge of academic opportunities beyond the research university, enabling them to examine the best "fit" between their own interests and institutional needs and to expand the range of options they might consider for an academic career.

Positions Outside the Academy

Although our PFFFP program originally focused on preparing students for the professoriate, not all PhD students select this career direction or have opportunities for academic employment. In 1998, the Survey of Earned Doctorates (Sanderson et al., 1999) found that of those graduating PhD students who had secured employment, 50% were working in colleges and universities, 25% in industry or self-employed, 8% in government, and 17% in other positions. In our own department, half of the recent PhD graduates are working in nonacademic

positions. Despite these recent employment trends, doctoral students from diverse disciplines report that they receive little guidance about careers outside the academy (Davis & Fiske, 2000; National Association of Graduate and Professional Students, 2000).

Our doctoral program's family policy emphasis and its unique proximity to Washington, DC, national research/advocacy organizations, and the state capitol, attract a number of students seeking professional positions outside academe. Approximately one third of our PhD students report that their job market choices are also constrained by dual career relationships and/or their desire to remain in the Washington metro area. These students have articulated their desire for greater knowledge of non-academic career paths, prompting our department to expand the focus of its original PFF program in the second year.

Maryland's PFFFP program is now introducing students to nonacademic career paths by examining family science careers in government, nonprofit agencies, and the private sector. This effort began with a University of Maryland Career Center workshop that helped students to identify and prepare for doctoral-level, social science positions outside the academy. Our department has invited speakers from the National Institutes of Health, the Urban Institute, and other government, research, and public policy institutes to acquaint students with the work demands and qualifications for their positions and to share their personal career journeys. Site visits are being planned to governmental and nonprofit agencies to familiarize students with the types of environments in which these family professionals do their work.

PhD students also gain valuable skills for careers in public policy and research through internships at the Children's Defense Fund, the Child Welfare League of America, the Urban Institute, Child Trends, and similar agencies. Our Maryland Family Impact Seminar has engaged students in learning about family policy and advocacy positions as they interact with legislators and citizens around key issues affecting the state. This new focus on job requirements and settings of nonacademic careers highlights the importance of listening to "student voices," sharing power in defining program goals, and designing experiences that inform students about the varied employment contexts in which they can apply their disciplinary expertise.

Job Search

Recent increases in the number of doctoral degrees awarded in family and consumer sciences (Food and Agricultural Education and Information Systems, 2003) and other disciplines (U.S. Department of Education, 2003) underscore the need for graduate schools to prepare PhD students for the job search. Yet, large numbers of new doctorates feel unprepared to search for academic positions, complete a job interview, or negotiate a contract (Heilberger & Vick, 1996; Pollack, 1999). For example, PhD recipients may be surprised when prospective employers require them to give an undergraduate class lecture in addition to the standard research talk. Doctoral students may need special help preparing for job interviews outside academe because faculty advisors often know little about the requirements of such positions (Adams, 2004).

Our PFFFP program prepares family science doctoral students for the job market by engaging students in the career mapping process. Students begin by examining their career goals, values, professional and personal skills, desired institutional type/size and workplace culture, and optimal job location. Following this exercise, they explore the match between their career objectives and current skills and experiences, developing a plan to continue their professional development and address identified gaps. Department faculty and staff from the University Career Center present workshops on how to set up a vita/resume, compose a competitive cover letter, and prepare for a job interview and campus visit. Students rehearse their job talks, participate in mock interviews with both peers and faculty, and learn how to negotiate their salary and start-up package from faculty advisors. During each visit to partner campuses, students ask faculty and administrators about desired qualifications of new faculty and the institution's interview process, building their knowledge of effective search strategies.

Student Evaluations of PFFFP

Our department introduced PFFFP (and its PFF predecessor) with the assumption that these programs would better prepare doctoral students for academic and nonacademic careers than traditional

programs, which focus more exclusively on training for scholarly research. Although our program is so new that it can boast only six graduates, we evaluated our PFFFP initiative after the first year. Three quarters ($N = 19$) of our PhD students completed an anonymous e-mail survey adapted from the national PFF evaluation (DeNeef, 2004). Respondents included four first-year (post-master's) PhD students, six second-year students, and nine third-year students; 17 were female and 2 were male. Consistent with the demographics of our PhD program, 26% of the respondents were African American, 5% were Hispanic, 5% were Asian American, 53% were Caucasian, and 11% were international students. Although there was no control group of

students without PFFFP, responses give a general sense of whether program goals are being met and suggest areas for improvement.

Doctoral students rated a wide variety of PFFFP activities on a 4-point scale from *not helpful* (1) to *very helpful* (4) in preparing them for academic and nonacademic careers. The mean ratings, presented in Table 1, reveal that students perceived all PFFFP activities in the range of "helpful" to "very helpful," with students awarding the highest ratings to teaching mentors, informal student-faculty discussions about teaching, research/scholarship mentors, funded travel to professional conferences, departmental/campus service opportunities, campus visits to partner institutions, career planning, and job

Table 1. *Doctoral Student Ratings of Preparing Future Faculty and Family Professionals Activities (N = 19)*

Topic	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Academic roles/responsibilities		
Teaching		
Teaching mentors	3.50	0.20
Seminars/programs on teaching topics	3.42	0.23
Teaching programs focusing on diversity issues	3.06	0.21
Informal student-faculty discussions about teaching	3.55	0.21
Research		
Research/scholarship mentors	3.72	0.16
Lunchtime seminars on research topics	3.28	0.18
Informal student-faculty discussions about research	3.33	0.18
Research internship course	3.07	0.22
Funded travel to professional conference	3.92	0.08
Coauthorship (with faculty) of papers, posters, and articles	3.43	0.20
Service		
Service on departmental/campus committees	3.50	0.22
Discussions about faculty roles and responsibilities	3.13	0.22
Observation of department faculty meetings	3.14	0.34
Personal concerns		
Discussions about balancing work and family life	3.15	0.27
Peer (student only) sessions on personal/program concerns	3.28	0.18
Institutional partnerships		
Visits to partner institutions to learn about faculty life	3.50	0.16
Positions outside the academy		
Program on nonacademic family science careers	3.00	0.20
Research institutes panel	3.25	0.25
Job search		
Career mapping exercise	3.83	0.17
Interviewing skills program/mock interviews	3.53	0.17
Guidance on negotiating the first job contract	3.29	0.22

Note. Topics were rated on a scale that included *not helpful* (1), *somewhat helpful* (2), *helpful* (3), and *very helpful* (4).

interviewing skills/practice (with mean scores of 3.5 or above).

PhD students also provided qualitative feedback about our PFFFP initiative, responding to open-ended questions that asked “What do you feel are the strengths of our PFFFP program?” and “What do you feel are weaknesses of PFFFP or areas in need of improvement?” Using a thematic content analysis (Strauss, 1987), the authors first individually identified all responses to survey items; core themes were then identified and coded for each case. The authors then compared their individual analyses, discussed commonalities and differences, and reached agreement on major themes that captured the diversity of student responses across cases.

Four major strengths of the PFFFP program were revealed. First, students credited the program with fostering a *strong sense of academic community* by facilitating “organized opportunities to interact and learn from faculty,” “a venue to share information and resources,” and a forum that legitimizes “discussion of the many teaching, research, and professional life questions that students are often hesitant to ask.” Students praised opportunities to meet with faculty to discuss active learning techniques, classroom management strategies, methods for assessing student learning, and ways to handle honor code violations (e.g., plagiarism). The program’s emphasis on diversity issues increased many students’ comfort in “establishing relationships with students from different backgrounds—both in our own graduate program and in our undergraduate classes.” PFFFP participants also credited the program with encouraging them to become more active in research, noting that research seminars presented opportunities to join departmental/interdisciplinary research teams and to attend research meetings with faculty. Finally, students described the student-only sessions as “building a community of graduate students” and “giving us organized opportunities to get together and learn from one another.”

A second major benefit cited by doctoral students was the *multiple mentoring relationships* fostered by PFFFP. Students appreciated receiving personal advice and feedback from several faculty advisors on their teaching, research, and internships, noting that “having only one (dissertation) advisor can limit the range of guidance, direction and support you get during your graduate years.” Students especially valued faculty members’

willingness to “self-disclose and share personal experiences” about a wide range of professional and personal issues, including career options inside and outside the academy, daily work routines, concerns about the tenure process, and strategies for balancing career and family goals.

Learning about life in diverse institutions was a third major benefit of PFFFP. Students described their visits to partner colleges and universities as “opening my eyes to a large number of family science teaching opportunities in the social sciences” and giving students “valuable contacts for future jobs in this area.” Visits provided PFFFP participants with new knowledge about teaching, research, service, and faculty governance at a wide range of institutions. One second-year PhD student noted that while feeling some pressure to work at a research university, the PFFFP program had enabled him to determine that he would “be happiest at a liberal arts college, teaching undergraduates and developing undergraduate scholars.” Another third-year student reported that visits reaffirmed an earlier decision to pursue positions at a research institution where there were “more resources for scholarly work.”

A final key benefit revealed in the student evaluation was *preparation for the job search*. Students report that PFFFP “gives us a more realistic picture of job opportunities available to us at graduation” and “prepares us to groom ourselves for the type of job we are hoping to obtain.” A second-year student appreciated being able to “dedicate time to reflecting and working on my professional development.” Students reported that the job application/interviewing seminars increased their confidence and skills for tackling both the academic and nonacademic job markets. As a third-year student concluded, the “tools and training in the PFFFP program have enabled me to begin my academic career with no surprises,” capable of determining “what is important at my institution and succeeding as an assistant professor.” Overall, student evaluations are consistent with national studies finding that PFF graduates perceive that they are better able to compete in the job market and have a more successful transition to faculty life than their non-PFF peers (DeNeef, 2004; Pruitt-Logan, Gaff, & Weibl, 1998).

Despite strong support for the PFFFP program, students also noted areas that should be strengthened. The most frequent suggestion was that PFFFP

expand its emphasis on careers outside academe. For example, one first-year student reported a desire to “learn more about think tanks, governmental positions, research and advocacy organizations, and policy-based research activities that I may like to consider as potential career options.” In the area of research, some students asked for more exposure to different types of research options for family professionals and for a formal presentation addressing the varied academic journals publishing family science research. Another suggestion was that we develop a written guide specifying PFFFP goals, required activities, and a timeline for completing these experiences. In a related comment, a student suggested identifying a “collection of tangible products that participants would take away from the program,” including teaching portfolios, research articles, and well-crafted resumes. Our Graduate Committee is now creating a professional development tool to ensure more deliberate integration and sequencing of PFFFP activities in the doctoral curriculum.

Faculty Evaluation

Family Studies faculty ($N = 12$) also provided feedback about strengths and weaknesses of the PFFFP program in individual interviews and during an annual retreat. Faculty comments were transcribed, and major themes were identified using the same strategy adopted in analyzing student comments. Similar to students, many faculty believed that a major benefit of PFFFP was that it *strengthened departmental community* and “faculty-student collaboration.” One senior professor reported that “as a teaching mentor, I could share my passion and expertise about teaching the children and families course with my mentee, and also learn about new problem-focused methods she uses to engage her students.” Both junior and senior faculty report that PFFFP has increased their involvement in mentoring (especially of doctoral student instructors), noting new opportunities for faculty and students “to connect on a personal basis,” “coauthor professional work,” and “learn from each other.” Mentoring relationships have also enabled faculty to learn more about their doctoral students’ career aspirations, with some faculty members reshaping elements of their courses to better address students’ professional goals.

A second strength of PFFFP reported by our faculty is its *positive impact on undergraduates*. Several faculty noted that “undergraduates are major beneficiaries of the PFFFP program,” gaining from the careful training of doctoral instructors and their exposure to innovative pedagogies. Indeed, a recent comparison of undergraduate teaching evaluations for doctoral instructors before and after PFFFP found that PFFFP instructors ($N = 8$), as compared to our earlier doctoral teachers without teaching mentors ($N = 9$), exhibited significantly greater gains on measures of “amount of student learning” ($p < .05$) and “teacher effectiveness” ($p < .05$) from the first to the second time they taught the same undergraduate course. PFFFP instructor gains averaged .29 points higher on “student learning” and .34 points higher on “teacher effectiveness” than non-PFFFP instructors on a scale of 1–5 (high); summary scores for both groups of doctoral instructors averaged above 4. Faculty are encouraged by the significantly greater gains in PFFFP doctoral instructors’ performance, especially given factors (e.g., small sample size, potential ceiling effect from overall high scores) that limit statistical power available to detect an effect. However, it will be important to determine whether these initial findings are replicated in extended evaluations of the program’s impact on student teaching.

Faculty also credit PFFFP with giving them a *deeper understanding of family studies coursework and scholarship in different academic contexts*. Five faculty members reported new knowledge of opportunities for students to teach family content in related social science disciplines, as well as increased awareness of how research/scholarship are defined at diverse institutions. Faculty members also recognized the potential to partner with departments at historically Black institutions, comprehensive universities, liberal arts colleges, and community colleges on interdisciplinary and inter-campus research, community outreach, and research grants.

A final benefit, described by 10 faculty, is the program’s *usefulness as a recruiting tool*. Prospective PhD students have expressed keen interest in PFFFP’s efforts to prepare them as future academics and family professionals; a growing number also appreciate the program’s ties to the national PFF program. PFFFP has proved especially helpful in recruiting racially/ethnically diverse, gifted

students to our doctoral program, potentially increasing the number of persons of color in the faculty pipeline.

Departmental faculty cited few weaknesses or drawbacks of our PFFFP effort. Although a few faculty reported initial feelings of skepticism about the program, fearing it would draw students away from research, they now acknowledge that the program has attracted many students to department research projects and enhanced their understanding of the kinds of research students might pursue at diverse institutions. Several faculty felt that the initial program did not adequately address the needs of students seeking careers outside academe, but the program has taken steps to expand its focus on governmental, nonprofit, and private sector careers.

Overall, there is unanimous faculty agreement that the benefits of PFFFP outweigh the costs. Financial costs are quite minimal, due in part to students' "sharing ownership" of the program and collaborating with faculty in organizing seminars, campus visits, and job search workshops. The chair and graduate director have spent a total of approximately 50 hr administering the program each year, supplemented by faculty time devoted to mentoring doctoral teachers (averaging one student per faculty member) and other informal faculty-student interaction. Since introducing PFFFP, the number of doctoral seminars/workshops has increased from one to two or more per month; approximately 90% of our faculty have participated in some program activities. Other financial costs are limited to renting vans for campus visits and small seminar expenses. The department has always funded doctoral student travel to NCFR, and our University's Center for Teaching Excellence supported PFFFP student participation in a national undergraduate education conference.

Recommendations

Table 2 provides an overview of the PFFFP program, linking goals, methods, and participant feedback. These data were used to generate recommendations that may help graduate educators prepare family science academics and professionals, regardless of whether they adopt models such as PFFFP. Recommendations are presented below and summarized in the table.

1. Family science departments should engage in the national dialogue about reform of graduate education by consulting the PFF Web site (www.preparing-faculty.org), the University of Washington Re-Envisioning the PhD Web site (www.grad.washington.edu/envision), and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Responsive PhD Web site (www.woodrow.org/responsivephd).
2. NCFR should lead the discussion of ways to reshape doctoral education in family science. The organization might consider joining professional societies in psychology, sociology, and other disciplines in funding PFF programs and sharing outcomes with graduate departments.
3. Doctoral educators should expand existing, high-quality graduate assistant programs to inform students about faculty roles and expectations at diverse institutions. Graduate schools and teaching and learning centers may be sources of start-up funds for new initiatives.
4. Graduate programs should develop partnerships with a broad array of academic institutions with varying missions, faculty expectations, and student bodies. Doctoral students should have opportunities to visit these diverse institutions and to question their faculty about their workloads, responsibilities, and lifestyles.
5. Graduate educators should provide a formal system to mentor students about the responsibilities of faculty careers, including teaching, research, service, and the challenges of balancing work and family. Multiple mentors offer a wide range of expertise and guidance.
6. Doctoral students should receive increasingly more independent and complex teaching assignments, including opportunities to serve as course instructors, and should be prepared to use a wide range of pedagogical practices and instructional technologies with a diverse student body.
7. Graduate programs should employ varied strategies to help students develop as researchers, offering opportunities to work with multiple mentors, evaluate programs, make presentations at professional conferences, write journal articles, and prepare grant proposals.
8. Graduate educators should help doctoral students to understand research requirements at different types of institutions, to identify some areas of research that are not resource intensive, and to incorporate undergraduates in their research activities.

Table 2. *Preparing Future Faculty and Family Professionals Program, University of Maryland*

Goals	Method/Delivery	Faculty/Student Feedback	Recommendations
1. Provide knowledge of faculty roles and responsibilities at diverse academic institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships with area colleges/universities Campus visits to diverse institutions Seminars/workshops addressing teaching, research, and service Faculty-student dialogue, including sharing of personal narratives Observation of faculty meetings Peer sessions that enable students to analyze academic culture 	<p>Students and faculty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased understanding of faculty roles, workloads, and scholarship at different institutions Heightened sense of academic community <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New knowledge of opportunities for teaching family science in various disciplinary departments Increased knowledge of tenure process, faculty governance, and campus service Greater awareness of faculty strategies for balancing work and family responsibilities <p>Faculty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of intercampus and interdisciplinary research and outreach opportunities with partner institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand graduate assistant programs to more broadly prepare students for academic life Build partnerships with area colleges/universities and organize doctoral student visits to departments that address family issues
2. Provide knowledge of nonacademic family science careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career center workshops on positions outside of academe Seminars with professionals from government, nonprofits, and private sector Site visits to government and nonprofit agencies 	<p>Students and faculty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requests for expansion of program emphasis on nonacademic careers <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge of family science careers and career tracks in nonacademic settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase students' exposure to career options and internship opportunities outside academe

Table 2. *Continued*

Goals	Method/Delivery	Faculty/Student Feedback	Recommendations
3. Equip students with skills and experiences for academic and nonacademic positions	<p>Academic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department and Center for Teaching Excellence seminars on effective teaching • Student instruction of undergraduate courses • Teaching mentors • Research mentors • Extension mentors • Service on department, college, and university committees • Faculty-student coauthorship of articles, papers, and posters • Practice/critiques of presentations • Financial support for conference attendance <p>Nonacademic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships with government and public policy/advocacy organizations • Participation in Maryland Family Impact Seminar 	<p>Students and Faculty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased teaching skills and use of innovative, inclusive instructional techniques • Greater student involvement in department research • Introduce increasingly more complex teaching assignments <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple mentoring experiences especially helpful • Valuable contacts for internship opportunities in family policy/advocacy organizations • Requests for future workshops on publishing • Requests for a written guide specifying Preparing Future Faculty and Family Professionals goals, required activities, and student products <p>Faculty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to share expertise, passion, and personal histories with doctoral instructors • Benefits for undergraduates who profit from well-trained doctoral teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish formal mentoring system and provide mentors for both teaching and research • Prepare students to use new pedagogies with a diverse student body • Acquaint students with a broad range of research/scholarship experiences, including those that require minimal resources • Familiarize students with faculty governance and campus/professional service responsibilities • Prepare students to market themselves for diverse positions and institutions

Table 2. *Continued*

Goals	Method/Delivery	Faculty/Student Feedback	Recommendations
4. Prepare students for academic/nonacademic job search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career mapping exercise and written career plan • Seminars on how to construct vita/resume and cover letter, and conduct job searches • Vita/resume and cover letter critiques • Workshop on interviewing for positions and negotiating an employment package • Mock interviews and faculty/peer feedback • Student-faculty rehearsals for actual job interviews 	<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for reflection on future career options • More realistic view of academic and nonacademic jobs in family science • Introduce career planning and equip students to apply, interview, and negotiate for first position • Increased confidence and competence in job search • Faculty/professional contacts for future positions <p>Faculty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater understanding of students' professional goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate graduate employment data and analyze program effectiveness in preparing students for desired careers
5. Prepare students to address trends in higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at professional conferences on pedagogies that enhance student learning • Faculty-student research/presentations on current higher education issues, such as cultural competence and balancing work and family • Workshop on instructional technology • Seminars/workshops on diversity, multicultural learning, and creating an inclusive environment • Participation in interdisciplinary scholarship • Participation in cultural immersion course on human services in Oaxaca, Mexico (selected students) and sharing of lessons learned 	<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New skills in using innovative teaching and learning strategies and instructional technologies • Increased comfort in relating to students from diverse backgrounds • Preparation as culturally competent teachers <p>Faculty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing Future Faculty and Family Professionals perceived as a valuable recruiting tool for diverse, talented graduate students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage faculty in departmental conversations about the reform of graduate education • Support reshaping of doctoral education through National Council on Family Relations leadership and funding of Preparing Future Faculty/Preparing Future Faculty and Family Professionals model programs

9. Doctoral educators should familiarize students with service responsibilities and faculty governance through activities such as attending faculty meetings, serving on campus and disciplinary society committees, and reading journal article and grant submissions.
10. Graduate programs should expose PhD students to career options outside academe including family science positions in government, nonprofit agencies, and business and industry. Students should have opportunities to meet with family scientists in nonacademic careers, discuss their career trajectories, visit their agencies, and participate in internships.
11. Graduate programs should prepare students to market themselves for different positions and institutions that will enable them to achieve their long-term career goals. Students should learn to develop a cover letter and vita/resume for academic and nonacademic employers, plan a job presentation, handle job offers, and negotiate a first contract.
12. Doctoral educators should explore job market prospects for family science PhDs and become familiar with career opportunities open to their students. Graduate programs should collect data on graduates' actual careers, evaluate their effectiveness in preparing students for these careers, and better address the needs of institutions/agencies employing graduates.

Conclusion

Graduate education is a vitally important period in the preparation of future faculty and family professionals. Although there are many effective elements of current PhD programs, research underscores important challenges that should be addressed. PFFFP attempts to equip our family studies doctoral students with knowledge and skills for a broad range of teaching, research, and service responsibilities in academic and nonacademic environments. Active collaboration with partner institutions is playing a key role in doctoral students' development. Our ultimate goal is to prepare professionals to become future agents of change, helping higher education and other family science professions prepare a new generation of family scholars.

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