

To: St. Olaf College Faculty
 From: CEPC
 Re: Proposed revision to the Family Studies program

At the March 2007, faculty meeting CEPC will move the approval of two changes to the Family Studies program.

Proposal:

1. The current Family Studies major will end with the graduating class of 2011.
2. A new concentration in Family Studies will begin with the class entering in fall, 2008. Requirements for the new concentration are:
 - a. **Recommended preparation:** courses in social science, biology and statistics
 - b. **Required Department courses (3):**
 - i. Family Studies 232: Introduction to Family Studies
 - ii. Family Studies 242: Family Relationships
 - iii. Family Studies 391: Senior Seminar

These required courses provide a core of knowledge in the discipline that is essential to thinking systematically about family systems and their interactions with society.

- c. **Possible electives** (choose 2):
 - i. FS 130: Families in Film and Literature
 - ii. FS 253: Human Sexuality
 - iii. Econ 116: Families, Consumers, Communities
 - iv. Nurs 130: Family Violence
 - v. Psych 241: Developmental Psychology
 - vi. Poli Sci 270: Family Values
 - vii. Soc/Anth 248: Sociology of Dying, Death and Bereavement
 - viii. Soc/Anth 260: Marriage and the Family
 - ix. SW 221: Social Work and Social Welfare
 - x. SW 274: Evaluation of Practice and Programs

These courses allow students to tailor their further knowledge in the discipline to fit a specific application area or to integrate with their major program. Elective courses not on this list may be counted with approval of the Department Chair. Department faculty will write guidelines for courses to count in Family Studies prior to the commencement of this concentration option, fall 2008.

- d. **Senior capstone experience**

This requirement is an academic, credit-bearing experience for seniors. It must be overseen by a St. Olaf faculty member and approved by the Department Chair of Social Work and Family Studies prior to enrollment in the experience. It may be met in several ways:

- i. by a senior year experience (course, independent study, practicum, etc.) in another major (e.g. Psychology, Soc/Anth, pre-med or Women's Studies), as long as the experience focuses on work with families
- ii. by credit-bearing experiential learning focused on families (e.g. a half or full credit internship, social work practicum, or nursing clinical)
- iii. by a senior-level, credit-bearing independent study or independent research project on family

Department faculty will write guidelines for this capstone requirement prior to the enrollment of students in this concentration, fall 2008.

Rationale:

Since the staff planning process of 1998, Family and Social Service has been a department of 3.17 FTE. With accreditation of the Social Work major requiring at least 2.0 FTE, the Family Studies major is almost entirely served by a single faculty member. Currently the major is served by a term appointment. One faculty member is not able to provide a full range of perspectives in a discipline, and presently there is little integration between the two areas of study, Family Studies and Social Work.

Review of the Family Studies program culminated in a spring 2006 site visit. The external reviewers' report recommends that a Family Studies major should have two full time faculty members with Ph.D.'s in Family Social Science. The site visitors also recommend a major that would add two more courses. Since current staffing does not allow for this expansion, the Family Studies major cannot be served with integrity, and a concentration is a more sensible option.

Students and faculty demonstrate strong interest in Family Studies, and it needs to remain viable at the College. Family Studies courses are highly enrolled and fit well with majors in a variety of other disciplines. While the number of Family Studies majors has averaged 16 per year since 1989, the number of students who graduate with only a Family Studies major is quite small; 3-4 per year in the past 8 years. A concentration in Family Studies will continue to serve students interested in the discipline. Furthermore, a concentration consisting of 5 required courses and a capstone experience will be a realistic option for nursing, education, and social work majors who currently have a difficult time double majoring with Family Studies.

Reducing the department's commitment to Family Studies from a 12 course major to a 5-6 course concentration will have no effect on departmental staffing or operating budget. This proposal is revenue neutral, but will have a positive impact on students and the College as a whole. Indeed, the department's plan to replace the term appointment in Family Studies with someone who has expertise in both Social Work and Family Studies (a Ph.D. in one field and master's level work in the other) will allow it to keep 2.0 FTE dedicated to Social Work for accreditation purposes, yet have the flexibility to serve the College by offering General Education or study abroad courses.

A department of three cannot serve two majors with intellectual rigor. In its current configuration, it is best for the Department of Social Work and Family Studies to eliminate the Family Studies major, but continue to give necessary and important curricular attention to the study of families via a new concentration. The long-term goals of the department include hiring two new faculty members, each with graduate-level training in both Social Work and Family Studies. If this happens, the department will have the flexibility and expertise to explore reinstating a new and improved Family Studies major.