UK College of Agriculture  
Family Sciences Strategic Plan 2009-2014  

Goal 1:  
Prepare Students for Leading Roles in an Innovation-driven Economy and Global Society

The Vision of the Department of Family Sciences at the University of Kentucky is to be a leader in improving the quality of life of individuals and families in Kentucky, the region, and the nation through rigorous academic programs, state-of-the-art research, community-driven extension, and engagement opportunities.

Challenges

- Faculty attrition creates significant difficulty – faculty are asked to do too much.
- Additional enrollment is not possible without additional faculty to meet the needs.
- Too little DOE time is allotted to advising.
- Some classrooms and teaching labs are inadequately equipped.
- Quality and quantity of classroom space limits optimal student-instructor contact and thus learning potential.
- Many students have lower grade point averages.

Strategies

- Recruit more high-ability students. Increase the number and quality of graduates at all levels to enhance the reputation of the department.
- Enhance marketing and communication efforts statewide and in strategic out-of-state and international target areas.
- Increase faculty numbers to improve student-to-faculty ratio and academic program quality.
- Ensure that graduates at all levels are able to demonstrate expertise in their disciplines and are prepared to succeed in professional and community settings.
- Expand instructional development opportunities for innovative pedagogies that focus on active learning, effective use of technology, and assessment, given appropriate faculty-student ratios.
- Provide training opportunities for graduate and professional students to serve the needs of the Commonwealth and beyond, through research, teaching, and clinical or professional expertise.

Key Indicators, by 2014 the Family Sciences Department will:

1. Reduce the student-faculty ratio to an average of 30:1 in each upper division undergraduate class.
2. Increase number of students who have a GPA of 2.5 or higher.
3. Fill vacant faculty lines.
4. Increase number of doctoral degrees awarded to 5 each year, based on a 3 year rolling average.
5. Provide opportunities for students to participate in collecting and reporting research data at conferences and in publications.

Goal 2: 
Promote Research and Creative Work to Increase the Intellectual, Social, and Economic Capital of Kentucky and the World Beyond its Borders

Faculty members in the Family Sciences Department are committed to the dual purposes of research: the expansion of the body of knowledge and the translation of basic research into practical innovations for the people of Kentucky and those beyond the state’s borders. Faculty members have made a commitment to completing basic research as well as translational and applied scholarship associated with understanding families that are underserved.

We are committed to developing and publishing high-quality scholarship.

Challenges
- The Family Sciences Department has more untenured than tenured faculty, creating difficulty for graduate students to form advisory committees and limiting the national reputation of the program.
- Faculty vacancies and lack of mid-career or senior faculty place the burden for service work and teaching responsibilities on junior faculty who need time to cultivate a research agenda.

Strategies
- Provide incentives/opportunities for tenured faculty to submit grants. Possible incentives: (a) offer course release of at least 15% of DOE during academic year; (b) provide one month of salary in summer.
- Increase faculty research FTE.
- Provide Assistant Professors with more research FTE.
- Aggressively retain Advanced Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors.

Key Indicators, by 2014 the Family Sciences Department will:
1. Sustain extramural funding of at least $200,000 per year.
2. Increase scholarship in appropriate high quality outlets.
3. Provide Assistant Professors more time (e.g., course release) to work on scholarship.
4. Have more tenured than untenured faculty with research DOE.
5. Increase faculty research FTE.
6. Provide incentives for tenured faculty to submit grant proposals.
7. Aggressively retain tenured faculty or advanced Assistant Professors.

**Goal 3:**
**Develop the Human and Physical Resources of the Department to Achieve the Institution’s Top 20 Goals**

A university is only as strong as the people who populate it and the tools – both physical and professional – they are given to work effectively. The strength of the University of Kentucky and its capacity to achieve the goal of Top 20 status is defined by the faculty and staff who give the institution its personality and its vibrancy. The Family Studies Department is committed to becoming a Top-20 department, which will require recruiting and retaining a talented and committed cadre of faculty and staff. The Family Sciences Department is dedicated to creating and sustaining a work environment that positions faculty and staff for success.

**Challenges**

- The hiring freeze has inhibited our ability to achieve our goal to recruit Top-20 faculty.
- Faculty vacancies have created more service and teaching work for the faculty, impairing their ability to devote time to scholarly activities.
- The Family Sciences Department’s ratio of student credit hours to majors is more than twice any other department in the College of Agriculture. This suggests that the Department is teaching too many service courses.
- Some of our physical facilities – especially office space – are in disrepair. Rain leaks through windows, and plaster and paint are falling from the ceiling in some offices and stairwells.
- There are more untenured than tenured faculty in the Department, making it difficult to achieve benchmarks (e.g., professional recognition, publications, extramural funding) associated with a top-20 Family Sciences Department.

**Strategies**

- Reduce the number of student credit hours, providing faculty with increased time to focus on scholarly activities.
- Invest salary savings from vacant faculty lines to provide assistantship support to faculty for scholarly activities. This has the added benefit of helping to recruit graduate students, who also contribute to the Top-20 mission.
- When given permission to recruit, there are two priorities: (1) replace position in family finance, and (2) recruit a mid-career or senior faculty area (open specialization) who has already demonstrated grant-writing success.
Key Indicators, by 2014 the Family Sciences Department will:

1. Recruit at least two new tenure track faculty (but preferably three because that is the current number of vacancies).
2. Sustain extramural funding of at least $200,000 per year.
3. Have more tenured than untenured faculty.
4. Increase faculty research DOE.
5. Reduce the ratio of student credit hours/major

Goal 4: Promote Diversity and Inclusion

The Family Sciences Department faculty enthusiastically endorses the University of Kentucky goals and objectives to promote diversity and inclusion. We agree that diversity is one of the strengths of American society and are keenly aware that participation in diverse families, workplaces, schools, and communities is the norm and not the exception. With an applied focus on families, the Family Sciences Department will prepare students for meaningful and responsible engagement within and across diverse communities. We share the University of Kentucky goal to help students

- attain a deeper understanding of and commitment to authentic democratic values and social justice.
- embrace a greater commitment to service and leadership for the common good.
- exhibit greater cultural knowledge and competence.
- play a personal role in Kentucky’s success in the global economy.

We accept the responsibility to embrace and nurture diversity as a core value with the result that the goal of diversity is inherent in all of the Department’s strategic goals.

Strategies

- Faculty members in the Family Sciences Department have made a commitment to completing scholarship and delivering outreach programs associated with understanding the needs of families that are underserved or marginalized.
- The Family Studies curriculum will infuse themes of diversity throughout all courses.

Key Indicators, by 2014 the Family Sciences Department will:

1. Include a proportion of faculty that is equivalent to the proportion in the community relative to sex, racial and ethnic background, abilities, age, and other measures of inclusion.
2. Include a proportion of staff that is equivalent to the proportion in the community
relative to sex, racial and ethnic background, abilities, age, and other measures of inclusion.

3. Include a proportion of students that is equivalent to the proportion in the community relative to sex, racial and ethnic background, abilities, age, and other measures of inclusion.

**Goal 5:**
**Improve the Quality of Life for Kentuckians through Outreach and Service**

The Department of Family Sciences, including its Cooperative Extension specialists, and in collaboration with other units in the School of Human Environmental Sciences and the College of Agriculture, will be responsive to the need for knowledge and research-based educational programs that address the quality of life for Kentuckians in the areas of individual and family development and family resource management.

**Most Significant Challenges**

- Budget cuts combined with turnover have created critical capacity shortages for faculty and Cooperative Extension specialists in family science and family resource management. The collaboration between research faculty and Cooperative Extension faculty and specialists to address Kentucky residents’ needs in health and well-being should be carefully reviewed.
- Cuts in state funding of mandated programs have increased burdens on alternative funds sources, including county extension funds.
- New communication and information tools are available that must be increasingly adapted and incorporated fully into Cooperative Extension programming.
- Operating funds for Cooperative Extension, teaching and some applied research are becoming increasingly limited, so extramural funding must increase.
- Cooperative Extension faculty members are challenged to balance program development and outreach, teaching, and research with seeking extramural funding sources.

**Strategies**

- The expectation for graduate education for agents has been established. Encourage graduate education for Family Consumer Science (FCS) agents.
- Sustain traditional Extension strengths while offering innovative new programs within the major FCS initiatives: Making Beneficial Lifestyle Choices, Nurturing Families, Embracing as Life as You Age, Securing Financial Stability, Promoting Healthy Homes and Communities, Accessing Nutritious Food, and Empowering Community Leaders. Promote enhanced linkages between Family
Studies faculty, Cooperative Extension, and new partners within and outside of the University that support Kentucky families.

- Build research programs within the FCS initiatives and the Department that emphasize topics that elevate the life of Kentuckians.
- Support the development of students to become leaders and professionals in the field of Family Studies through the graduate programs and FCS Cooperative Extension, to advance the quality of life for Kentuckians.
- Increase the deployment of web effectiveness and evolving information technologies such as Centra, eXtension, and YouTube.
- Enhance recruiting, training, and support of outreach personnel statewide.
- Establish clearly understood measures to assess and communicate the impact of Cooperative Extension programs.
- Engage key statewide constituencies – including alumni – to help the Department achieve its objectives.
- Faculty will continue to conduct engagement research.
- When appropriate, faculty will share research findings with Cooperative Extension Specialists for translation into Extension publications or media releases.

**Key Indicators, by 2014 the Family Sciences Department will:**

1. Continue to provide outstanding research-based resources and educational programs relative to the Cooperative Extension FCS initiatives that improve quality of life for individuals and families while building sustainable and resilient communities.
2. Increase the number of students conducting research and practicum experiences in community programs outside of the university.
3. Sustain or increase the procurement of grants, contracts, or integrated projects in Cooperative Extension as evidenced by numbers of submitted proposals and total funding amount.
4. Contribute to sustaining or increasing total College of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service contacts.