HDFS Department Highly Ranked Nationally

Although we live in a world of evaluation, until recently Departments of Human Development and Family Studies have largely slipped under the radar of public evaluation. A new study, recently released, shows UNCG has one of North America’s top Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) Departments.

Done by Claire Kamp Dush of Ohio State University, she first identified 53 departments that offer doctoral degrees in HDFS. She then obtained lists of faculty members in each department and contacted one representative from each department. She had these experts identify either the top five programs or top five sets of departmental faculty members from the 53 programs. Raters could not include their own department. Furthermore they were asked to make separate selections in terms of four areas of HDFS: family science, child development, adolescent development and emerging adulthood, and adulthood and aging.

Rankings of departments and sets of faculty members were highly correlated. This suggests that if you have strong faculty members you are very likely to have a highly regarded department.

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Professor Kamp Dush has made public the overall ratings of the departments in the survey and the top 5 departments in each area.

These expert ratings showed UNCG’s department to rank fourth nationally in the area of child development and seventh overall. Good going!!

Readers should note that this is a study of peer’s judgments of the quality of programs. Another approach is to use performance indicators such as grants received, quantity of publications, and citation impact of publications. Usually reputational and objective measures of reputational assessments are clearly but not perfectly associated.

In 1989, Gerald Adams and his associates published an evaluation of 30 HDFS departments based on six indexes of productivity. They ranked departments in two ways: total productivity and productivity per faculty member. Under the first system, departments were put into six groups with UNCG’s department being in the third group. Taking into consideration productivity per faculty member, UNCG ranked 15th of 30 departments.

Given that the methodologies of the two studies differ, exact comparisons aren’t warranted but it appears that the stature of UNCG’s HDFS department has increased over the years.

Rating studies can be controversial but their results are often used by prospective students, university administrators and others. They play into an academic pecking order and influence the self-concepts of program participants. It is unlikely they will go away. Alan Reifman of Texas Tech University reports he is embarking on a study of the citation impact of scholars in different HDFS departments. Stay tuned for his results when they are available!


School of Health and Human Sciences Alumni Awards Ceremony & Reception

Elliott University Center, Cone Ballroom Saturday, April 12, 6-9 pm

Alumni of the School of Health and Human Sciences are invited to attend a reception honoring distinguished alumni. Both HDFS alumnae Kari Adamsons and Vira Kivett will be honored.

For more information call 1-877-862-4123
NAEYC Awards Accreditation to CCEP

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Academy for Early Childhood has accredited UNCG’s Child Care Education Program for a five year term, valid until January 1, 2020. NAEYC Accreditation involves a very detailed and intense process with over 400 possible criteria used to evaluate the quality of early childhood programs. This national accreditation has long been the field’s standard of the highest possible level of quality in programs for young children. Renewal of NAEYC Accreditation involves documentation of the qualifications of program staff and daily program practices. In addition, an outside observer completes a day long assessment of both required and randomly selected criteria. The Child Care Education Program received commendations in 7 out of 10 possible standards, meaning a score of 100% was achieved. In addition, the three classrooms selected for observation met an average of 94% of the selected criteria on the day of the assessment.

“We’re proud to be recognized for our commitment to providing a high quality program for young children. NAEYC Accreditation is one way of letting others know the important work done by teachers in our program to offer quality learning experiences for young children and opportunities for university students to learn more about best practices in early childhood education.”

Sharon Mims, PhD, Director CCEP
Walking with the Stars Tops at UNCG, 3rd in the State

North Carolina’s Office of State Human Resources holds a Miles for Wellness Fitness event for state and university employees. In this year’s event, Challenge 10, 201 teams participated in three divisions. The members of each team had to wear pedometers to measure how much they walked (or jogged) from the time they woke up until the time they went to bed.

HDFS’ team included faculty, staff and students. The team’s name comes from the nucleus of the group being associated with the S.T.A.R. Project. This Project is interested in learning more about early school success. School requires social as well as academic skills. This study looks at how the development of children’s emotional, cognitive and social skills helps them to succeed in school.

The team ranked first at UNCG and third in their divisions state-wide. The team walked 2,414 miles during the 8 week event or an average of 4.2 miles per person per day. Margaret Swingler and Esther Leerkes walked the most. Congratulations to the Walking with Stars Team captained by Emilie Peterson for setting an example of fitness for all of us.
Dr. Vira Kivett Recipient of the School of Health and Human Sciences’ Legacy Award

HDFS extends congratulations to Dr. Vira Kivett, Professor Emeritus, on being the 2015 recipient of the School of Health and Human Sciences’ Lifetime Legacy Award. This award is for an alumnus/a who has served as a pioneer in his/her field of study and who has tirelessly given of his/her treasure through time or talents spanning a number of decades. This honoree may be selected from among the alumni of any of the eight departments and 2 programs of the School.

Dr. Kivett is an internationally recognized scholar in the field of social gerontology and one of the United States’ foremost scholars on rural aging. Through her innovative teaching, research, and service she has inspired and mentored many current college and university professors, along with practitioners in their service to older adults in North Carolina, the region and nation. Among Dr. Kivett’s many previous awards and accomplishments, she was recognized in 1996 by the UNC Board of Governors for her service on behalf of the elderly when she received the O. Max Gardner Award, the highest honor the UNC system can bestow on one of the system’s faculty members. She is a member of the Southern Gerontological Society’s (SGS) Hall of Fame and received the Gerontological Society of America’s Distinguished Mentor Award.

Always concerned not only with science but also with bettering the lives of older adults, she has presented before the Select Committee on Aging of the U.S. House of Representatives and has been recognized by the State of North Carolina for contributions to public policy on aging.

Vira received her bachelor’s degree in home economics from the Women’s College of North Carolina in 1955. She went on to earn her masters and PhD degrees from this institution after its name was changed to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She began her lifelong career as a UNCG employee as the campus dietician and began teaching in the Child Development and Family Relations department in 1960. She was promoted to the rank of Professor in 1987 and named the Elizabeth Rosenthal Excellence Professor in 1993. She became Professor Emerita in 1999.