

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST FOR NAME CHANGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA:
DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN, TEXTILES, GERONTOLOGY AND FAMILY STUDIES TO
SCHOOL OF APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES**

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Northern Iowa to change the name of the Department of Design, Textiles, Gerontology, and Family Studies to the School of Applied Human Sciences in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Executive Summary: The proposed name change reflects the interdisciplinary nature of current and future academic programs and acknowledges the applied focus of these programs and their foundation in the social sciences. The Mental Health and School Counseling Program in the College of Education will also be included in the proposed school. This request has been reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. This request addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to provide “educational excellence and impact.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of current department.** This multidisciplinary, pre-professional department prepares undergraduate students for careers which help people build better lives. Students can major or minor in interior design, textiles and apparel, gerontology, or family services. The four programs share a social science orientation.
- ◇ **Change consistent with mission of college.** The proposed school will remain an integral part of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and will provide a focal point for college faculty members interested in applied research with interdisciplinary interests. The mission of the proposed school will be consistent with the mission of the College which states “the mission of Social and Behavioral Sciences is to increase understanding of people in individual, social, cultural, and historical contexts.”
- ◇ **Comparable name at other institutions.** Iowa State University¹ has a College of Human Sciences that resulted from the merger of the Colleges of Family and Consumer Sciences and Education and includes a number of the same disciplines in the proposed school. Colorado State University has a College of Applied Human Sciences and the University of Mississippi has a School of Applied Sciences.
- ◇ **Goals of proposed name change.** The proposed name will provide an academic base for the addition of applied programs which are currently in other academic units on campus. The intent is to establish a foundation or core of faculty members and academic programs focused on applied human sciences to stimulate synergy among faculty members across the campus which transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries, fosters cooperation, and inspires more collaborative research. It is anticipated that faculty members throughout the campus may choose to hold an affiliated appointment with the proposed school, even if their academic department is not a unit within the proposed School of Applied Human Sciences.

¹ The ISU Dean of the College of Human Sciences was contacted about the proposed name change. No objections were raised.

- ◇ Effect on students. Students are expected to experience minimal impact. Degree names and requirements will remain the same. As the proposed school develops, it is anticipated that there will be more opportunities for course sharing across some majors, but all current degrees will continue to be available to students.
- ◇ Effect on resources. The new organizational structure of the school will not require additional resources. Recent budget cuts eliminated several faculty lines in the associated programs. It is anticipated that additional faculty lines will be available to replenish teaching resources if enrollments remain high and the budget improves.

Initially, the staffing will remain the same with faculty from the Department of Design, Textiles, Gerontology and Family Studies and the Mental Health and School Counseling Program. The proposed school will have a director who will initially be the head of the current department and will be the functional equivalent of a department head. It is possible that other programs and departments may join the proposed school at a later date. While there will be no immediate cost savings, it is anticipated that collaborations, especially in the areas of teaching and course sharing, will result in greater efficiency.

- ◇ Date of implementation. The proposed department name change will become effective upon approval by the Board of Regents and will be implemented in Fall 2010.