

Dear School of Family and Consumer Sciences Colleagues:

With honor, I accept the nomination to be considered a candidate for the Chair position in the School of Family and Consumer Sciences. Serving as a faculty member in this School for 15 years in different capacities has prepared me to embark on this important responsibility. My resume clearly defines my diversity of experiences within our university and at the local, state, and national levels. In this letter I have outlined my leadership style, my perspectives on the priorities of the College, Academic Affairs, and the University, and shared my vision for the future direction of the School of Family and Consumer Sciences. In addition, a summary of qualifications and experiences related to the position is provided.

The participative/teamwork leadership approach is the style of leadership that I appreciate as an employee and therefore utilize when I hold a leadership position. My responsibility as Chair would be to serve the faculty and staff in Family and Consumer Sciences and provide them with the resources and services to perform in their positions efficiently and effectively. I would be proud to represent our School across campus and at the state and national levels by fully participating in meetings and conferences and serving as the voice for the School of Family and Consumer Sciences at EIU. Mentoring colleagues and serving as the liaison for them between students, administration, or other constituents, and advocating and providing support would be priorities. I have been extremely fortunate over the years to work in capacities that have allowed me to be innovative and creative in my professional endeavors. The opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to excel and offer new ideas will be welcomed, as this is what keeps a program fresh and moving forward. Successful leaders surround themselves with diverse and highly qualified individuals and the FCS faculty and staff provides the foundation for success at this position.

The priorities of the College, Academic Affairs, and the University are, in my view, on target which furthers my interest in serving as the Chair. The School of Family and Consumer Sciences has embraced the concept of integrative learning for many years and is an educational practice that we value as it enriches a student's overall academic experience. It is a concept that we apply and we apply it well. Another priority is the recruitment and retention of quality faculty, staff, and students who value a diverse culture. This priority is critical to the future of the university. The Early Alert System and the Scholarship and Undergraduate Retention First (SURF) program, two recently implemented initiatives, are both excellent proactive approaches to reach out to students. Mentoring and building faculty/student relationships, engaging students in research projects, study abroad opportunities, and membership in professional student organizations are additional opportunities to build those relationships.

The vision and mission statements, first developed in 1909 for Family & Consumer Sciences, will be the driving force in the direction of our School. Preparing students to empower individuals, strengthen families, and enable communities to improve the global society using research, experiences, and service learning is what defines the profession. A few specific examples of the direction of the School will be addressed.

Clearly defining personal professional goals is imperative for an individual's morale and motivation and, as a leader, it is important to work with each individual in achieving those goals. Mentoring will be provided for the FCS faculty and staff to insure that they are provided the support needed to be successful in their positions. Developing a strategic plan for our School also will be a priority. The AAFCS Accreditation report, the EIU Strategic Planning Committee report, and collective participation from faculty, staff, and constituents will provide a foundation for these strategic plans to be developed.

As a collaborative effort between the Schools of Family and Consumer Sciences and Business, research is being conducted on creating a Financial Literacy minor and eliminating the Consumer Studies option area. Faculties in both Schools have expressed great interest in this minor and have been providing input on the curriculum. Along with the minor, the reinstatement of the Financial Health Education Center is a priority. This goal both satisfies the integrative approach to education, as well as educating students on empowering individuals and families by providing them with proper financial management skills.

Other priorities for the School will be graduate programs either retaining or achieving the First Choice Designation. This rigorous process will allow us to critically review our programs and determine the strengths and weaknesses. The graduate faculty will then have a stronger foundation and greater support necessary to address and revise the priorities of the programs. I perceive a significant growth in our Gerontology program due to the changes in the US demographic population and the opportunities for this program will be limitless. The direction of this program will be left to the expertise of the Gerontology Coordinator and faculty members; however, it will be exciting to play a role in the further development of this program.

My experience with the Black Friday research project validates the importance of engaging students in research, as the opportunities created for them have been staggering. They have had the experiences of conducting research, writing articles, networking, and presenting at conferences, thus building stronger resumes and portfolios. The study has received national attention and I emphasize to them that they have played a major role in that study.

The School of Family and Consumer Sciences has numerous affiliations and constituencies and I want to briefly address each one. The responsibility as Chair reaches far beyond academia and it is important to be well rounded in all areas.

Collaborating with the staff members in Peace Meal and the Child Care Resource and Referral will continue to be vital to insure the continuation of funding for these important services to our community. These outreach programs comprise the two largest grants on campus and unfortunately, the funding has been in jeopardy for years. I have been familiar with the Peace Meal program for many years since the time when my mother was still living, and we utilized this program by having meals delivered to her. When she was healthy, she volunteered for Peace Meal as a thank you to them for their service to her. Gayle Strader's husband, Mike, was the Director of the program; as an adjunct instructor in FCS in the early 1990s, Gayle and I shared an office and she and I would discuss the internal operations of the program. As with Peace Meal, Child Care Resource and Referral serves as a valuable resource for families in the community and provides financial assistance for child care services. I am aware of FCS undergraduate and graduate students who have utilized these services to assist them financially to

enable them to pursue their degrees. Without this service, the added child care expense may have prohibited them from achieving their educational goals. Both Peace Meal and Child Care Resource and Referral support academia by providing internships, graduate assistant sites, and other experiences for our students; thus enhancing our integrative learning approach.

The School of Family and Consumer Sciences was innovative with the development of The Alternative Bachelor's in Child Care Education (ABC program). This program of study provides an avenue for non-traditional students to complete their Bachelor's degree in Child Care Education. It provides accessibility and offers students convenient class times, meeting online or weekend formats, which fit into their demanding schedules. This is an excellent example of FCS "meeting the needs of our consumers"; we saw an opportunity and took advantage of it.

The School of Family and Consumer Sciences takes pride in using the theory to practice model by providing students the opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge to actual hands-on experiences. Pantera (and the soon-to-be-in-operation Faculty/Staff Café), the Child Development Laboratory, internships, and independent studies are all excellent examples of successfully using this theory to practice approach.

Pantera is a fully functional restaurant organized by the students and it has been a delight watching its growth over the years. I have personally experienced this restaurant setting and was very impressed with the professionalism exhibited by our students. As a result of this experience, I arranged to have the FCS catering students prepare and serve food for the Annual EIU Athletic Spring Fling, as I knew that this would bring positive exposure to the School of Family and Consumer Sciences. I was very proud of the results. Pantera not only provides valuable hands-on experience for our students but provides high profile exposure across the campus and in the community. The Faculty Staff Café will achieve everything mentioned above, as well as provide an avenue for collaboration between faculty and staff. I anticipate that the Café will be very popular and attract much attention.

In spring 2011, I visited the Child Development Laboratory and Dr. Meadows provided much insight on benefits and procedures of the laboratory. The meticulous attention to detail in coordinating the students and young children to enhance the learning environment for both of them is implausible. I am a very protective grandma of a beautiful 2-year-old granddaughter. The fact that I want to enroll her in this program next fall speaks volumes of the respect that I have for this exceptional program. The collaboration with the community members and the integrative learning experience that it provides for our students is invaluable.

Internships and independent studies provide our students a competitive edge in the job market. Again, the integrative learning and the ability to apply theory to practice enhances their collegiate experience. I have served as an Internship Advisor at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and as the Independent Study coordinator for students enrolling in coursework through the Disney College Program. This has allowed me to witness first-hand the tremendous opportunities available for our students. The connection that has been built between Disney and EIU provides our students with an opportunities and experiences that sets them apart and above their professional competition. The philosophy that they learn via the Walt Disney program can be applied to their lives, both personally and professionally.

Serving as the advisor for the graduate assistant assigned to the FCS student organizations has allowed me to observe the growth in professionalism of our students as a result of their membership. We have developed programs and provided numerous services to the community through outreach programs such as Adopt-a-Family, sorting clothes at Catholic Charities, and making cards for nursing home residents. Our student organizations are vital in enhancing the academic experience and serve as valuable tools for students to learn the importance of networking, organizational skills, service learning, and teamwork.

The study abroad opportunities made available to students over the years in our School have been incredible. I had the opportunity to take 26 students to Italy and found the experience to be amazing. Study abroad has been a priority for the university and I fully support further development of these types of opportunities in the future.

With the timing of our AAFCS Accreditation and the Strategic Planning Committee finalizing the strategic plan for EIU, it provides the perfect opportunity to closely examine our School, determine our strengths and weaknesses and develop our own comprehensive strategic plan. We are a very well respected program at the local, state, and national levels and have made great strides over the past years 15 years. My passion for Family and Consumer Sciences is not a secret. I have always taken a stand for FCS and am protective of the best interests of the School as a whole. Not only am I passionate about the strength and vitality of our School but I have a loyalty to EIU that I am not afraid to share with anyone willing to listen. I am ready and willing to take our School to the next level and am confident that with the collaboration and expertise of the School of Family and Consumer Sciences' team, we will be able to continue to move our School in the best direction.

Sincerely,

Linda Simpson, Ph.D.

Qualifications and Experiences Related to the Position Linda Simpson, Ph.D.

Due to the courses that I teach, I have the opportunity to instruct students from each concentration and option area in Family and Consumer Sciences. I have also taught a balance of lower level undergraduate and graduate level courses, which has allowed me to interact with students at all academic levels for the past 15 years. I have outlined the courses that I teach and the relationship to each concentration and option area, my specific experience with each concentration and option area, and additional background knowledge and experiences that are beneficial to this position.

Course levels and concentrations of students enrolled (Courses most frequently taught):

- FCS 2244, Consumer Textiles: This course is an undergraduate requirement for students in the options areas of Apparel and Textiles Design, Career and Technical Education (FCS emphasis) students, Hospitality, Consumer Studies, and Merchandising.
- FCS 3300 Consumer Education: This course is an undergraduate requirement for Apparel and Textiles Design, Career and Technical Education (FCS emphasis), Consumer Studies, Family Services, and Merchandising students, as well as graduate level students that do not have an undergraduate degree in Family and Consumer Sciences. This includes several graduate level Dietetics students that have enrolled in this course to fulfill the undergraduate deficiency.
- FCS 5301, Consumer and Management Problems for Older People: This graduate level course appeals to students enrolled in Gerontology, the Family Services option, and general Family and Consumer Sciences students.
- FCS 5302, Family Budgeting and Debt Management: This course appeals to graduate students enrolled in Gerontology, the Family Services option, and general Family and Consumer Sciences students.
- FCS 5460, Current Issues and Trends in Family and Consumer Sciences: This is a core requirement for all graduate students in Family and Consumer Sciences. This course has helped me to keep current on topics and research in each concentration and option area.

I have a clear understanding of each concentration and option area and fully recognize and appreciate the integrative nature of Family and Consumer Sciences.

Specific experience related to each concentration or option area.

- Apparel and Textile Design/Merchandising: I received my undergraduate degree in merchandising and taught this content area at Indiana State for two years. As mentioned earlier, I have taught FCS 2244 Consumer Textiles for 15 years. I am very familiar with the textiles lab and clothing construction and have become savvy in the fiber and needle arts. Apparel and Textile Design/Merchandising is a part of my program area which includes Apparel and Textiles, Consumer Studies, Hospitality, and Merchandising.
- Career and Technical Education (FCS emphasis): CTE students enroll in FCS 3300 Consumer Education which certifies them to teach this course at the high school level.
- Consumer Studies: This option area is my area of expertise. This past year, I received a Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences Faculty Award for

Interdisciplinary Research grant and am working in collaboration with the School of Business to explore a change from an option area to a Financial Literacy minor, making it a multi-disciplinary option. A goal in this area is to reestablish the Financial Education Health Center.

- Dietetics: I serve on Dietetics students' thesis and graduate committees and Dietetics graduate students enroll in FCS 3300, Consumer Education. This course is a deficiency for students who do not have an undergraduate degree in Family and Consumer Sciences. In addition, Dietetics students enroll in FCS 5460, Current Issues and Trends in Family and Consumer Sciences, which is a core requirement for our graduate program.
- Family Services: FCS 3300, Consumer Education, is a required course for students enrolled in the Family Services concentration. FCS 5302, Financial Budgeting and Debt Management is a course that appeals to Family Services students.
- Gerontology: I have served on the Gerontology faculty for 3 years and recently presented at the Illinois Governor's Conference on Aging. FCS 5301, Consumer and Management Problems of Older People, is a popular course for Gerontology students.
- Hospitality: FCS 2244, Consumer Textiles, is a requirement for students enrolled in this option area. Hospitality is a part of my program area which includes Apparel and Textiles, Consumer Studies, Hospitality, and Merchandising.

PERSONNEL EXPERIENCE

I have served on the School Personnel Committee for a total of six years; two of those years, I served as the Chair. This experience has made me very familiar with the Unit A Contract, as well as experience in reviewing portfolios. I have conducted numerous classroom faculty evaluations over the years and have served on six search committees, chairing three of those committees. The searches include:

- Family and Consumer Sciences Search Committees:
Apparel and Textile Design/Merchandising (Chair)
Consumer Studies (Chair)
Family Services
- Two Lumpkin College Business and Applied Sciences Dean Search Committees
- Vice President for Academic Affairs Search Committee
- EIU Head Basketball Coach Search Committee (Chair)

ACCREDITATION

I was selected by Provost Lord to serve on the Eastern Illinois University NCAA Accreditation Team and as the Chair for the Criterion 4 (Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge) committee. I have been involved with three Family and Consumer Sciences' Accreditations; one at Indiana State and two at Eastern Illinois University.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

Strong organizational and time management skills are abilities that I can bring to this position. I am a methodical thinker and am able to process and sort ideas easily. I possess the ability to generate ideas and to implement ideas through action. This is an area where I would excel and would also have the ability to assist others through the steps necessary to implement ideas.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT

A foundation in the area of consumer studies and budget management has provided me the experience necessary to prepare for resource allocation, prioritize needs and wants, and justify expenditures that align with the mission and vision of FCS. I am currently a member of the Stewardship Team at Salisbury Church where we are responsible for developing and reviewing the operating budget for the 750 member congregation. As a volunteer for the Coalition for People in Need for the local community, I have provided training sessions for clients on budget management, which is also a workshop that I presented for the EIU Academy for Lifetime Learning, the Illinois Coalition for Community Services, and an AAFCS Webinar.

As a member of the Panther Club Board of Directors and the Trojan Booster Club through Charleston High School, I was responsible for fundraising and soliciting donation items for awards and silent auction items. The fundraising was conducted via telephone solicitations or a personal meeting with potential donors.

I was the lead organizer for a benefit for a local 25-year-old Charleston resident who received a liver transplant this past June. I coordinated or helped with coordinating:

- a silent auction and a live auction
- a male “celebrity” cake auction (which included the Mayor of Charleston)
- entertainment and food
- all volunteers
- all marketing and promotions which included fliers, signage, and social network sites
- specific logistics for the evening such as the event schedule, silent auction procedures, and venue setup.
- the contacts to secure autographed memorabilia from professional athletes, trips, tickets to various events, and restaurant gift certificates
- recruiting and writing the script for the emcee
- a dynamic PPT presentation that included music and other enhancements

***Over \$21,000 was raised

My husband and I were selected to serve as a partner family to the new owners of a Habitat House in the Charleston community. Our responsibilities were to partner with the new owners and assist them in purchasing items for their new home; staying within the budget set by the Habitat Board.

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Being from the local community provides me the opportunity in developing partnerships outside of the university. Since I have a vested interest to Charleston and the surrounding areas, my passion to provide service to the community is enhanced. I have served the full spectrum of the community by speaking at Chamber of Commerce events to working with very low income families through the Coalition for People in Need. A colleague recently asked me, “is there anyone in this town that you do not know?” I also find it important to develop relationships within the university. I am visible across campus as I regularly attend events such as Homecoming, Celebration, sporting events, and other EIU sponsored functions.

INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

I served as a pioneer for teaching with technology on the EIU campus as I was one of the first faculty members to teach an online course. In 1998, this new pedagogical approach was met with much adversity but I was determined that it was an important step in the right direction for our campus; therefore, I did not give up. On January 24th, 2012, I was proud to attend the 10th anniversary for the Center for Academic Technology Services knowing that I played a significant role in the development of the Center. This is an example of my determination to be unafraid of pursuing new ventures and to persevere.

PERSONAL

The timing is perfect for this step in my professional career and the decision to accept the nomination for FCS Chair was not taken lightly. I would not be willing to be considered as a candidate if the passion and drive to give 100% to the position was not there. My children are ages 23 and 19 and I have one grandchild. My oldest daughter is getting married this summer and my youngest daughter will be graduating from Parkland College this spring. My time commitment as a parent has decreased over the years and I foresee that pattern to continue. I have full support and encouragement from my husband, as well. When Loretta Prater left the Chair's position nine years ago, a few faculty members requested that I consider the position. At that time, I was not ready. I am now ready and prepared for a new challenge.

