

## Committee on Academic Affairs Motion

March 23, 2016

Motion: The Department of Child and Family Studies shall have its name changed from the Department of Child and Family Studies to the *Department of Human Development and Family Science*.

The current Department of Child and Family Studies respectfully requests that all applicable faculty governance units and university administrators consider this request and approve this name change.

### **Rationale**

The current department name "*Child and Family Studies*" is a holdover from an earlier period of our field's history (prior to the 1980s) when the field emerged from the intersection of home economics, early childhood education and care, and child psychology. The field has changed fundamentally since that early period. It is now a dynamic interdisciplinary endeavor that studies developmental processes utilizing research methods and techniques typical of other social sciences. Given the change in the nature and focus of the field, we largely have moved past the term "*Child and Family Studies*" that formerly described the field (e.g., Hamon & Smith, 2014). The change we propose is consistent with the names of the journals in our field, the professional research organizations that oversee our fields, and in the names of our aspirational peer departments both nationally and internationally (see attached Appendix A).

The primary benefit of the proposed name change is accuracy. The proposed name, "*Human Development and Family Science*," more accurately describes the content of the teaching and research that currently exist in our department than does the present department name. First, our teaching and degree requirements at both the undergraduate and graduate level take a lifespan perspective on development rather than focusing only on child development. As a result, the phrase "Human Development" as part of the department name would better capture our pedagogical and research efforts. Families are, of course, both an integral part of lifespan development and an area worthy of intense independent focus. Finally, as indicated above, our department employs theories and research techniques that are shared with other social sciences.

Our requested departmental name change is consistent with national trends for our peers and our aspirational peers (Hamon & Smith, 2014; see Appendix A). Many of our current, competitor, and aspirational peers have already made a similar change. In addition, our requested departmental name change is also consistent with the preferred nomenclature ("Family Science") recommended by the National Council on Family Relations, one of our major professional organizations (Hamon & Smith, 2014).

Finally, we believe that this change will facilitate our efforts to recruit and retain students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Our current department name is somewhat out of keeping with our pedagogical focus, our research efforts, and national trends. It is our hope that the proposed department name, because it is in keeping with trends across the field will enable us to recruit greater numbers of higher caliber students. We would expect that this new title would be more appealing to prospective research-oriented undergraduate and graduate students and to the recruitment of faculty in the future.

Reference:

Hamon, R. R., & Smith, S. R. (2014). The discipline of Family Science and the continuing need for innovation. *Family Relations*, 63, 309–322.  
doi: 10.1111/fare.12068

**Approvals**

This motion was approved by a vote of the CFS Faculty on February 12, 2016 (9 Approve; 0 Reject; 1 Abstain).

Appendix A  
Peer and Aspirant Department Names

Penn State University	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
University of Illinois	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human &amp; Community Development</u></a>
Arizona State University	<a href="#"><u>School of Social &amp; Family Dynamics</u></a>
Cornell University	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development</u></a>
Auburn University	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
University of Minnesota	<a href="#"><u>Department of Family Social Science</u></a>
Virginia Tech	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development</u></a>
University of North Carolina– Greensboro	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
Ohio State University	<a href="#"><u>Program in Human Development and Family Science</u></a>
University of California – Davis	<a href="#"><u>Program in Human Development and Family Studies</u></a>
University of Missouri	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
University of Wisconsin	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
Oregon State University	<a href="#"><u>Program in Human Development &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
Michigan State University	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
Purdue University	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
Northwestern University	<a href="#"><u>Program in Human Development and Social Policy</u></a>
University of Arizona	<a href="#"><u>Division of Family Studies &amp; Human Development</u></a>
University of Georgia	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development and Family Science</u></a>
University of Texas	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Sciences</u></a>
Florida State University	<a href="#"><u>Department of Family &amp; Child Sciences</u></a>
University of Connecticut	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
University of Maryland	<a href="#"><u>Department of Family Science</u></a>
Oklahoma State University	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Science</u></a>
Colorado State University	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
Iowa State University	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
Utah State University	<a href="#"><u>Department of Family, Consumer, &amp; Human Development</u></a>
University of Delaware	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
North Dakota State University	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development and Family Science</u></a>
Texas Tech University	<a href="#"><u>Department of Human Development &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
University of Manitoba	<a href="#"><u>Department of Family Social Sciences</u></a>
University of Nebraska – Lincoln	<a href="#"><u>Department of Child, Youth &amp; Family Studies</u></a>
University of Kentucky	<a href="#"><u>Department of Family Sciences</u></a>