Winter Musings: What Makes a New Year New?

Do you remember when you were a child and it seemed like forever between birthdays? A year was long and luxurious, particularly summer vacations which seemed to stretch on and on from delicious day to delicious day. We counted our birthdays in halves and quarters just to show how old we were becoming, proud of the passing time. Is it just that we are aging, or has the pace of life in today's world increased so significantly that each year roars by, almost in a blur?

It's 2007 and a new semester has begun on campus. In Family and Consumer Sciences we are pleased that our number of student majors is still high with new students coming in weekly to talk about entering as freshmen or transferring their majors to our department. Our courses are in demand on campus and online, frequently generating waitlists within a day or two of preregistration. To the faculty's credit, they are continuing to work to insure that our students are being prepared for success after graduation. Our didactic dietetics program is undergoing its accreditation review, with the final report coming to us in July. A committee was formed to see where assignments related to our competencies can be embedded in our core courses. We have significantly reworked our FCSC 4010 Philosophical and Research Perspectives course to focus more on our electronic portfolio student assessments. Students will be presenting their portfolios to a panel of reviewers at the end of the semester. Do let me know if you'd like to participate, even at a distance. Your perspectives and expertise are always welcome. We're proud that our department is recognized as a campus leader in student assessment. We will be the featured department in the February issue of UW's Assessment of Student Learning newsletter. In addition, we have received a grant from the Ellbogen Center on Teaching and Learning to conduct employer surveys applicable to each of our degree options.

You may be interested to know the results of last summer's alumni surveys. We contacted graduates from the past 10 years to see where they were working and whether or not they felt their degrees had been beneficial. Seventy percent of the respondents indicated that they were currently working in a job directly related to their degree. Eighty-eight percent felt that their coursework had prepared them for success in their current positions. Sixty-eight percent would choose exactly the same degree and program option again. All of the results can be seen on our webpage at www.uwyo.edu/family/assessment3.asp.

Graduate student education is also on our minds. We have formed a graduate student recruitment and retention committee to examine ways that we can market our graduate programs. All graduate students now take a common seminar twice during their master's degree programs. It meets each spring, and is a forum for the faculty to present their research and for the students to present their thesis work or their ideas for research if they are new to the program. We hope it will help all of our graduate students understand how their specializations fit within the umbrella of Family and Consumer Sciences and help them appreciate all the ways that research and creative endeavor can successfully be undertaken, while increasing connectedness between graduate students and our faculty. Some of the faculty's current work is highlighted in this newsletter.

I hope 2007 will be productive, active and filled with good health. Recapture the child within and enjoy every day.

Best regards, Karen

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FCS News – Winter 2007
Editor and Designer – Mona Gupton
Mentoring the Undergraduate

Contributed by Associate Professor Shane Broughton

When I first joined the faculty at the University of Wyoming, I attended a presentation where the importance of the student was emphasized. Key to that presentation were the following five statements. The student is 1) the most important person on campus (Without students there would be no need for the institution.); 2) not a cold enrollment statistic but a flesh and blood human being with feelings and emotions like our own; 3) not someone to be tolerated so that faculty can do their thing (They are our thing.); 4) not dependent on us (Rather, we are dependent on them.); and 5) not an interruption of our work, but the purpose for it. (We are not doing them a favor by serving them. They are doing us a favor by working with us. They are giving us the opportunity to do what we do.)

With these guidelines in mind I set forth with determination to figure out how I could advance opportunities for students while simultaneously building my own research program. By providing undergraduates with opportunities to participate in publishable research, students learn how the information they hear in class is obtained. They learn the importance of the application of the scientific method to research and data evaluation. This has been a critical ongoing process handed down over the years from class to class as students teach research techniques to one another. My research studies have focused in the areas of reproduction and asthma. Students have, in some cases, been involved in the original design of a study or participated in previously designed ongoing studies. By taking advantage of these opportunities, the students have strengthened their applications for professional programs in medicine, dietetics, dentistry, ophthalmology, and as physician assistants. I have been fortunate that these opportunities have been supported by the College of Agriculture’s Paul Stock Program, through departmental research allocations, and extramural funding.

New Faces

We are pleased to announce the hiring of Dianne Barden as the new coordinator of distance programs for Family and Consumer Sciences. She will be working closely with the students pursuing the Child Development Professional and Family and Community Services degrees and the Early Childhood Program director’s certificate. Barden has an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Education and a master’s in education. She was the director of the Early Childhood Program at Front Range Community College in Fort Collins, Colorado, where she taught classes, observed students in child-care settings, and advised students. Barden is excited about working with our distance programs. “When my children were young, I did in-home licensed childcare and have been a director in a large child-care setting. My personal and professional lives have revolved around children and family needs. With this background, I am prepared to assist and advise students.” Having been a working parent, Barden understands the value of being able to work and pursue an education. Our distance programs are made for busy, motivated, and off-site students to do just that.

The department office has a new senior office assistant, Patricia Hysong. Hysong joined Tracy Bennett and Mona Gupton in January. The staff team is happy to welcome her and is looking forward to working together to support department administration, instruction, research, and extension.

Designing Public Spaces

Students in Treva Sprout’s Interior Design II class had an interesting and challenging project this year. Using high tech AutoCAD and VIZ4 software, students created professional design proposals for the interior of the Laramie Valley Chapel, a church building which is currently under construction.

The participants in the course designed the sanctuary, a coffee shop/fellowship area, public restrooms, and a greeting/receiving area. The students did a fantastic job with the design proposals and many of their ideas are already being implemented.

Interior Design II is the senior level, terminal design course in the Interior Design minor that focuses on designing public, rather than private, spaces.
The Cent$ible Nutrition Program (CNP) has helped Wyoming families and individuals with limited resources find greater food security for more than nine years by promoting physical well-being and sound nutrition for every resident. It has been a year of transition for the program with new staff in the state office. Mary Kay Wardlaw started the year as the new director, Mindy Meuli joined the team as program manager, and the program welcomed two new assistant project coordinators, Daniel Erichsen and Tressa M. Penrod.

During the past grant year, with annual funding from the Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), CNP worked with more than 1,300 adults in CNP lessons. On average, adult graduates of the CNP program saved $53 a month on food purchases and participants demonstrated marked improvements in food and nutrition choices. CNP also worked with almost 6,000 youth participants, all demonstrating dramatic increases in improved nutrition and knowledge of low-cost nutrition practices.

The CNP program re-launched its Web site, www.uwyo.edu/centsible, to provide greater access to nutrition and food safety tools. The new site ensures timely and useful information for those seeking the knowledge to feed their families with nutrition and cost in mind.

The program also updated their youth curriculum, Grazin’ with Marty Moose, to incorporate updated nutritional information from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) MyPyramid campaign. Other important revisions to the curriculum included letters for parents, aimed at distributing and reinforcing the information to the entire family.

Grant to Support Food Safety Research and Education

Associate Professor Rhoda Schantz will be leading a three-year food safety project titled Applying HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) to Small Rural Food Processors Through Interagency Cooperation. Funded through a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture CSREES, the project has the goal of preventing foodborne illnesses while integrating research and education with a multidisciplinary/multi-institution team of the UW Cooperative Extension Service, UW faculty, the Wyoming Food Safety Coalition (WFSC), and other Wyoming government food safety regulatory agencies. This team already has a proven track record in food safety and HACCP training and has successfully implemented several programs to teach food safety to consumers and industry.

New Publications

A soon-to-be-completed UW Extension publication features ideas for planning enjoyable and healthy food options for meetings and social gatherings. People will often try a new food for the first time when it is offered in this type of setting. Developed by a team of UW College of Agriculture personnel (including FCS Department members Mona Gupton and Suzy Pelican), the publication is one of the Focus on Health, Not Weight series. Titled Fresh Approaches: Ideas for Enjoyable and Healthy Foods at Social Events and Other Gatherings, the publication will be available online by April at www.uwyo.edu/ces/pubs/mp112-3.pdf. If you do not have Internet access and would like a copy when they are available, please contact the department office at (307) 766-4145 or fam-consci@uwyo.edu.
Life After Graduation: A Student Update

It is an unfortunate fact when working with students that you enjoy: they eventually graduate. They arrive as wide-eyed freshmen or transfer in at some point in their academic career and become a part of the department fabric. Then one day they don their caps and gowns and leave our hallowed halls. They move on to bigger and better things. Real life happens. Although we hate to see our favorite students leave, we are thrilled to hear of their success. We hereby initiate a new portion of our annual newsletter dedicated to student updates with the following.

Katelyn Holloway Anderson graduated with a masters of science in family and consumer sciences in May 2006. Her Plan B master’s project was titled *Fashionable Clothing Designed for Plus-size Preteen/Teen Girls*. While at UW Anderson completed courses in several areas within Family and Consumer Sciences as well as additional coursework in the College of Education. Anderson worked as a graduate teaching assistant in the option area of textiles and merchandising. She was the recipient of a National Association of College Teachers in Agriculture (NACTE) Graduate Student Teaching Award a few weeks before commencement. She served as the president of the UW chapter of Phi Upsilon Omicron, and was also a member of the UW chapter of American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. Anderson is currently employed as a University Extension Educator for Montana State University, located in Ravalli County. She lives with her husband Chris in Corvallis Montana.

In our telephone interview we asked Anderson how she feels about her graduate education at UW. She remarked that it provided her with opportunities and advantages that not only helped her gain employment, but also prepared her to be successful in her current position. “The small department provided a comfortable learning environment, allowing me to make mistakes and learn from them – everything was treated as a learning opportunity. I formed relationships within the department, college and the university. I still network with many of these people and hopefully will continue to do so.”

Anderson had several teaching opportunities while at UW, in both lecture and lab/studio type courses. This gave her valuable teaching experience that she builds on in her current position. She had one-on-one guidance in all aspects of her graduate experience from assistance with coursework, research, and teaching, as well as her work with student organizations. “I was lucky to have lots of leadership opportunities, such as serving as president of Phi U. That experience has proved to be so valuable to my current position. I learned how to work appropriately with people with different personalities.”

Anderson says the opportunity to take courses in other areas within the department made it possible for her to work with different faculty, and to observe and learn about a variety of teaching styles which she can incorporate into her current position. She also feels working with different faculty helped her learn about the diversity within the field of family and consumer sciences. “My UW experience taught me about my own personal areas of interest but also gave me the confidence to work as a professional in a very diverse field.”

Academics of Design

Professor Donna Brown, Associate Professor Sonya Meyer, graduate student Amy Kelly, and several undergraduates presented *Academics of Design*, a fashion show, in Reno, Nevada, on August 19, 2006, for PCM Expo’s Sew, Quilt, and Embroidery Festival. Students went through an application process to participate. Nine students were selected for participation. Student models were Ann Bonsell, Katie Champlin, Hazel Jordan, Amy Kelly, Devin Ledbetter, Elysa Nelson, Kaitlin Sanders, and Janelle Wolfram. The student narrator for the fashion show was Christina Maki. Garments constructed by students were featured in the fashion show along with designs by Brown and Meyer. Fifteen student garments were selected for the fashion show. The garments were created by Katelyn Andersen, Kali Bennett, Ann Bonsell, Carmen Clayton, Anne Funk, Hazel Jordan, Amy Kelly, Devin Ledbetter, and Deisy Vaske.
Assistant professors Kari Morgan and Enette Larson-Meyer, along with Agriculture and Applied Economics colleague, Assistant Professor Mariah Tanner-Ehmke, have received funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for a study focusing on childhood obesity. The overall goal of the study is to identify the relationships among familial economic behavior, food attitudes and behavior, health and fitness attitudes, and behavior in low income families. Specifically, the study aims to 1) identify the relationships among family economic behaviors, family food security, and actual child physical fitness and overweight/obesity; 2) understand resource allocation and negotiation in the family and its relationship to childhood overweight/obesity; 3) explore the relationship between family health and fitness attitudes and behaviors and child and adult physical fitness outcomes. These objectives will be accomplished using economic experiments, a family survey, and on-site physical fitness assessment.

Results from the study will be used to enhance and support development of policies and programs to prevent childhood obesity and promote overall family health.
Professor Michael Liebman and M.S. candidate Shawnna Murphy recently completed a study that assessed the efficiency of oxalate absorption from black (English Breakfast) tea. A common recommendation for individuals predisposed to the formation of kidney stones is to limit black tea consumption because of its high oxalate content. The key research question in this study was whether the ingestion of four cups of English Breakfast tea would significantly raise urinary oxalate levels. High urinary oxalate levels, also known as hyperoxaluria, is a primary risk factor for the formation of calcium oxalate-containing kidney stones. When oxalate is absorbed from a specific food or beverage, it is typically excreted in the urine within the following six to eight hours.

Tea is a commonly consumed beverage in many countries (e.g., black tea in Western countries, oolong tea in China and Taiwan, and green tea in many Asian and North African countries). Black tea undergoes several hours of processing (oxidation) before steaming and drying whereas oolong teas undergo partial oxidation; in contrast, green teas are not exposed to any oxidative process. It is clear that oxidation leads to the generation of oxalate because the concentration of oxalate is highest in black teas, intermediate in oolong teas, and lowest in green teas.

The methods used in this study suggested that there is very low absorption of the oxalate contained in black tea. The researchers concluded that there is little overall support for the recommendation that those prone to forming kidney stones limit their intake of this popular beverage.

Group Projects: Student Perceptions of the Process and Implications for Distance Courses

Associate Professor Bruce Cameron, Assistant professors Kyle Kostelecky and Kari Morgan, and Professor Karen Williams received a research grant from the UW Outreach School Grant Program to examine student perceptions of group dynamics in four online courses. Group processes are particularly important as the department offers a significant number of courses through distance delivery.

The department has six competencies identified in their student assessment plan, demonstrated through electronic portfolios: written communication, oral communication, critical thinking and problem solving, professional skills and behavior, multicultural literacy and global awareness, and technological competency and information literacy. Group processes cross all of the competency areas and are important for successful student outcomes.

Research questions to be examined in this study are: 1) What mechanisms do students use to develop their social relationships to foster successful group interactions? 2) How do students define their roles and responsibilities in online group projects? 3) How do students characterize the benefits and challenges of online group work?

Donor Recognition

We have so many wonderful donors and wish we could acknowledge all of the many gifts we receive! Permanent endowments have a lasting impact on the department. These wonderful gifts allow us to do so many important things beyond what our budget can support, such as student travel to present at conferences or enter juried competitions; graduate student research; faculty research semesters, and sabbatical leaves; and the purchase or update of equipment. During the Distinction Campaign the following alumni and friends established permanent funds to help our faculty and students: Margaret and Donald Boyd, Donna Beth Downer, Tammy Payne, and Noel and Constance Wilkie.

We also thank the following people who made a gift in honor of a colleague or family member in 2006. This is a wonderful way to recognize special people who contribute so positively to families and communities in Wyoming! Reverend Robert L. Morgan was honored by a gift from Mrs. Johnna R. Morgan. Margaret Hudson, Cheryl Johnson, Jamie Walker, Sherry Thompson, Anita Parker, Petey MacCarty, and Kurt Kinsey were all honored by a gift from Dee and Mark Swanson.

Thank you for your continued support of Family and Consumer Sciences!
WIN the Rockies Travels to England

WIN the Rockies (Wellness in the Rockies), a health improvement project funded by the United States Department of Agriculture 2000–04 and jointly led by UW Colleges of Health Sciences and Agriculture, promoted a health-focused (rather than a weight-focused) approach to well being. As project team members, Suzy Pelican (UW Extension food and nutrition specialist and WIN the Rockies co-principal investigator) and Fred Vanden Heede (WIN the Rockies consultant) were invited to give the keynote presentation at the first health-at-every-size (H@ES) conference in the United Kingdom, December 7–8, 2006. The conference was held at Leeds Metropolitan University in Leeds, England, and drew a variety of researchers and practitioners from throughout the country as well as a psychologist from Iceland. Vanden Heede also gave a seminar and delivered a workshop on interpreting people’s life stories about food, physical activity, and body image in relation to the development of identity and the sense of self. Additionally, Pelican conducted a train-the-trainer workshop on A New You: Health for Every Body, the WIN the Rockies curriculum developed by Mary Kay Wardlaw—now the director of UW’s Cent$ible Nutrition Program (CNP)—when she was the project education specialist for WIN the Rockies.

England is not the only place where A New You has been shared. Wardlaw, who developed the curriculum’s train-the-trainer workshop as well as the curriculum, and Pelican have presented the workshop at state-wide gatherings of UW Extension staff and other health and nutrition professionals in Charleston, West Virginia, in March 2006 and in Lincoln, Nebraska, in September 2006. Additionally, Pelican coordinated a team of field-based UW Extension FCS educators (Chris Pasley, Patti Griffith, Phyllis Lewis, Vicki Hayman, and Carolyn Benepe) who conducted the workshop at the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences in Denver in October 2006. The first A New You train-the-trainer workshop was conducted in April 2005 in Jackson, Wyoming, at the Shaping a Healthy Future III conference. That workshop was led by Wardlaw, with assistance from Pelican and now-retired UW Extension FCS educators Peg Cullen and Debby Johnson.

As Pelican and Vanden Heede observed, “WIN the Rockies, with its focus on healthy lifestyles instead of a specific body size, shape, or weight, was welcomed in Leeds as a beacon of hope and as a source of insightful research findings and practical resources to help people make lasting changes in habits that they can enjoy for a lifetime. We felt fortunate to represent this remarkable project and the talented team that made the project a reality.” Those other team members at UW are Mike Liebman (nutrition professor, FCS Department), Linda Melcher and Betty Holmes (retired UW Extension educators), Kathy Tatman (CNP nutrition educator), and Sylvia Moore (director, Division of Medical Education).

For information and resources about the health-focused approach of WIN the Rockies, go to www.uwyo.edu/wintherockies. Interested Wyoming residents also can check with their local Extension office about the availability of healthy lifestyles classes.
Wyoming AgrAbility: Promoting Success in Agriculture for People with Disabilities and Their Families

Wyoming AgrAbility will soon complete their first year of funding. FCS Extension partnered with Gottsche Rehabilitation Center in Thermopolis, Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND), Wyoming Independent Living Rehabilitation, and the Center for Rural Health Research and Education on this project. Professor Randy Weigel serves as project director. Project coordinator is Amanda O’Brien. O’Brien was born and raised on a small farm and ranch near Aberdeen, Idaho. Her father, Paul, left agriculture in 2000 due to a disability. She believes her background in agriculture as well as experiences in the disability field will provide valuable insight to the project. Sandy Root-Elledge of WIND is the project’s coordinator for disability services and Sarah Perry, occupational therapist from Gottsche Rehabilitation oversees the on-site assessments.

Wyoming’s highest nonfatal occupational injury and illness incidence rate in a major industry group occurs in agriculture. The incidence rate is 17.1 per 100 employed in Wyoming compared to 6.2 nationwide. Animal production accounts for the majority of this incident rate. In the last national census, more than 77,000 Wyoming residents identified themselves as having a disability (17.1% of the population). With 24,153 people living on Wyoming farms and ranches, an extrapolation of the data estimates 4,130 Wyoming farm and ranch members are impacted by a disability. The high occupational injury rate, limited disability expertise, and the lack of services necessary to accommodate disabilities deprive many hardworking individuals from continuing productive lives in agriculture.

Wyoming AgrAbility addresses the three National AgrAbility Project goals of education, networking, and assistance. Educational efforts include producer workshops; professional training via Web video conferencing; assistive technology training; educational articles on ranching and farming with a disability; and presentations at state agriculture, health, and disability conferences.

An advisory committee has been established to enhance networking, provide project feedback, and undertake efforts toward AgrAbility sustainability. A database of professionals who work with ranchers and farmers with disabilities is being developed as an outlet for information and referral. A peer network of ranchers and farmers with disabilities is planned for the future.

On-site assistance for ranchers and farmers with disabilities will occur throughout the entire project time frame and focus on on-site evaluation, assistive technology demonstration, assistive technology acquisition assistance, and independent living case management.

To learn more about AgrAbility or to refer someone for AgrAbility services, call 866-395-4986, visit our web page at www.uwyo.edu/agrability/ or e-mail agrability@uwyo.edu.

As part of National Make a Difference Day (this past October 28), Wyoming AgrAbility teamed with UW Collegiate 4-H to help an AgrAbility client with mobility impairment. AgrAbility provided the transportation and 4-H provided the labor to repair the horse barn, dog runs, and well system. The client received the much needed help and collegiate 4-H fulfilled its community service function. The client provided chili and hugs all around for a job well done. Joining O’Brien and Weigel were Collegiate 4-H Club President Amanda Phillips Kyle and husband, Travis Kyle from Yampa, Colorado; Krista Amos of Cope, Colorado; Derek Hensley from Gillette; and Troy Siddle of Sheridan.

When disability strikes a ranch or farm family, everything changes except perhaps the desire to continue ranching or farming.

Wyoming AgrAbility is part of a national program administered through the United States Department of Agriculture, focused on promoting independence for members of the agricultural community who have disabilities resulting from injury, illness, aging, or other causes.
Professor Donna Brown and two seniors in the textiles and merchandising option submitted designs to the upcoming 2007 American Quilter’s Society/Hobbs Bonded Fibers Fashion Show and Contest. The event will be held in Paducah, Kentucky, on April 27. Each entry in the contest must be an ensemble that reflects a creative approach using stitchery, quilting, or embellishment techniques. Garments were required to use Thermore Ultra Thin Batting, a patented product developed to be thin, drapable, and migration free. Hobbs donated the batting for the students’ designs. Entries are submitted to either the professional or amateur category. Cash prizes are awarded to the top three in each category. Best of Show, Design Excellence, and Viewer’s Choice are selected from all entries.

Donna Brown’s submission *Shining Star* was designed for the woman who wants to be the shining star at a special event. Comprised of two pieces—a fully lined dress with reversible, removable overskirt/train—the outfit can be worn as a wedding gown, a formal ball gown, or a simple but elegant evening gown. The dress of ivory silk Duchess satin with a cream silk organza underlay has a quilted front panel and bodice. It is embroidered in shades of purple and fully lined with natural-colored china silk. The overskirt was created with one side matching the dress and the reverse side in purple satin taffeta. The star and scallop design used to embroider the front of the overskirt and the hem of the dress was embellished with Swarovski crystals.

Janelle Wolfram designed a three-piece skirt suit for her entry. Wolfram chose the design because, “I don’t have any suits in my closet and my wardrobe wouldn’t be complete without a great suit.” The jacket, lined with china silk, is black raw silk with machine embroidery. The matching skirt has embroidery at the hem. The sleeveless shell underneath is a blue sueded silk charmuse. Wolfram is pleased with the finished ensemble. “I chose to design this because I wanted something professional yet fun; something that I could actually wear somewhere.” Entering a contest such as this requires a lot of hard work. Wolfram talked about her decision to enter. “I decided to work on this project because I wanted to try something new and different. I had never worked with an embroidery machine or machine quilting before. I also wanted to try to work with a fabric that I had never worked with before. The silk was great. This project really helped me improve in my sewing skills and allowed my creativity to come through.”

The Asian inspired dressy ensemble created by Ann Bonsell was made of 100 percent raw silk and is fully lined with China silk. The jacket has a mandarin collar and is knee length. A garden effect is created with a floral design at the hem with vines escaping up the body of the jacket. Slacks, with a wide leg for a contemporary look, complete this outfit. They also are machine embroidered with the same garden theme as the jacket. Bonsell chose this idea after seeing a vine and flower design on another garment. “I bought an embroidery machine but wasn’t sure how to use it. Donna taught me so much. It was great to work one-on-one with her. She is so patient and so creative. She inspired me to do my best.” Bonsell plans to start her own special-occasion design business after graduation. She already has a great start having designed her own wedding dress last year.

Earlier in the fall, a special design submission by Associate Professor Sonya Meyer added to her enjoyment of the International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) meeting held in San Antonio, Texas. The wedding dress she designed and made for her daughter-in-law, *Renae’s Aspen Grove*, was shown during the Live Gallery Exhibition portion of the conference. She and colleague Tamsten Herst, Wyoming bibliographer with Coe Library, presented their research during one of the historical and cultural sessions. Meyer and Herst have been conducting research on tourist dress of visitors to Yellowstone National Park in the early 20th century. An added bonus for Meyer was being able to spend time with former graduate student Melinda Adams (M.S., 2000). Adams is now a member of the apparel design faculty at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio. Adams and Meyer have been developing a manuscript from Melinda’s Ph.D. work titled “Use of a modified Delphi technique to define creative scholarship and identify criteria to evaluate creative scholarship.”

And the Winner Is.....

Congratulations to our outstanding faculty and staff for awards and other honors received during the past year.

Mortar Board extended Top Prof honors to Assistant Professor Kari Morgan in fall 2006.

Tracy Bennett, accounting associate senior, was the recipient of the 2006 College of Ag Outstanding Staff Award.

Assistant Professor Enette Larson-Meyer received the Vegetarian Nutrition Award of Excellence in Service and Leadership from the American Dietetic Association in fall 2006.
In September the Early Care and Education Center celebrated its first year of operation with pizza, cake, and balloons for a school-wide birthday party. More than one hundred family members joined their children for the festivities. Fireworks being impractical, the staff substituted yards of bubble wrap, saved from the move the year before, for a festival of noise making!

The center staff spent their first year growing together. Activities such as occasional surprise muffins and coffee in the morning, a family potluck each semester, and opportunities to volunteer in classrooms and on committees has increased parental involvement. A project was created to recognize and honor families using photography and interviews which will highlight each family’s hopes and dreams for their children.

College students are a huge part of the center community. Besides those employed as assistant teachers, aides, and work-study students, this semester alone 112 students from seven different courses in Family and Consumer Sciences and Early Childhood Education are doing internships, practicum experiences, or observation work at the center. In addition, department majors in human nutrition and food/dietetics are assisting in the center kitchen or at Washakie Center. The center has also hosted students investigating early literacy.

Besides these traditional relationships with students and faculty in child development and early childhood education, new partnerships have been forged. Associate Professor Mary Beth Stepans, the nursing consultant, mentored five nursing interns at the center, and more are expected this semester. In the fall, an exciting new relationship with the art department provided a site for graphic design interns. The interns helped the teachers learn how to more effectively use visual media to share the children's long-term project work and to convey the depth of their learning. The center will be hosting a theater major for a six-week puppetry practicum this spring and is discussing the possibility of working with that department on a children's drama project. Early discussions are underway with the music department as well.

Progress on developing the center's outdoor space has been slow but steady. A riding track was poured, and large sandboxes were constructed for both the preschool and toddler playgrounds. A tire swing was installed along with a new climbing structure for the toddlers. This spring the center will install a covered bridge for the riding track (which will double as a place to store tricycles and bikes out of the weather) and additional fencing that will enable expansion of the playground, giving more space for the school-age children to play soccer. Plans are also in the works for an outdoor theater/stage.

A donation of growlights and seeds for the science room and the tilling of topsoil gave the staff a crucial start on developing the garden as an integral part of the curriculum. Parent and teacher volunteers worked with all the classes to sprout seeds for planting outside. The summer-session children and teachers faithfully watered, and when everyone returned in the fall, they were greeted with an array of 7-foot-tall sunflowers, a large variety of annual and perennial flowers, an herb garden, and a delightful selection of vegetables almost ready for harvest.

One class began an intensive investigation of the sunflowers, which lasted most of the fall semester. Another class harvested vegetables and herbs, read the story, "Stone Soup" and made their own to share. They visited a grocery store to learn about the produce section and continued their exploration in pretend stores in their classrooms. All the classes enjoyed eating the homegrown salsa made by one group. This first gardening experience was extremely positive and has led to a clearer idea of possibilities for the future. One teacher and the art intern who worked with her have submitted a proposal for presenting their work on gardening with children at an upcoming conference.

ECEC co-directors Mark Bittner and Cleta Booth expressed their gratitude for the support they have received. "Donations of materials, time, money, and expertise have enabled us to expand and enrich our programs." They have a wish list and have set some goals for next year. "Besides developing the outdoor play space and our indoor multipurpose room, we are pursuing additional relationships within the university similar to the art internships. We'd love to have a technology intern to help us develop a plan to acquire both hardware and software that will support our extensive photo documentation for communication with parents and college students as well as for our own teacher-research. We are exploring the creation of digital video portfolios to track and communicate the experiences and learning of individual children. The center welcomes visitors and we hope you will stop by for a tour."
For many student parents, the added expense of child care while pursuing an education can create an economic hardship. Last summer an anonymous donation provided funds to subsidize tuition for the children of qualifying student parents who attend the Early Care and Education Center. The donor specified only that the parents must be UW students and that preference be given to children in single parent families. While we hoped the donation would have a noticeable impact, little did we know how much it would mean to the families who received the assistance for this academic year. One thankful parent put it this way, “I am a junior and a 20-year-old mother. I devote myself to fulfilling the priorities that are required for me to be a good mother and student. Any parent would want only the best for their children. My daughter deserves the best facility and staff. Without this help I would be unable to attend school or take my daughter to such a phenomenal facility. I thank you again for your investment in me and my daughter.”

Because of this year’s success, a new fundraising effort is underway to continue this subsidy for the children of student parents. If you are interested in assisting with this program, please contact our office at (307)766-4145 or e-mail us at fam-consci@uwyo.edu.

Learning is not attained by chance; it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.
Abigail Adams, 1744-1818