

Peer Review: A Filter for Quality

Dorothy I. Mitstifer

There is little dispute that peer review will remain as a means of quality control and certification of higher education scholarship and research. Harnad (2000, p. 1) refers to peer review as the “invisible hand” that maintains quality. Alternatives have been discussed, but no system has gained enough support for change in the foreseeable future. Thus, it is in the best interest of the human sciences to ensure that the peer review system serves the interests of all the parties involved.

Criticism of peer review indicates that neither the editor nor the referees are infallible. Poor selection of specialists for specific articles and misinterpretation of referee advice are potentially problematic. Failures of referees include careless review, unfair criticism, and inadequate feedback. In addition, attention to technical details instead of substantive issues can sometimes diminish the effectiveness of peer review.

Authors share in the problem; a good many papers have had insufficient editing before submission. And authors are not

always conscientious in using the feedback to make changes.

Because little attention is given to the intricacies of peer review and reviewers receive little or no training in how to conduct a review, this paper will explore the editorial objectives and the elements of the review that could enhance the process. An explicit peer review process and objective criteria can defend against unethical or unfair critiques. In addition to benefiting reviewers and the peer review process, these guidelines will enable authors to refine their research manuscripts before submission.

The editorial objectives of peer-reviewed publications include validity, originality, and significance. Validity requires that reliable research methods and techniques have been used and that conclusions are suitably qualified. Originality requires that the study is new or reports findings that have never been published. Significance requires that the two previous criteria are met and that the research findings add something new: an understanding, a perspective, an observation, or a potentially important piece of information (Gordon, 1983). The problem with meeting these criteria is that “the highly original paper which reports unusual research methods, unconventional forms of argument, unexpected findings, or a radically new perspective is far more likely to be considered of suspect validity” (p. 8). Thus the danger is that the work of a future Nobel Laureate could be rejected. The editor has to balance the risks of publishing a manuscript with the least errors and least novel and original findings against one that might have errors but might be breaking new ground.

The peer review process should give particular attention to the following questions (adapted from Morgan, 2002) when reviewing a manuscript:

- ◆ Does the title reflect the content of the paper in a short, interesting form?
- ◆ Does the introduction review the literature and objective of the paper?
- ◆ Does the review of the literature integrate the outside resources smoothly and efficiently?
- ◆ Is the “objective” (or hypothesis) statement thorough and specific?
- ◆ Is the method section logically arranged and complete (including research design, the sample, data collection, procedure, and approach to data analyses)?
- ◆ Could you repeat the study in its entirety by following the procedures?
- ◆ Are the results presented in a thorough and simple way?
- ◆ Are the figures and tables well prepared, easy to understand, and necessary?
- ◆ Does the discussion section really discuss the results?
- ◆ Was the objective met?
- ◆ Were the references taken from “good” sources (i.e., peer reviewed and recent)?

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- ◆ *Announcements & Calls for Papers*

Once the reviewer has explored the above questions, made notes, and “digested” the manuscript, a review should be written to include:

- ◆ A brief summary of the major points and message of the manuscript;
- ◆ Perceived strengths of the paper;
- ◆ Weaknesses or changes that need to be made, including source of comments;
- ◆ Quality and clarity of writing;
- ◆ Benefits to the literature; and
- ◆ The action to be taken on the manuscript.

Jawaid and Jafary (2002) discuss the ethical considerations from an Evidence-Based Peer Review perspective. A reviewer has an obligation to the publication but also to the author to focus on ways to strengthen manuscripts; authors do not gain from harsh and abusive criticism. Conflicts of interest should be communicated to the editor to determine whether there is adequate reason to withdraw. It is not expected that a reviewer comment on every aspect, but reviewers should note the areas of a manuscript that are beyond their expertise. If consultation is required, there must be acknowledgement of that fact in the review report. Reviewers must maintain confidentiality in regard to the manuscript. Authors have the right to expect that an article sent to a journal (or shared with colleagues) will be treated as their exclusive property. Reviewers will neither disclose the contents nor make personal use of them. In an open peer review process, explicit written permission of the author should be obtained to cite or use the information in any way. Lest too much emphasis is placed on reviewers, the ethical perspective of peer review requires an inclusive approach to the rights and responsibilities of the publisher, editor, reviewer, and author.

The role of institutions in mentoring researchers is as important as the role of publishers in assuring quality of

scholarship and research. Instead of a competitive climate, an intentional program to mentor researchers and authors will create a collegial atmosphere for communication about content, ethical, and technical standards of excellence. The educational outcomes of an institution depend upon the quality of the faculty, which is measured in part by the continuing commitment to learning and to extending the boundary of knowledge. As important as institutional health in this domain is that of the fields that faculty represent. The human sciences require both institutional support and quality publications to sustain the field and nourish future leaders.

This article has described the context for exploration of the peer review process, described the editorial objectives of peer-reviewed publications, posed questions for reviewers in reading a manuscript, described the elements of a review report, and explored the rights and responsibilities of the publisher, editor, reviewer, and author. At its best, peer review benefits researchers and consumers of research by providing a detailed, constructive, and well-founded critique. Although the editor makes the final decision, it is in the best interest of publications to have effective reviewers and concrete information upon which to make publishing decisions and to ensure that peer review is a filter for quality.

References

- Gordon, M. (1983). *Running a refereeing system*. Leicester, UK: Primary Communications Research Centre, University of Leicester.
- Harnad, S. (2000, April). The invisible hand of peer review. *Exploit Interactive* 5, 1-5.
- Jawaid, S. A., & Jafary, M. H. (2002, July-September). Peer review to improve quality of manuscripts. *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences*, 1-9. Retrieved December 16, 2002 from <http://www.pulsepakistan.com/pakmedsciences/page2.html>.
- Morgan, E. L. (2002). Peer review of a scientific journal article. Retrieved December 16, 2002 from http://iweb.tntech.edu/elmorgan/392/392_Peer_Review_Journal.htm.

New Initiative



Career Awareness for Schoolchildren, Ages 9-12

This program has been developed by Kappa Omicron Nu to give college students and professionals the resources necessary to share hands-on Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) experiences with schoolchildren ages 9-12. This program intends to make a contribution to understanding of family and consumer sciences careers by showing children that:

- ◆ FCS makes important contributions to everyday life.
- ◆ Children can use FCS knowledge to improve their lives.
- ◆ Careers in FCS can be fun and satisfying.

How Does the Program Work?

The Kids & Family & Consumer Sciences program provides college students and professionals with kits of a wide variety of hands-on FCS activities and demonstrations that are safe and age-appropriate. Existing activities will be collected in a central resource. Each activity will conclude with a short description of the applicable career, including how specialized knowledge is used in professional practice.

Kappa Omicron Nu will post program and resource kits for the Kids & Family & Consumer Sciences program on its Web site at www.kon.org/kids.

What's Next?

The Kappa Omicron Nu Board of Directors will launch the program with chapters at Conclave 2003. Other high school and college student groups will be encouraged to participate.

To contact the Coordinator:

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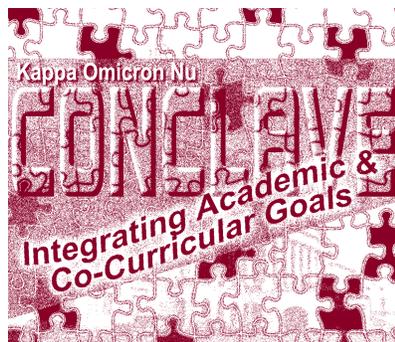
Conclave 2003

Kappa Omicron Nu Leadership Conclave and Undergraduate Research Community Undergraduate Research Conference

Hyatt Arlington at Washington's Key Bridge, Arlington, Virginia August 7-10, 2003

Theme: Integrating Academic & Co-Curricular Goals

The Hyatt Arlington, across the Key Bridge from Georgetown in Rosslyn, is minutes away from National Airport and located across from the Rosslyn Metro station, which provides access to all of the magnificent attractions of Washington, DC. Georgetown is accessible by walking across the Key Bridge or by a local shuttle.



Human Sciences Working Papers Archive



This Archive was initiated by the Kappa Omicron Nu Leadership Academy to fill an important niche—communication about working papers in the human sciences community. The “Rationale” and details “About HSwp” on the links reveal that the chief outcome can be described as ACCESS. Authors have access to readers and feedback. Students, professionals, and the public have access to new ideas and resources in a timely manner. Thus individuals, professionals, and society will benefit from the enthusiastic participation of authors and researchers. HSwp invites your participation. See www.kon.org/hswp/index.html.

2003 Kappa Omicron Nu Election

Nominees for Board of Directors are needed for the offices of:

- ◆ Second Vice Chair – two-year term

Nominees for Committees are needed for:

- ◆ Editorial – three-year term
- ◆ Nominating – two-year term

Any Kappa Omicron Nu member who would like to volunteer is urged to submit an application form by July 15. See www.kon.org/board_info.html and www.kon.org/committees.html or request an application from the National Office.

The members of the Nominating Committee are: Virginia Moxley (chair), Frances E. Andrews, Diana Carroll, Peggy Meszaros, and Frances Shipley.

Online Publications

These publications can be found at www.kon.org/archives/forum/forum_archives.html. They are open to additional manuscripts. The Calls for Papers begin on page 5.

- ◆ KON FORUM – Vol. 12, No. 2 – **Diverse Families: A Dialogue about Practice** – Katia Paz Goldfarb, Guest Editor
- ◆ KON FORUM – Vol. 13, No. 2 – **The Role of Sociocultural Perspectives for Professional Practice** – Edith E. Baldwin, Guest Editor.
- ◆ KON FORUM – Vol. 14, No. 1 – **Personal, Social & Corporate Responsibility in a Common World** – Margaret Bubolz & Linda Nelson, Guest Editors.
- ◆ KON FORUM – Vol. 14, No. 2 – **Critical Thinking & Transformative Learning** – Frances M. Smith & Donna Kienzler, Guest Editors.
- ◆ KON FORUM – Vol. 15, No. 1 – **Critical Science & Critical Discourse Analysis** – Sue L. T. McGregor, Guest Editor.

Call for Papers

Family Communication in the Information Age

Rebecca Dumlao, Guest Editor

Objective: To nurture interdisciplinary collaboration and build common scholarly understandings about family communication practices and processes.

Overview: Scholars in several academic disciplines are concerned with promoting the well-being of families through teaching and research. A key ingredient in promoting healthy family life is improving the quality of communication—verbal and nonverbal, explicit and implicit—between family members and within the family as a whole.

Discussion: Family members, young and old, develop shared meanings

about their world in the unique communication environment of the family. Issues like family diversity, family roles and rules, creating closeness and distance, negotiating conflict and power, establishing personal and family identity(ies) come up in regular communication among family members. The family environment also provides a setting for managing topics like marriage, sexuality, health, consumerism, new technology, and mass media content.

This special issue of Forum will explore family communication from a variety of perspectives and academic backgrounds. Current research using quantitative and/or qualitative methods will be appropriate for this volume. Theoretical and methodological innovations in studying families and their communication would also be welcome.

Information and Deadline: Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM is a refereed publication outlet for both members and nonmembers. Manuscripts are due February 1, 2004. This issue will be an online publication. See Guidelines for Authors at www.kon.org/CFP/cfp_gfa.html. For further information contact the addresses below.

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be contacted at: dumlaor@mail.ecu.edu,
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Invitation to Affiliate as a Participating Institution

Human sciences units are invited to apply for status as a Participating Institution of the Undergraduate Research Community for the Human Sciences. Affiliation offers institutions the opportunity to participate in the development of the national structure for building a cadre of undergraduate researchers that will bring credibility to the profession and among the disciplines.

To affiliate with the URC, each unit shall submit a one- or two-page letter of commitment that responds to the criteria for institutions to qualify as a Participating Institution and includes the following: Name of Coordinator, including address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address; Sign-off by the Dean and the Provost; Brief description of present vision and unit plan for implementation of undergraduate research program. A sample letter is available at www.kon.org/sample_letter.pdf.



Undergraduate Research Journal for the Human Sciences

This journal was organized during the First Undergraduate Research Conference of the Undergraduate Research Community (URC) for the Human Sciences at the Kappa Omicron Nu Conclave, Grosvenor Resort, Orlando, August 2-5, 2001. On October 15, 2001, the Editorial Committee announced the Call for Papers and set the first deadline for papers as January 15, 2002.

See the first & second issues at www.kon.org/...

[urc/urc_research_journal.html](http://www.kon.org/urc/urc_research_journal.html) and
[urc/urc_research_journal2.html](http://www.kon.org/urc/urc_research_journal2.html).

Managing Editor: Dorothy I. Mitstifer.
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Finding Research Opportunities –

This article explores a variety of opportunities for undergraduates to become involved in research in human sciences programs. Listed are several options that enable students to present and publish research and enhance career exploration. See www.kon.org/urc/urc_finding_oppor.html.

Guidelines for Submission –

Three categories of undergraduate research are described as (a) research manuscript, (b) research paper, and (c) research report. These categories offer a variety of research and creative activities as opportunities for submission in both the Undergraduate Research Journal and for the Undergraduate Research Conference. See www.kon.org/urc/urc_authorguidelines.html.

2004-2005 Scholarships, Fellowships, & Grants

Scholar Program

Variable national grants to chapters based on the prior year's total initiates, awarded once each biennium.

Master's Fellowships - application deadline April 1

Eileen C. Maddex Fellowship, \$2,000 - awarded annually from an endowment in the Omicron Nu Fellowship Fund in honor of her contributions as Omicron Nu Executive Director.

Doctoral Fellowships - application deadline January 15

Hettie M. Anthony Fellowship, \$2,000 - awarded annually for doctoral research from an endowment in the Kappa Omicron Phi Fellowship Fund in honor of her as founder of Kappa Omicron Phi at Northwest Missouri State University.

Omicron Nu Research Fellowship, \$2,000 - awarded annually for doctoral research from the Omicron Nu Fellowship Fund.

Research/Project Grants - application deadline February 15

One or more grants are awarded annually that meet the criteria of the Kappa Omicron Nu research agenda. Cross-specialization and integrative research is the research priority for the honor society. Multi-year proposals will be considered.

National Alumni Chapter Grant, \$1000 - awarded annually as a project of the National Alumni Chapter.

New Initiatives Grant, \$3,000 - awarded annually from the Kappa Omicron Nu New Initiatives Fund.

Applications and further information about fellowships and grants may be secured from the Kappa Omicron Nu National Office, 4990 Northwind Drive, Suite 140, East Lansing, MI 48823-5031 - T: 517.351.8335; F: 517.351.8336; E-mail: dmitstifer@kon.org.

**2003-2004
Kappa Omicron Nu
Scholarship &
Fellowship Recipients**

Scholarships and Awards

Forty-two Scholar Program Grants for Chapter Scholars - \$150-\$500

Six Undergraduate Student Presentation Awards - Airfare + Registration + \$50 each - TBA

Master's Fellowship - Omicron Nu/Eileen C. Maddex Fellowship

Jamie Schwartz, Rutgers University - \$2,000 - Nutritional Sciences - "The Influence of 'Portion Distortion' on the Selection and Quantification of Typical Food Portions."

National Alumni Chapter Fellowship

Maria S. Wong, University of Utah - \$2,000 - Family Ecology - "Understanding the Socialization of Emotion: Parental Beliefs, Behaviors, and Children's Social and Emotional Competence."

Doctoral Fellowship - Omicron Nu Research Fellowship

Christopher A. Taylor, Oklahoma State University - \$2,000 - Nutritional Sciences - "An Approach to Diabetes Prevention for Native Americans."

Doctoral Fellowship - Kappa Omicron Phi/Hettie Margaret Anthony Fellowship

Angella Young Eanes, University of North Carolina—Greensboro - \$2,000 - Human Development and Family Studies - "A Mixed Method Approach to Understanding Special Needs Adoptive Mothers' Perceptions of Parenting Costs and Rewards as Factors Associated with Parenting Stress."

National Alumni Chapter Research Grant

Barbara Allison and Marsha Rehm, Florida State University - \$1,000 - "Teaching Culturally Diverse Students: Implications for Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher Education Programs." This research is integrative in nature and makes connections across family and consumer sciences education content areas, diversity issues, related specialties in vocational education, and K-12 teachers and teacher educators.

New Initiatives Research Grant

Sandra J. Bailey, Montana State University - \$3,000 - "Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: An Assessment of Delivery of Methods." - This research is

integrative in nature and makes connections across family finance, human nutrition, human development and family studies, and housing and energy.

Calls for Papers

Call for Papers for publication as an online edition of Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM, the journal of Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society. **For further information or to submit a paper, contact Dr. Dorothy I. Mitstifer, Editor, 4990 Northwind Drive, Suite 140, East Lansing, MI 48823-5031. Tele: 517.351.8335 • Fax: 517.351.8336 • e-mail: dmitstifer@kon.org or obtain the "Guidelines for Authors" on the web at www.kon.org/CFP/cfp_gfa.html.**

Topic: Personal, Social & Corporate Responsibility in a Common World

Guest Editors: Drs. Margaret Bubolz and Linda Nelson

Objective: This theme of FORUM will explore issues and problems from an ecological perspective, taking into account the interface of individuals, families, and communities with the natural and social-cultural environment.

Overview: This issue will serve a dual purpose. It offers members and nonmembers an opportunity to think about the future from the perspective of "Personal, Social, and Corporate Responsibility in a Common World." Selected papers will be published from the Paolucci Symposium and Society of Human Ecology Conference with that same theme. This issue is planned to blend theory with practice and cutting-edge thinking with world realities. A range of topics and discussions are welcome to challenge thoughts, practices, and potentials. Broad topics include global change, the "commons," health, human development, "Green" movements, family and community, technology and ethics, and consumption and production.

Discussion: The challenge of environmental sustainability is joined by related dimensions of worldwide systemic change: the equity and justice challenge, increasing marginalization of people and cultures, and the *worldview* challenge (Harman, 1998). Perception appears to be the problem, and perceptions can change.

Because we are learning that small changes can make big differences, all we need is a significant minority to make positive change. Our scholarship will be needed to be sure that the welfare of future generations is uppermost in thought, word, and deed. The following list offers some suggested topics:

- The Perils and Promises of Human Ecological Models
- The Interface of Sustainable Human and Natural Systems (Consequences, Ambiguities, Benefits, Conflicts)
- Environmental Issues: Corporate and Consumer Responsibility
- Global Ecological Demands and Human Existence
- Transformation of Human and Environmental Resources to Develop Human and Social Capital and Sustain Life
- Facing the Future: Proactive Policies for Human and Natural Systems
- Family Decision Making in the Ecosystem
- Shaping Destiny Through Everyday Life in the Family
- Values Underlying Our Joint Responsibility for the Ecosystem
- Quality of Life Issues Across the Life Cycle
- Designing Human Environments from an Ecological Perspective
- Food Systems: Personal, Social, and Corporate Responsibility
- Human Health: The Interface of Life Styles, Genes, & Environments
- Marketing in the Global Ecosystem
- Institutional and Community Settings for Human Well-being

Information and Deadline: *Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM* is a refereed publication outlet for both members and nonmembers. Manuscripts are due January 15, 2004. See www.kon.org/archives/forum/forum_archives.html#f14a.

Harman, W. (1998). *Global mind change: The promise of the 21st century*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Call for Papers for publication in Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM, the journal of Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society

Topic: Critical Thinking and Transformative Learning

Guest Editors: Donna Kienzler & Frances Smith

Objective: Extending students' critical thinking abilities to encompass transformative learning.

Discussion: Transformative learning involves a shift in the basic premise of thought, feeling, and action¹. Aspects of critical thinking such as questioning assumptions, dialoging in an environment of mutual trust, and putting oneself in another's shoes can form the basis of a shift that alters the way we view the world and ultimately alters that world itself.

Educators in family and consumer sciences have used elements of the critical thinking process in courses related to consumer choices, globalization, human relationships in a diverse society, and others. These courses have given students the opportunity to reshape their lives, beginning in their own academic community and expanding to their local community and beyond. The goal of this special issue is to provide an opportunity for professionals to share past experiences or elaborate on future plans related to critical thinking and transformative learning. Discussions of topics such as social change, economic justice, and the public good are particularly encouraged. As possible example of shared experiences, see Allen, Floyd-Thomas, and Gillman² and Fisher³.

Information and Deadline: *Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM* is a refereed publication outlet for both members and nonmembers. Manuscripts are due September 30, 2003. This issue will be an online publication. Guest Editors can be contacted at dkienzle@iastate.edu; fmsmith@iastate.edu or at 515-292-9295.

(Footnotes)

¹ O'Sullivan, E. (2002). The project and vision of transformative education: Integral transformative learning. In E. O'Sullivan, A. Morrell, & M. A. O'Conner (Eds.), *Expanding the boundaries of transformative learning: Essays on theory and practice* (pp. 1-12). NY: Palgrave.

² Allen, K. R., Floyd-Thomas, S. M., & Gillman, L. (2001). Teaching to transform: From volatility to solidarity in an interdisciplinary family studies classroom. *Family Relations*, 50, 317-25.

³ Fisher, S. (2001). Making hope practical and despair unconvincing: Some thoughts on transformative education. *Appalachian Journal*, 29, 90-97.

Call for Papers for publication in Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM the journal of Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society

Topic: Diverse Families: A Dialogue about Reflective Practice

Guest Editor: Dr. Katia Paz Goldfarb

Objective: This collection of essays will focus on applications of the Reflective Human Action theory in the arena of family diversity. The theme underlying this issue will explore how professionals and organizations, connected with our field, are working, researching, teaching, contributing, serving, and analyzing the diversity represented in today's families using the reflective human action theory to further our understanding.

Overview: In our profession, we deal with individuals, families, and groups. Diversity is becoming a norm in modern times. Families encompass a variety of relationships, cultures, religions, ethnicities, races, national origins, and socioeconomic status. The goal of this issue is to use the reflective human action theory to frame our study, work, and understanding of programs, services, research, policy, and teaching related to a wide variety of families. The essays may give other professionals ideas and inspiration for their practice involving family diversity.

As a nonpositional leadership perspective, reflective human action features the principles of accepting chaos, sharing information, developing relationships, and embracing vision—all supported by authenticity, ethical sensibility, and spirituality. Most importantly, this theory encourages reflective engagement—searching for meaning and thinking about what you are doing while you are doing it.

Discussion: This collection of articles is intended to provide an array of cases on how family diversity is revealed at the macro and micro levels. Topics appropriate for this issue may be same-sex families, divorce, step families, grandparents raising grandchildren, ethnic minority families, marginalized families, multiethnic families, multigenerational families, homeless families, commuter families, and others.

Authors are asked to focus on the strengths of families rather than pathologies or deficits. The format of the articles may vary from personal experiences to research-based essays. Thoughtful analysis will help us, as individuals and collectively as a profession, to achieve the mission to which we are dedicated: empowered individuals, strengthened families, and enabled communities.

Information and Deadline: *Diverse Families: A Dialogue about Reflective*

Practice is a refereed publication for members and non-members. Manuscripts will be accepted until further notice. See www.kon.org/archives/forum/12-1/12-2/title12-2.html.

Call for Papers for publication in Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM the journal of Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society

Topic: The Role of Sociocultural Perspectives for Professional Practice

Guest Editor: Dr. Edith Baldwin

Objective: To stimulate interest in social and cultural analysis, interpretation, and critique as a basis for professional practice.

Overview: In recent decades we have witnessed dramatic change in every dimension of life. The controversial dialogue concerning “modernity” and “postmodernity” provides a challenging but useful starting point for examining these changes and what they mean for professional practice. By now there are many perspectives on the reappraisal of modernity or the “postmodern turn.” Although some are celebratory, others are critical (Lyon, 1999).

Four major, interwoven issues emerging from the debate are:

- Increasing resistance to overarching theories or metanarratives (e.g., supporting the belief that scientific-technological development is synonymous with emancipation and human well-being).
- Growing awareness of the dangers of rationalization and domination in the human lifeworld (e.g., disempowerment by the invasion of everyday life by systems rationality and strategic action).
- The impact of new information and communication technology on people’s lives and on globalization.
- The growth of new social movements.

Discussion: These broad themes encompass social and cultural aspects and highlight the complex interaction between modern and postmodern. They also invite the participation of FCS professionals in dialogue concerning them.

Some topics worth considering are:

- Implications of the new information and communication technology for work and family life.
- Globalization: Issues for Family and Consumer Sciences.

- The mass media, conformity, and human well-being.
- Postmodernity, the consumer culture, and family well-being.
- The human body in a postmodern world: Political-moral choices and professional practice.
- Social critique, family empowerment, and professional practice.
- A reappraisal of modernity. Is it all “bad news” for Family and Consumer Sciences?
- Rationality revisited in a postmodern world.
- Identity and integration in postmodern society.
- Chaos or community in a postmodern world?
- Celebration of difference or dialogue across differences within and beyond the profession?
- Feminism and postmodernism as natural allies. Myth or reality?

Information and Deadline: *Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM* is a refereed publication outlet for both members and nonmembers. See *The Role of Sociocultural Perspectives for Professional Practice*, FORUM, Vol. 13, No. 2. www.kon.org/archives/forum/forum_archives.html#13b.

Additional manuscripts will be accepted until further notice.

Call for Papers for publication in Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM the journal of Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society

Topic: Critical Science and Critical Discourse Analysis

Guest Editor: Dr. Sue McGregor

Objective: To foster further dialogue about the critical science approach and the synergy between this approach and critical discourse analysis as a basis for more reflective and relevant practice—by revealing the hidden messages behind our words.

Overview: Kappa Omicron Nu has focussed valuable energy on developing the reflective human action (RHA) theory. The AAFCS 1999 Yearbook provides a powerful overview of the critical science approach to practice. RHA beckons us to engage in critical reflection in our leadership role and the critical science approach is concerned with power relationships, especially distorted power relations, that make it easy for the elite to oppress others by controlling knowledge, access to power, meanings, and daily practices. The leaders in

our field have been advocating for a critical science approach for nearly half a century—we are not there yet. The words people use, and how they use them, reflect their practice and beliefs. Discovering this language helps determine how and why these practices and beliefs are (re)produced, resisted, and changed. Turning to critical discourse analysis enables us to approach our written and spoken language as a dynamic that creates, maintains, challenges, and changes ideology. (See *Critical Science Approach—a Primer* at www.kon.org/archives/forum/mcgregorc.html and *Critical Discourse Analysis* at www.kon.org/archives/forum/mcgregorcda.html.)

Discussion: Critical discourse analysis is a type of research that studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by written text and oral language in the social and political context. Just as family and consumer sciences is value laden, so are critical discourse analysts. Revealing power relations in our profession and in society, by examining written and oral language, means we are better equipped to fulfil our mission of improving the condition of the human family and, our home, earth. This deep understanding is especially important given:

- the growing gap between the haves and have-nots,
- our unsustainable consumer culture,
- the growing power of transnational corporations coupled with the loss of the state’s ability to invest in the “public good,”
- the increase in social and economic injustices,
- the lack of sustainable and durable peace, and
- the ecological tragedy we live with on a daily basis.

This special edition of the journal will be published online to serve as a vehicle for expressing our growing understanding of this powerful approach to research and scholarship—an analysis of society’s language leading to revelations of power structures, positive and negative, that affect the quality of life and human security of individuals, families, and communities.

Information and Deadline: *Kappa Omicron Nu FORUM* is a refereed publication outlet for both members and nonmembers. Manuscripts are due January 15, 2004. The Guest Editor can be contacted at sue.mcgregor@msvu.ca.



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Message from the Board of Directors

Karla Hughes

A hearty welcome to the new Board members installed January 2003: Chair-Elect, Sarah M. Shoffner, University of North Carolina—Greensboro; Vice Chair/Program, Barbara A. Woods, University of Vermont; Secretary, Angela Rushman, Lincoln, NE. Also elected were the following committee members: Nominating Committee – Frances E. Andrews, University of Montevallo; Peggy S. Meszaros, Virginia Tech; Editorial Committee – Carol Kellett, Kansas State University; Rebecca Lovingood, Blacksburg, VA.

It is a pleasure to document in this issue of *Dialogue* the contributions of Kappa Omicron Nu to members and family and consumer sciences/human sciences in general. On a daily basis National Kappa Omicron Nu and our chapter network are implementing our mission of empowered leaders. I encourage you to read the Undergraduate Research Journal. As with the 2001 Undergraduate Research Conference, the Journal demonstrates that undergraduates with the proper mentoring are developing as professionals and contributing to the knowledge base. If your institution hasn't joined URC, how about doing so now? Through collaborative efforts the Undergraduate Research Community can make a significant impact on undergraduate education. Our future is dependent upon new professionals, so our investment today will have huge benefits.

The new initiative, *Kids and Family & Consumer Sciences*, not only offers high school and college students the opportunity to learn through teaching 9-12 year olds about FCS careers but it enhances the recruitment efforts of higher education institutions. Another impact of the program is the valuable content offered to 9-12 yr. olds. We appreciate the willingness of partner organizations in joining this effort.

Another initiative, announced here, is the commitment of Kappa Omicron Nu to create a National Coalition for Hispanic Development in the Human Sciences. The first planning meeting will be held during the AAFCS Annual Meeting in Washington, DC to explore approaches for enhancing Hispanic leadership. Janis Van Buren and Dorothy Mitstifer are co-chairs of this effort. The growing Hispanic population and the apparent low numbers of professionals and leaders in the human sciences community lead Kappa Omicron Nu to the conclusion that a direct initiative is required to enhance diversity in organizations that serve the human sciences. Diversity has been a priority of Kappa Omicron Nu since the launching of the theme of Leadership for a Culturally Diverse Society in 1991. We welcome volunteers for this important initiative.

We look forward to your continuing support, and I hope to see some of you at Conclave.

Kappa Omicron Nu *Dialogue*, Volume 12, No. 2. ISSN: 1520-4855 - Executive Director and Editor: Dorothy I. Mitstifer. Assistant Editor: Lisa Wootton Booth. Board of Directors: Karla Hughes, Sarah M. Shoffner, Barbara A. Woods, Missale Kumelachew, Angela Rushman, Kristie Shaub, Fotu Soliai, Tambra Stevenson. © Copyright 2003 by Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society, 4990 Northwind Drive, Suite 140, East Lansing, MI 48823-5031. Telephone: 517.351.8335 ♦ Facsimile: 517.351.8336 ♦ e-mail: dmitstifer@kon.org