Dear Colleagues:

Attached for consideration at the August 28, 2006, Full UCC meeting is a request from the College of Family and Consumer Sciences for a non-thesis option for the major in Housing and Consumer Economics (M.S.).

Sincerely,

Dr. William K. Vencill, Chair
University Curriculum Committee

cc: Dr. Arnett C. Mace, Jr.
    Dr. Delmer D. Dunn
Proposal to Add a Non-thesis Option to the M.S. in Housing and Consumer Economics

Department of Housing and Consumer Economics

Submitted to: Dr. Maureen Grasso
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Basic information

Proposed Change: Non-thesis option for students pursuing a non-research, professionally-oriented track

Start Date: Fall 2006

Program Description

The Department of Housing and Consumer Economics is requesting that a non-thesis option for the M.S. in Housing and Consumer Economics be implemented for students pursuing a non-research professionally-oriented program of study. Consistent with the department’s goal to enhance and broaden its graduate program, this option is designed for students who intend to pursue careers and professions more oriented to applied analysis rather than theoretical research. Students selecting this option would not be planning to pursue doctoral or other research-focused degrees. One example of this is students who intend to acquire the CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ designation after completing their Master’s degree and practice as financial planning professionals.

The program of study for students electing the non-thesis option would contain all but one of the courses required of thesis track M.S. students. These courses are HACE 8000, HACE 8100, HACE 8150, and STAT 6210. Twenty-one additional core and elective credit hours, as outlined by the department and the student’s committee, would be required depending on the student’s professional orientation and professional objectives. At the time of application the student must choose via admissions either the non-thesis or thesis option. If the student is currently enrolled, a degree objective change is required.

The current M.S. with thesis option will not change. The following table outlines the current program of study that requires a thesis and the proposed non-thesis option.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current M.S. with thesis</th>
<th>Proposed M.S. non-thesis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core: (18 credits)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Core: (12 credits)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>HACE 8000 – Research Methods I</td>
<td>HACE 8000 – Research Methods I</td>
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<td>HACE 8050 – Research Methods II</td>
<td>HACE 8050 – Research Methods II</td>
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<td>HACE 8150 – Theory: Households &amp; Markets II</td>
<td>HACE 8150 – Theory: Households &amp; Markets II</td>
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<td>STAT 6210 – Statistical Methods I</td>
<td>STAT 6210 – Statistical Methods I</td>
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<td>STAT 6220 – Statistical Methods II</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Concentration: (6 credits)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Concentration: (21 credits)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 credits of HACE coursework</td>
<td>At least 12 credits of HACE coursework</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Electives: (6 credits)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Practicum: (3 credits)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Non-HACE courses</td>
<td>HACE 7910 – Housing and Consumer Economics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Internship</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis: (6 credits)</strong></td>
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<td>HACE 7300</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum Total Credit Hours = 36</strong></td>
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In lieu of a thesis the student will complete a three-hour practicum. The student’s committee will review the student’s portfolio of work from his or her practicum experience and evaluate it based on its comprehensiveness, completeness, and appropriateness relating to professional work in the student’s respective area of interest. The chair will assign a pass/fail grade with input from the student’s committee.

**Faculty Vote**

Graduate Faculty in the Department of Housing and Consumer Economics voted unanimously in favor of the proposed non-thesis M.S. option.

**Justification for the Proposed Non-Thesis M.S. Option**

A non-thesis M.S. option is needed for several reasons. First, an increasing number of current and potential M.S. students do not intend to undertake Ph.D. degrees upon completion of the M.S. Instead, these students are either pursuing, or have expressed strong interest in pursuing, professional careers such as family financial planning, residential property management, and housing counseling. While advanced degrees in these fields are very worthwhile, additional coursework and a supervised practicum in their respective areas of interest meet the needs of some students much better than a thesis requirement. Second, many potential graduate students who currently inquire about the program could not meet their education and career objectives under the current M.S. with thesis program structure. For example, 21 hours of coursework are necessary in order to be eligible to apply for certain professional designation examinations, such as the CFP® Examination. As a result, the majority of these students look elsewhere to attend graduate school or meet their educational and professional interests. In short, the department is losing out on qualified
students who are interested in the department’s programs, but for whom the department’s graduate programs are not flexible enough to meet their educational objectives. Third, several similar programs around the country have successfully adopted non-thesis M.S. options to attract and meet the needs of such students; these programs include Texas Tech University, University of Missouri at Columbia, Kansas State University, and Virginia Tech. Finally, we believe that the addition of the non-thesis M.S. option to the current selection of graduate programs offered through the Department of Housing and Consumer Economics will strengthen both the department’s and University’s standing regionally and nationally.

**Admission Procedures for Domestic Applicants**

The admissions standards are the same for both the thesis or non-thesis options. Admissions are open to all qualified graduates of accredited institutions. Admission materials are available through the Graduate Admissions Office. All prospective students should send directly to the Graduate School: 1) a completed application; 2) two official copies of all transcripts; 3) official Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, and 4) the application fee of $50.00.

In addition, all prospective students should send directly to the Department of Housing and Consumer Economics: 1) three letters of recommendation; 2) a Statement of Purpose using the required guidelines, 3) a resume or vita, and 4) an Application for Assistantship (if financial aid is desired). MS applicants should have completed a course in statistics (equivalent to STAT 2000) and a course in microeconomic theory (equivalent to ECON 2106). Admissions are reviewed by the HACE Graduate Policies Committee, which is made up of four members of the Graduate Faculty.

**Admission Procedures for International Applicants**

The admissions standards are the same for both the thesis or non-thesis options. Admissions are open to all qualified graduates of accredited institutions. Admission materials are available through the Graduate Admissions Office. All prospective students should send directly to the Graduate School: 1) a completed application; 2) two official copies of all transcripts; 3) official proof of degree(s) awarded; 4) official Graduate Record Examination (GRS) scores, 5 official TOEFL scores; and 6) the application fee of $50.00 U. S. Dollars.

In addition, all prospective students should send directly to the Department of Housing and Consumer Economics: 1) three letters of recommendation; 2) a Statement of Purpose using the required guidelines, 3) a resume or vita, and 4) an Application for Assistantship (if financial aid is desired).

A minimum score of 575 (or 230 for computer-based tests) on the TOEFL is required when English is the student’s second language. MS applicants should have completed a course in statistics (equivalent to STAT 2000) and a course in microeconomic theory (equivalent to ECON 2106). Admissions are reviewed by the HACE Graduate Policies Committee, which is made up of four members of the Graduate Faculty.
**Impact on Current Students**

There would be no impact on students currently enrolled in the M.S. with thesis program. It is anticipated that students who begin the M.S. in Housing and Consumer Economics program in Fall 2006 and later will have the option of choosing the current thesis program of study or a non-thesis program emphasizing a specific area of study as determined and approved by the department. We anticipate initial enrollment in the non-thesis option to consist of 3 students and within three years to be between 10 and 15 students. These numbers are based on enrollments at similar programs around the country. This option will enhance the experience of current students by incorporating more students with diverse experiences and perspectives in courses because some of the non-thesis students are likely to be non-traditional students.

**Financial Impact**

No additional funds would be required to offer this program. Current faculty, buildings, library, and other facilities are adequate to implement the proposed offering.

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**August 9, 2006**