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ABSTRACT

A study explored whether recipients of graduate fellowships through the Family and Consumer Sciences Education Graduate Fellowship Fund become leaders in family and consumer sciences education. The usable sample consisted of 51 of 64 recipients from 1969-97; 29 responded to a mailed 2-part survey, Impact of the Fellowship Questionnaire and The Personal and Professional Characteristics Questionnaire. Content analysis of qualitative data was conducted. Findings were as follows: 100 percent of respondents were female; 96.6 percent were Caucasian, 3.4 percent African-American; after receiving the fellowship, recipients averaged 2.5 years to complete their degree program, with a range of 9 months to 6 years; and over one-half were currently in a university position. Recipients' involvement with the fellowship included encouraging others to apply, contributing money toward a Roll of Honor nominee, and nominating someone. They were active in professional organizations and reported the fellowship gave them financial support to obtain a degree and offered encouragement by demonstrating the profession's commitment to development of future leaders. Three themes emerged as types of impact on careers: developing a stronger personal commitment to the profession, gaining confidence from receiving the fellowship, and connecting with other family and consumer sciences education professionals. (Three charts are appended.) (YLB)

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Legacy of Leadership: American Vocational Association Family and Consumer Sciences Education Graduate Fellowship

Refereed Research Presentation:
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32 In 1960, the Family and Consumer Sciences Division of the American Vocational
33 Association initiated a Family and Consumer Sciences Education Awards and Graduate
34 Fellowship Program. The awards portion of the program focused on honoring outstanding
35 family and consumer sciences professionals. The purpose of the fellowship program was
36 to provide fellowships to family and consumer sciences educators—graduate students who
37 would become future leaders in the profession.

38 Family and consumer sciences education professionals honor their colleagues
39 through contributions to the Graduate Fellowship Fund. Names of these persons are
40 inscribed on the Fellowship Roll of Honor. You can find a list of these names in the
41 brochure you received when you came in the door. Placement on the Fellowship Roll of
42 Honor is the highest honor within family and consumer sciences education and recognizes
43 those professionals who have made significant contributions to the field. Since its
44 inception, the fund has received over \$170,000 in contributions. Since 1961, ninety-four
45 professionals have been placed on the Roll of Honor. If any of the people on the Roll of
46 Honor are here, would they please stand to be recognized?

47 Beginning in 1967, graduate fellowships have been awarded through the Family
48 and Consumer Sciences Education Graduate Fellowship Fund. To date, sixty-four family
49 and consumer sciences educators have received graduate fellowships. Many current,
50 past, and future leaders are among the recipients. As of 1997, \$171,000 has been
51 awarded. If any of the recipients of the fellowship are here would they please stand?

52 Since the inception of the Graduate Fellowship Program, no follow-up of fellowship
53 recipients has been undertaken. The stated purpose of the fellowship is to contribute to
54 the preparation of future leaders in family and consumer sciences education. The purpose
55 of this study was to determine whether or not recipients have in fact become leaders in
56 family and consumer sciences education. This study was guided by two objectives: 1) to

57 identify the personal and professional characteristics of the fellowship recipients; and 2) to
58 ascertain the impact of the fellowship on the recipients.

59 The design of this study was descriptive. The population of the study was the sixty-
60 four fellowship recipients from 1969 to 1997. The population frame was obtained from the
61 American Vocational Association Family and Consumer Sciences Division Graduate
62 Fellowship records. Of the previous recipients, one is deceased and eight could not be
63 located. The four 1997 recipients were not included in the study population because of
64 their early stage in the doctoral program. The usable sample of the population consisted of
65 fifty-one fellowship recipients of which six were identified as minority fellowship recipients.
66 Twenty-nine of these recipients responded to the mail survey for a response rate of 56.9%.

67 The instrumentation consisted of two questionnaires. The Impact of the Fellowship
68 Questionnaire was used to assess the influence the fellowship had on the recipients' lives.
69 The Personal and Professional Characteristics Questionnaire was used to assess personal
70 and professional characteristics of the recipients.

71 Data were collected by a mailed survey. Reminders were sent one month after
72 initial mailing. The statistics were analyzed using the SPSS statistical analysis program.
73 Frequencies were calculated for each variable of interest. Content analysis was used to
74 analyze the qualitative data.

75 In terms of personal characteristics, 100% of the respondents were female; 96.6%
76 were Caucasian and 3.4% were African-American. Most recipients were married (72.4%),
77 followed by single (20.7%), divorced (3.4%), and widowed (3.4%). The mean age of the
78 respondents was 49.1 years. After receiving the fellowship, recipients averaged 2.5 years
79 needed to complete their degree program. The range for time to degree completion was
80 nine months to six years.

81 The recipients were asked the position in which they were currently employed. As
82 you can see from the pie chart, over ½ of the respondents were currently in a university
83 position.

84 After receiving the fellowship, respondents' involvement with the fellowship
85 included: encouraged others to submit an application (79.3%); contributed money toward a
86 Roll of Honor nominee (51.7%); and nominated an individual for the Roll of Honor (20.7%).

87 The respondents reported being active in professional organizations. They were
88 specifically asked to identify their membership status related to seven organizations
89 affiliated with family and consumer sciences education. This bar graph shows that over 4
90 out of 5 respondents have membership in the American Association of Family and
91 Consumer Sciences and the American Vocational Association. Respondents also provided
92 information on additional organizations in which they were involved. The mean number of
93 memberships in additional organizations was 2.14. Combining all organizational
94 memberships, the mean number of memberships per recipient was 4.79.

95 Themes of the open-ended questions from the respondents' replies were identified.
96 Recipients were asked to describe the ways in which the Family and Consumer Sciences
97 Graduate Fellowship assisted them in obtaining a degree. Financial support was the first
98 theme to be identified. All described the many expenses they covered with their fellowship
99 grant including tuition, computer purchase, and dissertation costs. Some indicated they
100 were able to conduct research with greater breadth and depth due to the additional
101 financial support. The following quote illustrates the financial support role of the fellowship
102 in the completion of their degree

103

104 Provided me with the financial support to carry out a complex research study.
105 Without this initial research, I would not have been able to enter a faculty position
106 already up and running with a research agenda (Recipient 11).

107
108 Another important contribution the fellowship made toward degree completion was that it
109 offered encouragement by demonstrating to the recipient the commitment of the profession
110 to the development of its future leaders.

111
112 First of all, this award gave me confidence in continuing my research. It helped me
113 to identify with the profession and continue my commitment to an area that is
114 critically important. This award was an affirmation to me that what I am doing is
115 worthwhile and may become a significant contribution to our profession (Recipient
116 17).

117
118 In another question, the recipients were asked to describe the impact of the
119 fellowship on their career. Three themes emerged as types of impact on their career: 1)
120 developed a stronger personal commitment to the profession; 2) gained confidence from
121 receiving the fellowship; and 3) provided an avenue to connect with other family and
122 consumer sciences education professionals.

123 In terms of personal commitment to the profession, several recipients highlighted
124 the prestige and responsibility that comes from receiving the fellowship.

125
126 It was a tremendous honor. It gave me encouragement and support from a
127 wonderful organization. It reinforced my commitment to family and consumer
128 sciences education (Recipient 35).

129

130 The fellowship increased recipients confidence in their professional work and
131 served as a "launching pad" for future professional involvement.

132
133 I saw it as a big honor and was recognized by colleagues for having received it. I
134 had mentors who were active with the fellowship and I became an active contributor
135 and chaired the committee. I feel I became more involved with family and
136 consumer sciences education as a result of receiving it. The fellowship helped put
137 me on a "professional launching pad" and gave me "wings" (Recipient 20).

138
139 Other fellowship recipients identified connecting with family and consumer sciences
140 professionals as an important impact of receiving the fellowship.

141
142 The type of study I was able to conduct gave me contact with all family and
143 consumer sciences teacher educators and state supervisors across the nation. I
144 was able to use this as a base for developing mentors all across the nation
145 (Recipient 16).

146
147 Fellowship recipients identified numerous people who influenced them most during
148 their graduate program. Not surprisingly, they identified major professors, committee
149 members, and fellow graduate students as having the most influence on them. Many
150 respondents listed more than one person.

151
152 [Committee member]. She was not my official advisor but I obtained more advice
153 from her than any other person. She was on my exam committee and taught
154 several of my classes. She was a good model for teaching and for dealing with

155 professional colleagues and advisees. She combines warmth and empathy with
156 high standards for students. She is assertive and principled. She integrates
157 teaching, scholarship, and service in mutually supportive ways and balances them
158 with a personal life. She handles stress well, uses humor, is well organized, and
159 creative (Recipient 28).

160

161 My graduate advisor and the other doctoral students my advisor had at the same
162 time I was going through the program. My advisor was an extremely kind and
163 gentle woman who was an outstanding educator and researcher. She was patient,
164 allowing me to travel down many theoretical paths before coaching me on ones that
165 might be more productive than others. She drew examples from research
166 published in a wide variety of social sciences field to provide instructional materials
167 and to demonstrate how the questions we asked in our research could be grounded
168 in more basic social science questions (Recipient 43).

169 Definitely, my doctoral advisor! She was my teacher, advisor, personal friend and
170 coach. Also, I became very close to the other faculty in our department. As a
171 graduate assistant/teaching assistant, I was included in so many
172 department/college activities. It was a wonderful training ground, both
173 professionally and personally. Even though I was a graduate student in my
174 late/middle 20's, I felt I was treated as a faculty member with privileges and
175 responsibilities. My doctoral advisor was easily accessible, a warm and caring
176 individual, a superb teacher in the classroom, energetic and enthusiastic, and
177 extremely open to new ideas. She helped me make contacts with other faculty in

178 other colleges on campus and provided many research opportunities for me to
179 assist with as well as writing opportunities (Recipient 46).

180
181 These quotes provide evidence of the leadership qualities and skills that
182 encouraged and aided the recipients in becoming leaders. Recipients described their
183 contributions made to both their professional and personal lives. Advisors and colleagues
184 of fellowship recipients can be proud of the influence they have exercised.

185 In summary, the fellowship has enabled future family and consumer sciences
186 educators to pursue leadership opportunities in local, state, and national levels. The
187 fellowship provides recipients funding for their dissertation research, offers recognition, and
188 builds connections within the profession, but its most important contribution may be the
189 recognition it gives future leaders. From the words of the fellowship recipients, we
190 conclude that the fellowship has met the expectations of those far-sighted professionals
191 who initiated it in 1960. A significant pool of family and consumer sciences education
192 leaders has emerged from graduate students in family and consumer sciences education.
193 They have made contributions to the field which have enabled us collectively to move
194 forward and advance our mission of improving the quality of individual and family life.

195 In conclusion, as we prepare to enter the new millennium, family and consumer
196 sciences education leaders are needed more than ever before. Changes in families,
197 communities, and other social institutions provide numerous opportunities for family and
198 consumer sciences education professionals to continue our service to and on behalf of
199 families. As we move forward, the Graduate Fellowship has an important role to play in
200 enabling future leaders to emerge and develop to fulfill the mission of family and consumer
201 sciences. It establishes a strong foundation for tomorrow's leaders to interact with and
202 learn from current leaders and to build strong family and consumer sciences programs for

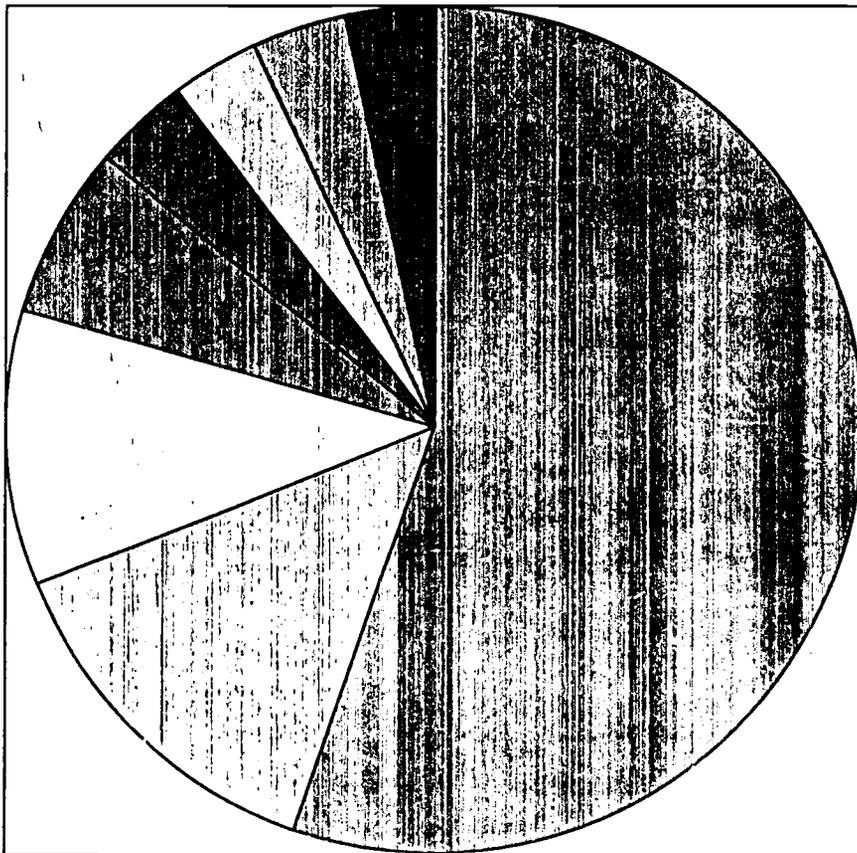
203 the future. The legacy of the fellowship is a significant gift toward the development future
204 of family and consumer sciences educators.
205

Personal Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	frequency	%
Sex	Female = 29 Male = 0	100% 0%
Ethnicity	Caucasian = 28 African-American = 1	96.6% 3.4%
Marital Status	Married = 21 Single = 6 Divorced = 1 Widowed = 1	72.4% 20.7% 3.4% 3.4%

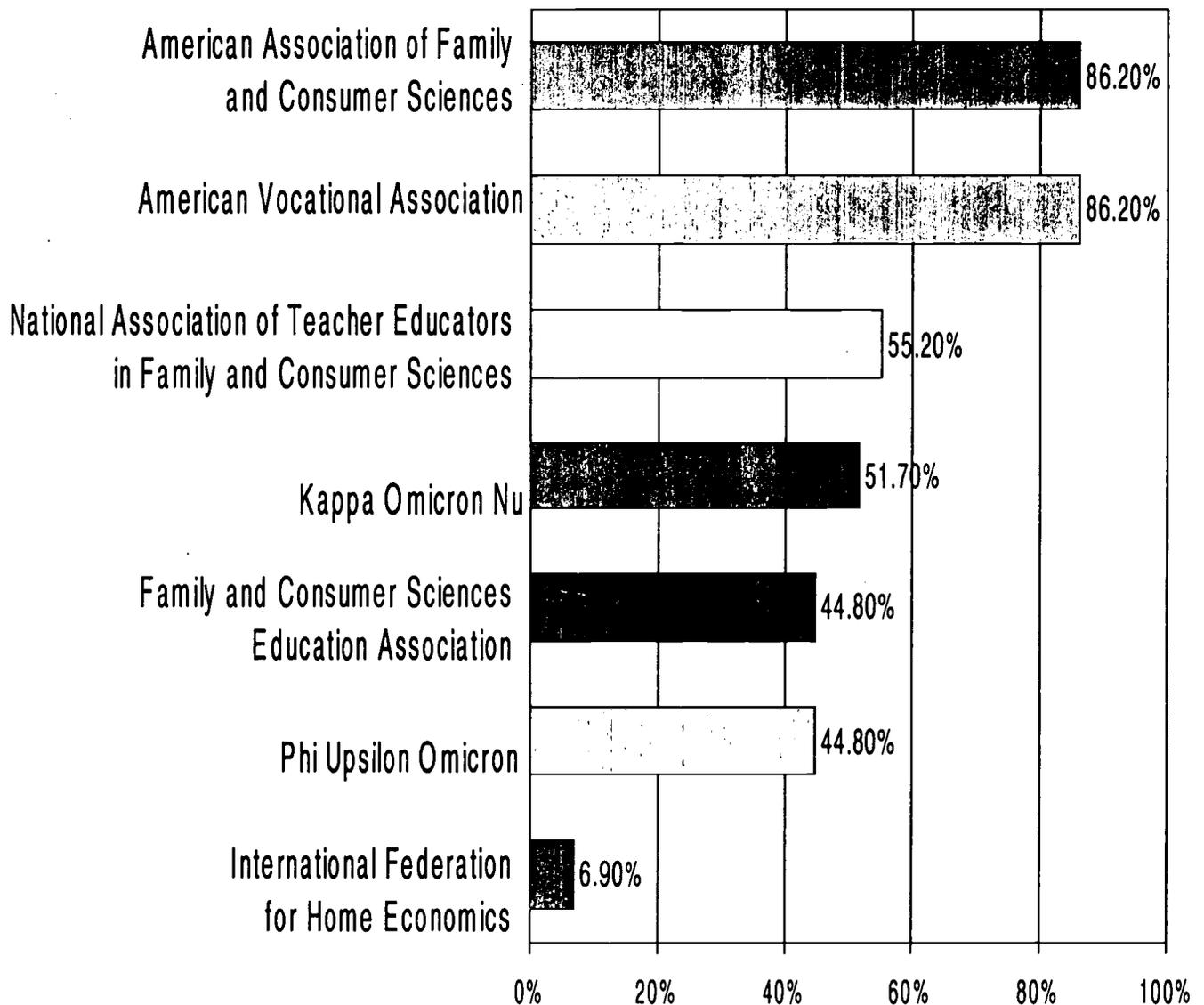
Characteristic	Mean
Age	49.1
Years needed to complete program after receiving fellowship	2.5
Number of memberships per respondent	4.79

Current Positions of Fellowship Respondents



- University faculty
- State Dept. of Education personnel
- Graduate students without assistantships
- Graduate students with assistantship
- Assistant principal
- Elementary school teacher
- Industry personnel
- Local extension faculty

Professional Organizations Membership





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