

Transforming AAFCS: New Era of Action

Phase 1 Proposed Recommendations for Action *Frequently Asked Questions*

General:

- **I have heard that “a lot of the details of these recommendations need to be fleshed out before they are implemented.” How can I vote on a concept when some of the details that need to be determined might affect how I vote on the topic?** The leadership of AAFCS has given thoughtful consideration to these recommendations for action, based on input from many members, leaders and external audiences. At this point, the goal is for the Senate and members to assess the concepts being proposed. Hence, the vote is on approval of the concept.

If the recommendations are approved, more input will be requested for the details necessary to implement the recommendations. You will be invited to provide input on the details during that period of the transition process. The Board prefers that members and groups help design the details of how these recommendations are implemented following a vote on the concept.

Membership:

- **Does the “special” one-year introductory offer mean it’s only an offer for the first year of this plan (’07-’08)?** The special one-year introductory offer is available in any year to anyone who meets the criteria for the Active membership category for his/her first year in this category.
- **If someone’s membership is really only lapsed, can she or he receive the introductory offer?** The one-year introductory offer is only for first-time-ever Active members.
- **I wonder about the idea of opening up membership to non FCS-degreed people. What are the potential benefits of doing this?** In opening up the membership, we would be sending the message that our focus is the mission of AAFCS rather than the specific academic preparation of those who support the work of the Association.

Current national statistics show that people may change careers as many as seven times during their lives; thus, individuals may have academic training in another field but may be working in the field of family and consumer sciences, or

vice versa. What better way to share the philosophy and mission of family and consumer sciences than with those who have an interest but different academic backgrounds and to learn from those who bring diverse perspectives needed to address the issues and persistent problems affecting families?

Also currently, many of our professionals come from non-FCS academic preparation and, with restructuring of some colleges, many are in non-FCS units. Yet, these professionals want to affiliate with an association where members all have the **shared goal of enhancing the quality of living for individuals, families and communities.**

Examples of other organizations with open membership are the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) and National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE).

- **I'm retiring at 58 and believe I should be eligible for the Emeritus category. Why do I have to be 60?** The traditional concept of retirement is changing. While some people, like you, are retiring in their 50s, many are working well into their 70s, sometimes in a second or third career. In comparing AAFCS Membership Categories with other situations where "retirement" is partially defined by a specific age, a case can be made that 60 is too young now and into the future.

After a great deal of discussion and analysis, including whether to specify an age at all, it was recommended that 60 is the appropriate average age for offering a retirement level category to AAFCS members.

- **Why are you raising the Retired/Emeritus category dues?** We very much appreciate the past contributions to the field and the Association of individuals eligible for the Emeritus category and **need their continued support to sustain AAFCS' legacy as the premier organization for family and consumer sciences.**

However, as the Active category dues have increased incrementally with the cost of living over the past few years, the retired category has remained the same as it was in 2000. Hence, this increase (from \$65 to \$95) is actually playing "catch up" on dues, proportionate to the Active category.

- **What types of people do you see joining our association who would not have been eligible previously and to which category would they belong?** Those who work in areas such as school counseling, culinary arts, family law, health and community/economic development are just a few of the types of individuals who would be invited to join in the active category.

By virtue of supporting the mission of AAFCS, parents of secondary school FCS students, 4-H'ers or FCCLA members/officers could also choose to become members. Note: the parents would be eligible in the active category. The

secondary school FCS students, 4-H members and FCCLA members/officers would be eligible in the student category.

- **The organization for which I work will pay my dues only if AAFCS is a professional association. Will it still be considered a professional association if nonprofessionals can join?** AAFCS will continue to be defined as a professional association. Additionally, opening up membership criteria will not change the 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt status or the legal structure of the association.
- **Isn't the proposed student category, whereby secondary school students can join, competing with FCCLA for membership?** There are many secondary school students who attend schools without an FCCLA chapter, and home-schooled students who are not eligible for FCCLA Chapter-based membership may also be a targeted audience for this section of the student category. Our student member category would offer these students a way to develop their own interest in the family and consumer sciences field, to be mentored by professionals, to learn more about FCS academic programs offered at various institutions of higher education and to participate in FCS-related initiatives.

FCCLA is a valued partner of AAFCS and we share the goal of reaching students and professionals at all levels.

- **Can career and technical college students be a member of the student section, since I don't think they are considered undergraduate students?** Our working definition of "undergraduate," used in the student membership category, includes "students from universities, 2-year and 4-year colleges, and career/technical schools." We welcome students who are attending career and technical colleges.
- **What do you project to be the ratio between professional and nonprofessional members in the active category since "...retaining a professional component" (1st bullet in Implications/Rationale under the Active category) implies to me that professionals will not be the majority of the members of our Association?** We expect professionals to continue comprising the majority of our membership. However, opening the membership is a significant step toward strengthening the association and positioning it for influence and attracting resources.

Structure:

- **What's different about Communities of Interest and/or Practice (CoI/P) from our current action groups which have not always been successful?** Certainly, to a degree, CoI/P resembles the action groups already available to AAFCS members. However, action groups are largely identified and created by the Board of Directors. Through self-forming CoI/P, members determine their own topics, issues of interest, actions and organization. AAFCS' new technology

capability will allow them to utilize electronic communications to form their groups. This enables many members to engage in dialogue throughout the year, expanding the opportunity to those who are not able to attend the Annual Conference and other face-to-face meetings. It permits ways to conduct virtual networking--a method increasingly attractive to emerging professionals.

- **What are the criteria for forming a CoI/P?** If the concept of CoI/P is approved by the Senate, a committee will address this question. Many professional associations have groups of a similar nature. We can learn from their experience.
- **What will the online form look like when a member gets ready to identify their CoI/Ps?** The form will likely be an online template with boxes to check and spaces to complete. The form will permit customization and search capabilities to locate others with similar interests or willingness to serve in various capacities within the CoI/P.
- **When will the change take place, if approved?** If approved, the recommended action will be effective on May 1, 2007, which is the beginning of the next AAFCS fiscal year.
- **What will happen to the funds that have been allocated to current sections and divisions?** Current sections and divisions may choose from among five options as to how their funds may be used to: (1) support a special project; (2) be transferred to a pool of funds for new Communities of Interest/Practice potential projects; (3) retained for supporting activities of a specific CoI/P; (4) be donated to an existing Scholarship, Fellowship, or Endowment fund; or (5) be donated to the AAFCS Centennial Campaign. A form, due February 15, 2007, will be provided to chairs for proposing the choices of their sections/divisions.
- **How will activities of the new CoI/Ps be funded?** The financial pool into which sections and divisions may transfer their current funds will be one source of funding for activities by the new CoI/Ps. The Board, with its budgetary responsibility, will track this financial pool and decide if/when adjustments may be needed.
- **If our section transfers money to the pool for CoI/Ps, will we get to use it for a project of a CoI/P that has the same types of members? For example, if the Extension section donates its funds to the pool, will a CoI/P made up of Extension professionals have access to that money?** The CoI/P financial pool is designed for access by CoI/Ps that submit funding requests to be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors. Hence, funds that are transferred by a specific section or division to the pool may be available to a new CoI/P made up of a similar membership or of different members who choose to affiliate with the CoI/P.
- **What if our section or division wants to retain its structure and continue using our designated funds for project/activities?** A section or division may opt to

reorganize as a CoI/P and one of the options for the use of current section/division designated funds is to retain money to **support** projects of a specifically identified CoI/P.

- **What if no leaders emerge in a CoI/P?** CoI/Ps are successful because of the relevance of the interest topic to the members who choose to be part of a particular grouping. Hence, leaders typically emerge who are motivated to gain knowledge and share best practices with colleagues and who are willing to provide the energy to start-up, monitor or manage a CoI/P. In general, when groups have the opportunity to develop their own guidelines and operating procedures, leaders are more likely to emerge. If no members are willing to take leadership in a CoI/P, that is an indication that there is not sufficient energy or interest to warrant continuation of that particular community.

Additional guidelines will probably be necessary for CoI/P formation and operation. These guidelines will be developed by member committees and tested and monitored for effectiveness and future modification.

- **Will CoI/Ps be required to send reports to the national association office?** CoI/Ps are expected to be less formal and structured than is the current practice. Therefore, we don't expect standardized reports per se. With technology, CoI/P's should be able to post activities, achievements, requests, etc. for intra group use or for full association viewing, thus eliminating formal reports.
- **Are the CoI/Ps predetermined and as a member, I just select the ones I want to participate in?** At least in the beginning, it is likely that some CoI/P's will be suggested. Down the road, more CoI/P's will be created by members as interests arise.
- **How will self-selecting CoI/Ps be monitored and what happens if some act as if they are speaking 'for' the Association?** We acknowledge the potential difficulty in monitoring the dialogue threads and activities of the CoI/P members. Members should conduct themselves according to our professional code of ethics at all times, including when engaged in the CoI/Ps. As is the case currently, members are encouraged to express their personal and professional opinions, but not to portray them as viewpoints of AAFCS unless approved by governing bodies of the Association.
- **How will we respond to press and public policy inquiries if we don't have sections and division designations for members?** The CoI/P group designations will serve the same purpose in providing staff and AAFCS leaders a 'Bank of Experts.'
- **Will there be set number of CoI/Ps per member? If so, will there be an extra charge for choosing more than the allowed number?** At this point, possible charges are undetermined. One advantage of self-determined and governed CoI/Ps is that they require few resources of staff time, though the electronic

support will likely increase. We really are anticipating that this approach will provide a wonderful benefit in allowing members to seek out and share information with many colleagues on topics of mutual interest.

Governance:

- **Since some Vice President positions were responsible for constituency groups (e.g., sections/division chairs) or liaison to committees (e.g., membership, development, annual conference), who will work with these groups in the At-Large Board Member concept?** The President and/or President-elect will work closely with Board members to identify areas that need leadership and coordination.
- **Who appoints the Finance Committee Member-At-Large?** The President-Elect is in charge of appointing all committee members including the At-Large Finance Committee Members, based on each individual's interest and experience in the committees' areas of responsibility.
- **What is the role of the Past President on the Board?** The Past President would be a full Board member and provide continuity of information and perspective on the Board of Directors, based on service and experience as President-elect and President.
- **Could the APU Representative to the Board then be elected as a Board Member-At-Large, in essence serving two consecutive terms?** Yes, the APU Representative could subsequently serve as an At-Large Member and national officer (President-Elect/President or Treasurer). However, since one of the tenets of the governance redesign recommendations is for a greater number of members to have an opportunity to serve in a leadership capacity, consideration may be given to adding to the AAFCS Policy and Procedures Manual that nominees shall not be selected if their election would result in their serving "x" consecutive years as an AAFCS Board Member.
- **Do you see the governance recommendations helping or hurting our desire to have diversity among the Board members?** Disallowing Board Members to succeed themselves in the same role will increase the *number* of people able to serve in leadership positions for the Association. And, the Nominating Committee will continue its current focus on developing as much diversity as possible among the candidates for the national offices.

Mission:

- **How does the "leadership and support" referenced in the proposed mission statement compare to what the Association does now?** It is a continuation of

what AAFCS currently provides, but written in language with more clarity.

- **Does the proposed mission statement include Association involvement in activities to influence public policy?** Certainly. However, AAFCS is moving toward giving more focus to enabling its members to impact and inform public policy, particularly at the local and state levels, rather than relying on headquarters staff, or a small committee, to represent the Association.
- **Relative to the 2nd bullet in the rationale column, why are we not being more assertive in claiming a role of prominence in the profession?** The field of family and consumer sciences is complex, increasingly specialized, and shared by many entities. AAFCS simply does not have the resources to shoulder the support of the multitude of facets that comprise the field of family and consumer sciences, but we anticipate helping to lead a coalition of FCS organizations.
- **How will focusing AAFCS efforts more on advancing/promoting the Association and less on the profession affect the Association's activities and operations?** AAFCS and the entire field of family and consumer sciences are not "one in the same." That said, when AAFCS supports its members, the ripple effect is that it supports the field of FCS.
- **Under the new mission statement, will we be attempting to change the general public's perception of family and consumer sciences?** We continually have the goal of educating the general public to have a current, accurate and positive image of family and consumer sciences. One way to do that is to be more inclusive of members from diverse backgrounds who become stakeholders with commitment to action on behalf of family and consumer sciences.
- **I thought our current mission statement was "bringing people together to improve the lives of individuals, families and communities."** Actually, "bringing people together ..." is the core purpose of AAFCS as designated in the 2003 Strategic Plan. The current mission statement was approved by the AAFCS Senate in 1995.