

PSH NEWS

New campus research with a caring touch

Karen M. Putt
Capital Times Staff

Imagine being responsible for a human life and not knowing how to care for it. Such is the case for parents of technology dependent born babies. Babies born prematurely require special

care many parents aren't qualified to give. But that's about to change and Penn State Harrisburg is part of that change.

Headed by Steven Melnick, assistant professor of education, the Early Childhood Research and Evaluation Projects (ECREP) office of PSH is

conducting research that "will have major impact on the quality of child care on a national level."

Programs included in the project are the Abandoned Infants Assistance Project, the Early Childhood Linkage System, the Washington Licensing Matrix Project and the Early Childhood Program Quality Study. All programs are aimed at improving the quality of early childhood and child care programs.

Melnick said the projects are significant and continue the college's research mission.

Assistant director Richard Fiene agrees the program is of great importance.

"I think all these projects will help improve the standards of child care all over the country. I'm really committed to improving the quality of child care."

The Abandoned Infants Assistance Project deals with the care of babies who need respirators or other machines to live. Nearly all technology dependent infants are "preemies," or babies born before their due date.

"When technology dependent born babies are ready to leave the hospital they often don't have anywhere to go," explained senior project assistant Kim Carlson. "We're talking about really high risk babies."

The purpose of the Abandoned Infants Assistance Project is to develop a working system with parent counseling and a transitional care home for technology dependent infants. These infants remain hospitalized because they cannot get the care they need outside of a hospital.

The project is evaluating the effectiveness of a transitional home in Philadelphia where three local hospitals provide services for the non-profit Ken Crest agency.

According to Melnick, "The overall objective is to train parents to care for technology dependent babies or find adoptive parents who will take technologically dependent babies. The emphasis is on parents receiving the appropriate training."

The transitional home is a place where families can stay while they learn to care for their babies. There is also a day-care program for technology dependent babies from newborn to pre-school ages.

The ECREP office is staffed by three senior project assistants, a faculty researcher, four graduate and undergraduate assistants and one administrative/clerical support staff.

Senior project assistants Kim Carlson, Lynne Wells, and Heide Melnick are full-time workers responsible for the day-to-day operations in the office, and they are also involved in the conceptual design of the program. Graduate and undergraduate students Amy Vaites, Judy Wolf, Peggy Reese and Cheryl Koch are involved in the heavy library work each program requires.

"We provide the students with experiences they won't get anywhere else," Melnick said. "I think everyone wins."

"There's a new interest in child care," Fiene said. "This fall we'll [PSH] be resurrecting our early childhood program. The research end dovetails with what the program will offer."

College enjoys silver anniversary

Jeff Berrigan
Capital Times Staff

Happy Birthday Penn State Harrisburg!

As part of its 25th Anniversary celebration Penn State Harrisburg will have a Major Dinner Dance, a Tailgating party, an Academic Convocation, and other events for Earth Day, said Provost Ruth Leventhal.

"I'm very excited about it," Leventhal said. "It's another milestone for the college."

The celebration has actually already started and will extend through the 1992 Spring semester.

On April 28th a Major Dinner Dance featuring Joe Paterno, who is celebrating his 25th year as head coach of the Nittany Lions football team, and the Penn State Blue Band will be held at the Hilton Hotel in Harrisburg.

A crowd of approximately 400 people are expected to attend the dinner and the money raised will go to the Library, Leventhal said.

On the weekend of Oct. 4,5,6, an Alumni Homecoming will be held, Leventhal said.

"Athletic events and an Academic Convocation with a famous speaker, not known at this time, will take place, and various clubs from Penn State Harrisburg will have food stands," Leventhal said.

After the Sat. April 5th football game against Temple, a tailgating party and dance will be held, she said.

Other events to take place include the Lecture Series, featuring various speakers, and other dinners and dances.

Leventhal said she hopes these activities "increase the visibility of the college and community." She would also "like the students to get more involved in school activities."

Faculty committee to revise constitution

Robin Price
Capital Times Staff

Penn State Harrisburg's outdated faculty constitution is undergoing revision by a special faculty committee, according to James Hudson, professor of social science and sociology.

The present constitution gives ultimate governing authority to the entire faculty. The revision would give legislative authority to the Faculty Council, a representative body. Only certain matters like amending the constitution would go before the whole faculty, said Louise Hoffman, associate professor of humanities and history and a member of the revision committee.

The Faculty Council consists of nine elected members and an immediate past chairperson.

"Having two bodies of government is redundant and obsolete," Hudson said. "We're looking for more consistency. We'd like to clarify the authority. As the campus has grown and changed, the

constitution hasn't and therefore it doesn't reflect our needs as accurately as it should."

According to Hudson, the present constitution has some "weird things in it." For example, it still reflects the term system, rather than semester system. This makes Faculty Council elections awkward because according to the constitution, elections must take place May 31--after the semester has ended.

The constitution, written in 1971 shortly after the formation of the campus, has been revised many times and was last rewritten in 1989.

"The constitution sorely needs updating," Hoffman said. She said she feels faculty governance is very important, particularly in a large institution like Penn State.

Hoffman said changes would make for "strong, healthy faculty involvement," in campus business.

The council is still discussing several issues, according to Hoffman. Any changes must be approved a two-thirds of the faculty.



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