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THE PROFRESSION WITH A 1,000 JOB TITLES: HISTORICIZING HOME ECONOMICS, GENDER, AND SOCIETY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

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AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

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Dr. Mirelsie Velázquez, Chair

Dr. Curt Adams

Dr. Kirsten T. Edwards

Dr. Alisa Hicklin Fryar

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a curriculum history of the School of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma. The primary research question asks what the role that the school's home economics curriculum had in creating and reinforcing gendered stereotypes of the white woman. This history identifies differing curriculum from three points in time during the 1915-1990 existence of the school. Through this history the relationships of faculty members, students, and alumnae is brought out as it became an important component to the educative process within the school. The history and stories that are being explored though this work is that of white women as the university was an exclusionary place for Black and Brown students. To be sure, in places like the University of Oklahoma, home economics in its early history was explicitly a space that upheld and normalized whiteness through the education of white women. This study utilizes a documentary research methodology of archival artifacts from the University of Oklahoma Archives at the Western History Collections, as well as an analysis of secondary sources. This project aims to help to help fill the current gap in home economics research with little research on the history of home economics curriculum and the individual university programs that provided this training, while also adding to the literature on the role of education and gender identity for white women.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is not mine alone and would not have been possible without the help of numerous people that I would like to take a moment to thank; for without you I would not be here, and this work would not exist. Chief among them is the faculty and students of the School of Home Economics whose stories I was able to engage with and tell. This is their story that I am so honored that I was able to coexist with these stories, learn from them, and share them so that we can all learn a little something from them at least one more time. I would also like to thank my family for their unwavering support and encouragement through this entire journey. Honestly, there are no words to fully describe the role and impact you have had on my life and are the reason that I am where I am.

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In Memory of all the faculty, students, and staff of the School of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma

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CHAPTER I

MAKING A HOME: INTRODUCTION

Did you know that college home economics prepares for "the Profession with 1,000 Job Titles?" Administrative dietitian, advertising writer, community health consultant… All of these roles are filled by home economists, who are; graduates of nearly 500 colleges and universities which grant bachelor's degrees in home economics. Usually specialists in one of the six areas (textiles and clothing, food and nutrition, applied art, family economics and management, family relations and child development, and housing and household equipment) and well-grounded in the sciences and liberal arts. [1]

- Mary Warren
Professor and Chairman, School of Home Economics, the University of Oklahoma

Home economics is a vast field of study that prepares students for more than becoming a housewife or mother. Home economists are trained in several areas, with most choosing to specialize in one of the six subfields. Home economists, or home economics, is the umbrella that all of these job titles can go under. That is why it is "the Profession with 1,000 Job Titles."[2] It is not a singular notion or one specific thing. All of the individual jobs and learned traits work together to advance the overarching profession of home economics. Each job or trait adds to the beauty, grace, and power of the one unified field of home economics with a connected individuality. This was explored though the

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1. Mary Warren, *Lively Facts and Figures,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics, Box 3, Folder 2 Publicity Files, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

2. Ibid.

departments, schools, and colleges of home economics that existed in American universities.

The School of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma was officially founded in 1920.[3] Starting in 1914, courses in Domestic Arts and Sciences were offered at the university, leading to the formation of the School of Home Economics.[4] In 1982, the school transitioned into the School of Human Development after dropping multiple degree programs. The school closed in 1988 after the remaining programs were moved to other departments.[5] Even though the school is gone, reminders can be found throughout campus. For example, the interior design major was moved to the College of Architecture, and the nutrition major was moved to the Health Sciences Center and is now only an option for graduate studies.

More than curriculum strands remain, as Burton Hall, the building built for the school, is now the home of the department of communication. No longer do its classrooms offer the hands-on laboratories once present there. Gone are the multiple kitchens that made up the food and nutrition laboratory. The equipment

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3. Helen B. Burton, "Home Economics from The University's Building Needs: A Survey," *Sooner Magazine,* December 1930, 98.

4. The University of Oklahoma Quarterly Bulletin, *Announcement of Courses in Domestic Science and Art 1915-1916,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics (Domestic Sciences and Arts), Box 1, Folder 1 Publications, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

5. Carol J. Burr, "The Legacy of Burton Hall," *Sooner Magazine,* Summer 2004, 32.

and mannequins of the textile laboratory were liquidated or given to the theater department. Now all that remains of its original tenants are the ironing boards built into the wall, the excess storage cabinets now free of equipment; and the name of Dr. Helen Burton, director of the school from 1927 to 1949.[6]

This dissertation aims to pick up these curriculum strands and experiences to catalog them together as a social history of the School of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma. The perspicacity of the home economics curriculum is juxtaposed against the gendered notions that are both found within the curriculum and placed upon the practitioners of the field. Part of the layered nuance within this project is the way that gender identity and gender roles are wrapped up into home economics, and situated as a space to uphold and reinforce whiteness as the space, as seen through the photos shared within this document, was very much a place for white women at the University of Oklahoma. To be sure, absent from this narrative on the history of the school of economics is the experiences of Black and Brown women, as the University of Oklahoma practiced segregationist policies until the 1940s. In many incidents at institutions across the country, and something I hope to explore in future work, home economics spaces offered a different future for white women as opposed to Women of Color. While analyzing these histories through archival document methodologies, one thing that we need to be cognizant about is the privilege of retrospection. Tosh defines this

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6. University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, School of Home Economics UA RG 40/24/01, Box 5, Folder 4, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

as, “In history we know what happened afterwards, and the actors don’t. The arrow of time makes our knowledge intrinsically superior to that of the actors.”[7] The purpose of this dissertation is not to adjudicate any perceived shortcomings of home economics’ past, but rather to bring them into conversation so that they may be addressed in the future of home economics.

Home economics is not preparing for this one thing or job, but rather these thousand other jobs. It has a breadth and depth that adds to the complexity of something that is so much more than stitching and stewing. The purpose of home economics is not to have the perfect home, but rather, to prepare its students for their everyday life after they have completed their studies, whether that be a housewife, a writer, or anything else they desire. For some populations, its purpose is to limit their full participation in the labor economy of particular historical moments. Home economics focuses on soft and transferrable skills that can be used by anyone. It’s how the people engage with home economics that makes it come alive.

The United States home economics profession was officially started in 1909 by Ellen Henrietta Swallow Richards.[8] Richards’ original thought was to create a space for white middle-class women in the workforce, and to help with

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7. Nick Tosh, “Anachronism and Retrospective Explanation: In Defence of a Present-centered History of Science,” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 34, no. 3 (2003): 653.

8. Emma S. Weigley, “It Might Have Been Euthenics: The Lake Placid Conferences and the Home Economics Movement,” *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1974): 96.

the living conditions of the time. When Richards released her work, entitled *Euthenics: The Science of the Controllable Environment,* she was hoping to help with current living conditions in the United States, as well as serving as a catalyst for the study of sanitation chemistry. Prior to the release of *Euthenics,* and the founding of the American Home Economics Association, Richards was involved in the Lake Placid Conferences. This was a series of ten meetings that occurred between 1899 and 1908.[9] The reason for the conferences was that "the trustees of the Lake Placid Club at Morningside N.Y., believing that the time was ripe for some united action on the part of those most interested in home science, or household economics, sent out invitations to a conference on this important sociologic problem."[10] Richards, along with other supporters of women's education, founded the American Home Economics Association in 1909.[11]

Since the Lake Placid conferences, the field of home economics has evolved and grown past the original vision. Modern home economics is now comprised of six fields: Human Development, Financial Literacy, Interior Design,

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9. American Home Economics Association, *Lake Placid Conference Proceedings,* Albert R. Mann Library. 2018. Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition and History (HEARTH). Ithaca, NY: Albert R. Mann Library, Cornell University.

10. American Home Economics Association, *History and Outline of First Conference,* Albert R. Mann Library. 2018. Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition and History (HEARTH). Ithaca, NY: Albert R. Mann Library, Cornell University.

11. Emma S. Weigley, "It Might Have Been Euthenics: The Lake Placid Conferences and the Home Economics Movement," *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1974): 96.

Food Science and Nutrition, Textiles and Apparel, and Consumer Education.[12] This was not always the case; home economics started out with fewer cognate areas, and slowly added more as the field continued to develop. In the 1990s, right before the name change, there was discussion within the field over where it should go and what the purpose was. There was a sizable movement to focus on the home and how it affects society. Dr. Marian Davis, in her piece, *Unity and Identity* (released the year before the official name change), calls home economics

> an 'applied anthropology' as its applications help the family and society meet the basic human needs of its members and continue a culture from one generation to the next. When anthropology examines a culture, the areas that yield the most basic significant information about a culture are those which make up home economics. Its child rearing, food habits, patterns of using resources; its clothing, housing, furnishings, living patterns, division of labor, family member hierarchies, kinship patterns, family relations, and management styles; its family-based ceremonies celebrating passages through life – pregnancy, birth, childhoods, adolescence, marriage, and death. Hence, home economics is closely intertwined with other professions of human studies, and the subject matter often provides a basis for understanding other fields.[13]

For Davis, home economics was more than just schooling girls to be perfect housewives, party planners, and mothers. It went back to the roots of the field. For her it was important to divide between the reality of home economics, and the perception that was created during the 1940s and 1950s that still persists today. Davis argues that "home economics is a developmental, applied profession. It is

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12. "Frequently Asked Questions," American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences [AAFCS] webpage, accessed March 18, 2019, https://www.aafcs.org/about/about-us/faqs/ .

13. Marian Davis, "Perspectives on Home Economics: Unity and Identity," *The Journal of Home Economics* 85 no. 4 (1993): 29.

founded on the natural and social sciences and research, including both theory and practice."[14] Davis emphasizes that we need to be turning away from the notions and images that have been ingrained into our heads from media and society about what home economics is and does. It is a profession of caring for others and is full of academic rigor, just like any of the other fields and departments across the university.

During 1993, the areas of home economics were "Child Development and Parenting, Family Development, Food and Nutrition, Family Economics and Resource Management, Home Management, Housing, Furnishing and Equipment, and Clothing and Textiles."[15] These were areas that were part of the home economics movement, and others were part of the movement that became the human ecology/human sciences movement. Davis provides the following definitions for home economics at the time

> Home economics is an applied profession which integrates the basic, related and universal human development needs (physical health needs internally and in the external near environment, and behavioral needs of nurturance, relationships, and management); and recognizing these components as interacting means to an end purpose of optimal human development. Should further elaboration be desired: Based on the natural and social sciences, home economics promotes optimum human development environments and prevents negative conditions that grow into social, economic, and political problems. Its component specialties combine into one profession to reflect those combined areas fundamental to individual, family, and social well-being, the realities of daily living, and the cooperation of versatility and specialization.[16]

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14. Ibid., 31.

15. Ibid., 27.

16. Ibid., 27.

This definition comes from a rooted experience of the field in the immediate years preceding the name change. Megan Elias touches on the historical importance of home economics, and the effect it has had on our culture in the United States. These effects are seen starting in the 1950s and lasting until the 1990s. Elias notes that "historians of home economics write about the transformation of rural life, nutrition, interior space, consumer society, education, human development, marriage, gender, and social control, among many other subjects."[17] There were various subfields of home economics that all have different traditions and outside areas that they pull from, but they are all rooted in a "focus on self-reliance through education."[18] So even though home economics is comprised of many different sub-fields and specialties, they still all come together to make one field of knowledge and change while also working independently.

One of the main fields of home economics at its founding was sanitation chemistry; from there, other topics were introduced throughout the course of its lifetime.[19] By the 1920s, typical courses in home economics would range from home nursing, to home management, to consumer budgeting and shopping. The heyday of home economics occurred around the 1950s, and this is where many of the stereotypical assumptions come from. During this time, the courses had taken

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17. Megan Elias, "No Place Like Home: A Survey of American Home Economics History," *History Compass* 9, no. 1 (2011): 97.

18. Ibid., 98.

19. Sharon Nickols and Gwen Kay, eds. *Remaking Home Economics: Resourcefulness and Innovation in Changing Times.* Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. 2015.

out certain aspects and focused on training young girls to become mothers and wives. Each topic focused on how to be more in the home and to make sure that everything was prim and proper.[20]

Interest grew in the field of home economics, which allowed course offerings and topics to expand. These courses served dual purposes within the university and society at large. While they educated women and gave them an opportunity to work outside of the home and other areas reserved for them. they also served as a space to uphold the image of white women by which students would be evaluated. If a student did not adhere to this image, then she was directly or indirectly affected by what was occurring in the school. This could be from the way girls were trained and what education was available to them, to the education being offered at the university upholding the norms of society as it continued to educate. Even though it can come from good intentions, there was harm being done to others, which is still occurring in the present. So, while the field still works to further its mission, it needs to be aware of the dangers of what it has done so that they are not repeated.

Sources and Methodology

wd Kliebard states, "Much of the value of studying the history of education lies not in providing us with answers, but in daring us to challenge the questions and the assumptions that our intellectual forebears have bequeathed to us. The key problem, often, is not to find an answer to a question but to get past

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20. Megan Elias, *Stir It Up: Home Economics in American Culture.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

it."[21] For me, this is one of the key elements of this study. My goal is not to provide a singular solution that fixes all of the problems within home economics, or even write one narrative. Rather, it is to flesh out some of these problems that we have seen happen historically so that the field can collectively address them. When Kliebard's purpose of the history of education is partnered with Wanda Pillow's notion of working with populations and not on, then we are able to take a step towards including the stories and voices of those previously left out in the right way. [22]

It is important to use Kliebard and Pillow's framework together so that we are incorporating all into the stories and experiences that we choose to share as scholars. This way, when we are challenging the questions and assumptions that have been ingrained into the master narrative, we can reinsert the voices of the disenfranchised populations that have been harmed by exclusion and erasure in the past. This is a compounded issue within the field of home economics that needs to be addressed within the field and will be a forethought in this study. Home economics was a field and place for women, created by mostly women. Women have been a historically othered population, particularly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when home economics was being formed. We need to remember, however, that the mainstream home economics that we know today

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21. Herbert Kliebard, "Why History of Education?" *The Journal of Educational Research* 88, no. 4 (1995): 194.

22. Wanda Pillow, "Confessions, Catharsis, or Cure? Rethinking the Uses of Reflexivity as Methodological Power in Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Studies in Education* 16, no. 2 (2003): 179.

was created and shaped by white women. Home economics looked very different for women of color. Many times, the actions, discoveries, and moves made by women of color within home economics was taken or discredited as less than by the white women of the field. While home economics served as a haven for women, it was not for all women. Women of color's experiences differed from white women's.[23] Home economics saw many developments by women of color that were not always acknowledged or would have the credit taken by their white counterparts.

In order for this project to serve its purpose, we must use these notions in concert with each other in order to provide a social history that is aware and conscious of itself. Instead of revising history and continuing to erase the past, I will be reinserting these experiences into the narrative so that we can see the history as it happened. This is how Pillow's and Kliebard's notions fit together as a framework. Instead of answering a static question posed about home economics at the university, or even home economics in general, a historical approach allows me to explore the experiences of the School of Home Economics while placing it in conversation with larger moments that occurred throughout the school's history.

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23. For more on the on the differing and compounded experiences of women of color, please refer to Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989) Vol. 1989, Article 8.

Being mindful of the voices that are included in this project is a key aspect that must be carried out through its entirety. These voices are people's stories, people's lives. When working with history, we are handling the lives of people. Sometimes these stories are the only things that are left of their lives, of their memories. We cannot work on people and separate their stories from their lived experiences.[24] This type of work and lens discounts entire portions of their story and their experience from existence and acts as another way to erase and other these voices so that the master narrative stays the same.

To gain a more detailed understanding of the experience and lives of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma, a curriculum history will be embedded within the educational history of this space. "This history of the present is also to understand the ironies and paradoxes of pedagogy" which is a "practice of the social administration of the individual."[25] As Popkewitz refers to, understanding the curriculum history allows us to comprehend the educative process that both the faculty and students engaged in. It fills in the picture and allows reasoning to be added to certain decisions or meaning to certain actions that were taken in part of the educational journey that the school embarked on. An example of this from the School of Home Economics is the journey and evolution

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24. Wanda Pillow, "Confessions, Catharsis, or Cure? Rethinking the Uses of Reflexivity as Methodological Power in Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Studies in Education* 16, no. 2 (2003): 179.

25. Thomas Popkewitz, "Dewey, Vygotsky, and the Social Administration of the Individual: Constructivist Pedagogy as Systems of Ideas in Historical Spaces," *American Educational Research Journal* 35, no. 4 (1998): 536.

of the practice home within the school. A practice house played an important part in the home economics curriculum in universities across the nation. Practice homes would have roles and duties that the students who were staying there needed to complete.[26] What was included changed over time. For example, at one point, teaching modules included the use of live 'practice babies' in some of the practice homes across the nation.[27] Regardless of the time of the practice homes, the content learned there helped to shape students as future home economists. Leinaweaver notes that practice homes were "a critical site at which babies and children are deployed by women in order to construct and constitute their feminine identities and practices."[28] Practice homes played an important part in reinforcing the image of white women that the school had. This reinforcement played a large part in not perpetuating these ideals, but also allowing systemic oppressive ideologies to exist. As they were not only renewed in that one student, but they also permeated into future students that the one home economics major would have.

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26. Beverly Beauchamp, *Coeds Have Complete Run of House, Receive Practical On-the-Job Training,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folder 4 Publicity Files, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

27. "Practice Apartments," *What was Home Economics? From Domesticity to Modernity.* Albert R. Mann Library. 2019. Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition and History (HEARTH). Ithaca, NY: Albert R. Mann Library, Cornell University. http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/homeEc/cases/apartments.html

28. Jessaca B. Leinaweaver, "Practice Mothers," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society,* 38, no. 2 (2013): 406.

Within educational and curriculum histories, the issues of gender and the image of white, heterosexual, cis women will be explored. Home economics at its core is a highly gendered space and this aspect needs to be placed into conversation with its history. When conceptualizing gender, Butler refers to, "Gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceeded; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time–an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts.*"[29] Gender is a social construct that is tethered with the image of woman and the tenets of the gender that our society has created. Many of the tenets and the stylized acts that Butler refers to can be found in the home economics curriculum and educative experience. This experience is part of the journey but must also be looked at separately and how it changed over the course of the School of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma.

The image of the white, heterosexual woman is made up of multiple things that are both tangible and intangible. "It tends to reinforce precisely the binary, heterosexist framework that carves up genders into masculine and feminine and forecloses an adequate description of the kinds of subversive and parodic convergences that characterize gay and lesbian cultures."[30] This is something that is enshrined within American society, the notion that there is the ideal and the

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29. Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 519.

30. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity,* (New York: Routledge, 2011) 90.

ideal woman, and nothing else. These constructs are idolized in our society and funnel down to our educational practices through multiple means. “One is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman.”[31] These are things that we can find embedded in the educative process of the university, and within home economics curriculum.

Keeping all of these notions and frameworks in mind while carrying out this project, the following questions will be the guide for this study.

- Home economics is a highly gendered field, playing into key aspects of American gender roles. How did the home economics curriculum at the University of Oklahoma play into constructing this image of the white woman, and what did this image look like? How was this image reinforced by the curriculum and educational practices of the school?

The main method that will be utilized in this study is documentary research of artifacts. In this type of research, we have primary and secondary sources to complete the analysis of history. Marwick defines these types of sources as “the distinction is one of nature—primary sources were created within the period studied, secondary sources are produced later, by historians studying that earlier period and making use of the primary sources created within it.”[32] Both of these

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31. Simone de Beauvior, *Second Sex,* (New York: Vintage Books, 2009) 283.

32. Arthur Marwick, *The New Nature of History: Knowledge, Evidence, Language,* (Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books, 2001), 156.

types of sources will be used in this study. Primary sources will be the main artifacts in this study. McCulloch says this about primary sources,

> Manuscript materials held in archives and private collections would occupy the first level of the hierarchy of primary documentary sources, followed at the next level by published pamphlets, periodicals, government reports and reports of parliamentary debates which can be located in a university library or reading room. In this sense, unpublished and relatively inaccessible documents appear to carry greater intrinsic worth to the historical research than published documents that are widely available.[33]

These two distinctions of the types of artifacts that will be analyzed allow us the space to utilize the archives to tell a story. With primary sources, the historian is able to see the story unfold, and the secondary sources help to sharpen the image by providing background details, interpretations, and possible missing links or information. The narrative of the story is carried through the primary sources.

A large portion of the primary sources for this study comes from the university archives housed at the Western History Collection. The School of Home Economics files are housed within the College of Arts and Sciences archive. These files contain items from the personal and professional lives of faculty, staff, and students at the school. Specific items include syllabi, research notes compiled by faculty, and marketing materials used to recruit students. These are just some of the items in the collection. This collection will give a detailed insight into the inner workings of the school and how the faculty operated within the profession of home economics as it adapted over time. The next set of primary source documents comes from the collections of university presidents during the

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33. Gary McCulloch, *Documentary Research: In Education, History, and the Social Sciences,* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 31.

years that the school was in operation. These documents allow us to see how forces outside of the school and within the university impacted the work of the faculty and students. We will also be able to see how home economics at the university changed from president to president, and not just year to year.

Purpose of the Study

Home economics is frequently a forgotten or misunderstood subject; and its history is often erased or revised when included in educational or social history. The purpose of this project is to identify the role that the School of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma had in the overarching conversations and field of home economics, and the impact it had on the image of white woman. It must be stated that this project deals solely with white women as the university was not a welcoming place for Black and Brown women. The fact that the school was able to exist at all was at the cost of excluding Black and Brown women so that white students could engage with home economics. While it is not a perfect history, we need to be aware of the full narrative and history of what happened, and who was included, in order to understand home economics' role in the master narrative.

This dissertation will serve as a curriculum history of the School of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma. Centering this narrative is identifying the role that home economics education played in educating white women at the University of Oklahoma. The school provided an opportunity for white women that at the same time perpetuated notions of patriarchy, division of wealth and status, and othering of populations. This relationship is not explored fully within

the field of home economics and family and consumer sciences. This project aims to reinsert the school into the larger narrative of the university, while also exploring its place within history and how it navigated these spaces.

My hope is that this work helps with the missing pieces of the story and is a step towards challenging some of the current assumptions and misconceptions that revolve around the world of home economics, serving as a historical examination of curriculum and the educative experience. Traditions from curriculum studies will be utilized to garner the curriculum history of the School of Home Economics and place it into conversation with the educative process of the University of Oklahoma. In the end, the goal of this project is to be a complete educational history of the school.

Historiography

Home economics in the United States was officially founded in 1909 with the formation of the American Home Economics Association (AHEA).[34] However, home economics had been around for quite some time in one form or another before its official establishment. The vision of home economics was created by the attendees of the Lake Placid conferences. What came from this conference was an ideal of a specific type of person. The attendees were concerned with the growing need for the education of women.[35] The problem is that it was only the education of white women that they were focused on.

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34. Keturah E. Baldwin, *The AHEA Saga* (Washington: American Home Economics Association, 1949), 21.

35. American Home Economics Association, *Lake Placid Conference Proceedings* (Washington: American Home Economics Association, 1908), *Fifth*

Training in home economics started before the formation of the AHEA in 1909, but went by various names before this point. Formal training could be found in the early 1800s. The start of home economics that is portrayed in media and meant for white women can be traced back to Catherine Beecher.[36] Beecher published *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* in 1841, and *Domestic Recipe Book* in 1842. Both of these works were used as training manuals for women and the start of a home economics textbook repertoire.[37] In 1869, Beecher, along with her sister, Harriett Beecher Stowe, published *American Woman's Home.* This book contained a proposed model of how the home should be planned, staged, and run, further extending Beecher's formation of a foundation for home economics. Beecher even had more direct ties into future home economics curriculum. "Especially striking was the plan outlined for 'practice houses' or house laboratories, in connection with the domestic economy departments in the projected professional schools… It incorporates an idea which our college departments of Home Economics are now eagerly championing as the next step

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Conference Proceedings, p. 34-35; *Sixth Conference Proceedings* p. 26; *Eighth Conference Proceedings* p. 88; *Tenth Conference Proceedings* p. 161-163. Albert R. Mann Library. 2003. Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition and History (HEARTH). Ithaca, NY: Albert R. Mann Library, Cornell University. http://hearth.library.cornell.edu (Version January 2003).

36. Emma S. Weigley, "It Might Have Been Euthenics: The Lake Placid Conferences and the Home Economics Movement," *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1974): 79.

37. Keturah E. Baldwin, *The AHEA Saga* (Washington: American Home Economics Association, 1949), 3.

to-day in methods of instruction."[38] These practice homes became a staple in collegiate home economics education, with numerous homes existing in programs across the United States in the first half of the 20th century.

Precursor to Home Economics

The beginning of home economics for white women can be found in the era of domestic economy. Catherine Beecher is one of the prominent leaders of this era. Beecher published many works that would later be viewed as the first textbooks for domestic arts or home economics courses.[39] Domestic economy was a mixture of practical and moral education that has some tenets that can be found in the Cult of True Womanhood, and is grounded in Christianity beliefs and education. Beecher was an advocate for the education of young girls, particularly in domesticity.

> Another reason for introducing such a subject as a distinct branch of school education, is, that, as a general fact, young ladies will not be taught these things in any other way. In reply to the thousand-times-repeated remark, that girls must be taught their domestic duties by their mothers, at home, it may be inquired, in the first place, what proportion of mothers are qualified to teach a proper and complete system of Domestic Economy?[40]

Beecher believed it was imperative that we teach young girls how to care for the home and raise the family, because it was only the woman who could properly

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38. Benjamin R. Andrews, "Miss Catherine E. Beecher: The Pioneer of Home Economics," *The Journal of Home Economics* 4, no. 3 (1912): 220.

39. Keturah E. Baldwin, *The AHEA Saga* (Washington: American Home Economics Association, 1949), 3.

40. Catherine Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy: For the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School,* (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform 2015), 65.

raise the children to fulfill their roles in our society. It was a ripple effect that starts with the women properly educated in domesticity, morality, and spirituality that allowed for our society to be created in the way that it should be. Beecher talks about the role of women in the home and in the United States. It is interesting to see her stance on the equality of men and women: "It appears, then, that it is in America, alone, that women are raised to an equality with the other sex; and that, both in theory and practice, their interests are regarded as of equal value."[41] For Beecher, the work of women raising young boys into men and the leaders they were to become was so important that she saw women and men as equals. To her, domesticity was so important and vital that she believed that democracy and democratic institutions would fall without it.[42]

Beyond the work of Catherine Beecher and before the founding of the American Home Economics Association, we see the transitional field of Domestic Arts & Sciences emerge. This era had strong foundations in Beecher's work, with the main difference being the absence of the Christian education element. Practical skills in the areas of cooking, cleaning, sewing and textiles, and home management were taught. This was paired with the previous notion and the True Womanhood movement of the time that the ability to carry out these tasks fed into identity as a proper woman. True Womanhood is described by Barbara Welters as

> The attributes of True Womanhood, by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbors and society could be divided into four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity.

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41. Ibid., 33.

42. Ibid., 36.

> Put them all together and they spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife—woman. Without them, no matter whether there was fame, achievement or wealth, all was ashes. With them she promised happiness and power.[43]

Domesticity was a precipice for the image of women, and how they operated within society. A woman's ability to carry out these tasks well was a way for the woman to control her image in the eyes of others; this is when training in this area was sought by white women outside of seminaries to achieve their goal. Mary Brooks Picken was one of the leaders of this era of home economics. She founded the Woman's Institute of Domestic Arts and Sciences and authored many textbooks and instructional materials related to design, sewing, and fabric. Many departments or schools of home economics were first founded as departments of Domestic Arts and Sciences and would keep the name until the 1920s, when they started to switch over to home economics. Domestic Arts is also found in other countries, and Jill Matthews notes that we started to see Domestic Arts within compulsory education in Southern Australia in 1900.[44]

During this era is when the rise of Euthenics started stemming from the work of Domestic Arts. Euthenics focused on the science behind domesticity or the lived environment. Ellen Richards was a trained chemist who focused on sanitation chemistry. Her work laid the groundwork for modern sanitation practices and created some of the first standards and methods of treating water

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43. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1966): 152.

44. Jill Matthews, "Education for Femininity: Domestic Arts Education in South Australia," *Labour History* no. 45 (1983): 33.

and sewage.[45] Her research started to focus on the home and how to have more effective and efficient means of caring for the home and family. This is when her 1882 book *The Chemistry of Cooking and Cleaning: A Manual for Housekeepers* was published. To continue her passion on the subject, she helped to establish model or public kitchens that spread to multiple cities in the Northeastern United States.[46] The goal of the kitchens was to help the lower and middle classes learn about better eating, cooking, and food sanitation habits by providing meals at costs of the ingredients.

The public kitchens became popular with philanthropists who were viewing this as a new approach to charity that did more than just giving out items for free; it addressed a need while providing an educational base for future improvements.[47] The kitchens had a major flaw, though: they were not resonating with and drawing out the lower-class populations that they were targeting. This was for multiple reasons, from not addressing the taste and cultural backgrounds or needs of the groups, to the people having already found a cheaper way to eat within their means, with which the kitchens could not compete.[48] Eventually, the public kitchens were abandoned, and Richards moved on to continue her research

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45. "Ellen H. Swallow Richards," Science History Institute, accessed June 15, 2019, https://www.sciencehistory.org/historical-profile/ellen-h-swallow-richards

46. Harvey Levenstein, "The New England Kitchen and the Origins of Modern American Eating Habits," *American Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (1980): 374.

47. Ibid., 377.

48. Ibid., 379.

that comprises *Euthenics, the Science of Controllable Environment* including improvements to what was found out during the public kitchens. Euthenics was Richards' way of contesting with the eugenics movement. Many supporters of the eugenics movement believed that eugenics would lead to better lives because the genetics of nobility and the upper class was why their members lived better lives. Richards and euthenics discussed the controllable environment and argued that it was through the act of better sanitation and hygiene that the nobility was living better lives. Therefore, it would be faster and a more desirable outcome to all if we just controlled the environment around us to make ourselves healthier.[49]

Richards' work and passion that areas of domesticity education be shared with the world led her to be an integral player in the Lake Placid Conferences. The Lake Placid Conferences was a series of conferences between 1899 and 1908 where members discussed a variety of topics related to women's education that eventually led to the formation of home economics.[50] The conferences were led by Ellen Richards and had attendees from varying backgrounds who were interested in the subject. The first of the conferences was focused on gathering information and support for the education of women and expanding the role of

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49. Ellen H. Richards, *Euthenics, the Sciences of Controllable Environment: A Plea for Better Living Conditions as a First Step Toward Higher Human Efficiency,* (Boston, MA: Whitcomb & Barros, 1910), 8.

50. "Was Home Economics a Profession?" *What Was Home Economics? From Domesticity to Modernity,* Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition and History (HEARTH). Ithaca, NY: Albert R. Mann Library, Cornell. University, accessed June 15, 2019 https://rmc.library.cornell.edu/homeEc/cases/profession.html

women. Over the series of conferences, this became the groundwork of the home economics field, where attendees discussed what would be included in the curriculum, where it was to be taught, and what to call the professionals and the field itself.[51] This is what the attendees of the conference finally decided on for a definition of home economics:

> The ideal home life for to-day unhampered by the traditions of the past.
> The utilization of all of the resources of modern sciences to improve the home life.
> The freedom of the home from the dominance of things and their due subordination to ideals.
> The simplicity in material surroundings which will most free the spirit for the more important and permanent interests of the home and of society.[52]

The Lake Placid Conferences established the framework for home economics and how to help the field become established and grow and concluded with the formation of the American Home Economics Association (AHEA) and the first research journal for the new field.[53]

After the Lake Placid Conferences, home economics began to spread rapidly throughout the United States. Universities began to implement short

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51. Emma S Weigley, "It Might Have Been Euthenics: The Lake Placid Conferences and the Home Economics Movement," *American Quarterly* 26 no. 1 (1974): 85.

52. *Sixth Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics Proceedings,* p. *5*; *AHEA Creed* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics Collection, Box 2, Folder 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

53. Emma S Weigley, "It Might Have Been Euthenics: The Lake Placid Conferences and the Home Economics Movement," *American Quarterly* 26 no. 1 (1974): 86.

courses, full programs, and outreach initiatives that involved both the university students and the community. This was further spread by the passage of the 1914 Smith-Lever Act, which established the cooperative extension programs of land-grant universities that received funding to help promote and educate community members.[54] There was a period after the conferences where university programs were still going under the name of Domestic Arts and Sciences, but by the 1920s, almost all programs were known as home economics. This is where the School of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma comes in. The school started as select Domestic Science and Art courses in 1914, and quickly gained courses and faculty members.[55] The school was officially recognized as the School of Home Economics in 1927, with Dr. Helen Burton serving as the first director of the school.[56]

Counter Spaces

While the School of Home Economics did make some great strides in creating opportunities for women outside of the home. This was only for white

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54. United States, Department of Agriculture, States Relations Service, *Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, 1916,* H.doc.611/2, Washington: [s.n], 1917.

55. *Announcement of Courses in Domestic Art and Science,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

56. *History of Home Ec. And Directors since 1915,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics Collection, Box 2, Folder 2, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

women as the school was not a welcoming space for Black and Brown women to come and study. In fact, the town of Norman, where the university is situated, was still a sundown town until 1967.[57] While the School of Home Economics did not have any overtly racist policies, it did play a role in the exclusion of certain students based on their racial backgrounds and thereby contributed to the systemic racist structures at the university. The school also had exclusionary practices based on how it interacted with students, the types of socialization that occurred within its educational process, as well as the types of careers or womanhood that it catered to as it was white womanhood that the school pandered to. While there were spaces for Black and Brown women to engage with home economics, this certainly was not one of them as its existence was based on the cost of excluding Black and Brown students so that white women could study a version of home economics that offered them opportunities not allowed to other or othered women. These are just some of the stories of Black and Brown women who were able to study and engage with home economics in other spaces. This was a very different home economics than that of the white home economics found at the University of Oklahoma, and at times came from a place of servitude that was not seen in the white home economics that was a choice and sometimes a sign of power of status for white women.

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57. Michael S. Givel, "Sundown on the Prairie: The Extralegal Campaigns and Efforts from 1889 to 1967 to Exclude African Americans from Norman, Oklahoma," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* XCVI, no. 3 (2018): 264.

While home economics has been a field that has created opportunities and produced positive changes in our society, it has also added to the othering of Black and Brown people when you look throughout the history of the movement and field. For example, at the Hampton Institute students were taught the "ethic of routined hard labor and in occupations prescribed for Black women in the South,"[58] as well as in the outing system where female students were restricted to domestic courses before working in the homes of surrounding white families at the federal Indian boarding schools.[59] This once again highlights the differences between home economics for white women, and what it meant for Black and Brown women. Instead of reaffirming their femininity and identity, Indigenous women who attended the federal boarding schools had a relationship with practice homes that aided the erasure of their cultural identity and helped to create a new one that sought to move them into the role of subservient domestic workers in the homes of white families. In Brenda Child's work on the history of boarding schools, where she articulated the relationship that students had with part of the domestic science training: "Indian girls seldom had much enthusiasm for the outing program and its servitude."[60] Indian families and communities did not just accept handing over their children to the oppressive government structures that

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58. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935,* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 56.

59. Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940,* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press 2000), 70-71.

60. Ibid., 1.

sought to 'civilize' tribes by stripping away their cultural identity through the federal boarding school program. Childs speaks of the steadfastness of these communities when "Hopi children were taught by their parents to play a game similar to 'hide and seek' to avoid the police."[61] These feelings and resistance was not unique to just one tribe or community.

Catherine Beecher's work was not the only place where home economics could be seen before the formation of the AHEA. Domestic training was part of the vocational training for people of color, particularly women. We see formal domestic training as part of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. The Institute was founded in 1868 and provided vocational or manual training to the Black population in the south.[62] As Anderson states, "Armstrong developed a pedagogy and ideology designed to avoid such confrontations and to maintain within the South a social consensus that did not challenge traditional inequalities of wealth and power."[63] One of the main focuses of the Institute was labor, even for those in non-vocational programs. Women who were students in the teacher preparation program learned to sew and cook in order to learn "the ethic of routinized hard labor and in occupations prescribed for black women in the South."[64]

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61. Ibid., 13.

62. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935,* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988, 33.

63. Ibid., 33.

64. Ibid., 56.

The Hampton Institute was not the only place of training for Black communities where you could find domestic skills being taught, with a large number of educational centers for Black individuals, including at least some form of domestic training. This description of courses being offered at Tuskegee in 1901 allows us to see the type of courses available to women. "Among the industries taught only to the young women were mattress making, plain sewing, dressmaking and millinery, cooking, laundry and general housekeeping. Training in general housework was a requirement for all women students."[65] All of these specific courses are all components of what would become home economics. These courses were offered throughout the institution's history, and remnants are still available in the modern-day Tuskegee University. Burley notes of Tuskegee that "for educators of African American women, education for beautifying and maintaining the home was vital to race uplift."[66] Burley goes on to share an incident when a white housewife from Mobile, Alabama had written to Booker T. Washington "if it was true that he had informed a previous requestor for cooks and housemaids that Tuskegee's women were trained to become wives and mothers and not for service."[67]

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65. Max Bennett Thrasher, *Tuskegee; Its Story and Its Work,* (Boston, MA: Small, Maynard, 1901, Reprint New York, NY: Negro Universities Press 1969), 98.

66. Laurita Mack Burley, "Reconceptualizing Profession: African American Women and Dietetics at Tuskegee Institute, 1936-1954" (PhD diss., Georgia State University, 2005), 94.

67. Ibid., 95.

While Washington focused on ways to improve the lives of the Black population in the United States, and overall lift up the race, not every school shared this view, and it was not localized to just the Black population. Home economics and domestic sciences were also found in the boarding schools for Native Americans. Flandreau even introduced its own version of the of the practice homes that come from the vision of Catherine Beecher. These practice cottages were started at Flandreau and other boarding schools so that students at the schools could experience domestic life and their future roles while practicing the skills they had learned.[68] While the home economics programs at the boarding schools prepared the students to raise their own families when they left, it also prepared them for other roles that they would have in American society. "Indian students in government boarding schools were constantly bombarded with the notion that they were best suited for menial labor. This message was reinforced daily in classroom lessons, by limited vocational training, and during endless hours of labor in the gardens, dairies, kitchens, and laundries of the schools."[69] This was also reiterated through the outing program. In this program, students were able to go out into the local communities around the boarding schools, either during the summer or sometimes during the school year, and work with the vocational skills that they were learning at the school.[70] The government boarding

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68. Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940,* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press 2000, 80-81.

69. Ibid., 81.

70. Ibid., 82.

schools had a distinct purpose for Native American students that attended them, and home economics was one of the tools that helped to achieve this purpose.

Home economics for people of color has a very different meaning and history than the home economics that was designed for white women, that was perpetuated in the media and societal norms. The main difference was how it was intended for the students to use these skills and the knowledge acquired from their experience with the curriculum. For students of a white middle-class background, it meant that they were learning how to manage their own homes, families, and expectations to fit in with what society pictured for them. For People of color, it meant learning how to care for their own families while also caring for other families, or to put the needs of another family ahead of their own.

The differences between home economics for whites, and home economics for othered populations, is addressed again by Burley. Burley talks about the differences that women experienced in their education and how it was compounded through the history of slavery in the United States, and was still carried by present-day Black women.[71] Burley brings in Booker T. Washington's thoughts towards race uplift through education and this quote from Jacqueline Jones.

> Black women's work took place within two distinct spheres that were at the same time mutually reinforcing and antagonistic. One workplace was centered in their own homes and communities, the locus of family feeling. Beginning in the slave era, the family obligation of wives and mothers overlapped in the area of community welfare, as their desire to nurture

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71. Laurita Mack Burley, "Reconceptualizing Profession: African American Women and Dietetics at Tuskegee Institute, 1936-1954" (PhD diss., Georgia State University, 2005), 89.

> their own kin expanded out of the private realm and into public activities that advanced the interests of black people as a group. In contrast to this type of work, which earned for black women the respect of their own people, participation in the paid labor force (or slave economy) reinforced their subordinate status as women and as blacks within American society.[72]

These are just a few of the examples to illustrate how different the lived experience was for white students who chose to study home economics, and how it was mandated by either policies or cultural histories of othered populations. This is important to keep in mind as we continue to revisit the story of the School of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma. The students who attended the school, especially in the first half of the school's history, chose this path from the multiple options available to them. While they had limitations placed on them because of their gender, they still had privilege and a different experience from othered populations.

Layout of Chapters

This dissertation serves to historicize the experience of the School of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma. In the introduction, we start with the emergence of home economics and the events leading to the movement. In the 1800s, we see domestic economy starting to be talked about and an emphasis placed on more efficient measures for managing and caring for the home. At the same time, we see the events leading to the formation of the

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72. Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present,* (New York, NY: Vintage Books 1985), 3.

University of Oklahoma and statehood. After being acclimated to Oklahoma, we are able to start looking at home economics at the University of Oklahoma and the journey of the school. Through this journey, we see what home economics meant within this particular space and the ideologies that were conceptualized. We end on the precipice looking over what has happened and where it is going.

The chapters are organized by breaking down the curriculum history of the school into the specific thematic experiences that are being examined in that chapter. This organization allows for the experiences to be viewed with an individualized, detailed lens on the separate components of the entire lived experience of students and faculty of the school. This approach also disrupts the notion of time existing in a linear fashion, so that the past lived experiences can be brought into discussion with current experiences.

The first two chapters after the introduction will focus on the curriculum history of the school, rooted in the stated curriculum of the school, stemming from the syllabi, lecture notes, and course descriptions throughout the time of the school. Throughout these chapters, we see the progression and development of the aims and mission of the school through the perspective of the faculty members. The development of the field as a whole can be isolated at the University of Oklahoma and compared to other universities throughout the country in future studies. The curriculum history also includes the examples of student work that have survived throughout the years. Curricula for the food and fashion areas of the school are grouped together since they are the first subjects that were taught and were constantly being revised throughout the years. Human growth and

interior design were added to the school later in its history and were not always viewed as part of the home economics experience.

Meet Me at Burton Hall focuses on the physical edifices and conclaves that the school occupied. Due to the nature of the content taught in home economics courses, specialized classrooms and training facilities were needed. These facilities were important to the faculty and students of the school. The main home economics building started off as bouncing around various classroom buildings of the campus before being housed in what is now known as Burton Hall. Other facilities that were important to the school included the practice or home management house, the institute for child development, and the shadowbox store.

The last chapter delves into the relationships that were forged in home economics. These relationships were a large part of what it meant to be a student or alumna of home economics, whilst also being the reason for many of the successes of the school. These relationships were fostered by the faculty members, but students and alumnae actively engaged to maintain these relationships. A strong foundation for these relationships was established over newsletters that the faculty sent out annually. Student organizations helped to connect students to each other as well as to professionals.

Chapter II

STITCHIN' & STEWIN': THE CURRICULUM OF FASHION AND FOOD

There were days when she wanted to climb to the Union Tower to tell the campus all about home economics and its importance but she had a problem—how could she do it? Where could she find some lively facts and figures that would mean something to a history major, her math professor, to her high school English teacher—to her? [1]

- Mary Warren
Professor and Chairman, School of Home Economics, the University of Oklahoma

Home economics started out at the University of Oklahoma as an offering of select courses in Domestic Arts and Sciences in 1915.[2] This was in line with other university home economics programs from that time. For comparison, Oklahoma State University (then known as Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College until 1957) offered courses on domestic economy in 1900,[3] before becoming the Division of Domestic Science in 1908.[4] During the tenure of the school, the curriculum was continuously updated, and represented the subjects

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1. Mary Warren, "Lively Facts and Figures," University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics, Box 3, Folder 2 Publicity Files, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

2. University of Oklahoma. "Announcement of Courses in Domestic Science and Art," *Quarterly Bulletin,* June 1915, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

3. Lorene Keeler-Battles, *A History of the Oklahoma State University College of Home Economics* (Stillwater, OK: Oklahoma State University, 1989), 21.

4. Ibid., 27.

found within the interdisciplinary home economics field. The subjects may have changed, but the approach that the faculty utilized was steadfast. The members of the faculty were continuously finding themselves at the intersection of the mundane and the theoretical. Having to constantly negotiate how they belonged in the university, faculty members would need to toe the line of rigorous theoretical work with practical everyday application due to the gender ideology of the content they taught.[5] This chapter focuses on two of the five home economics specialties covered by the School of Home Economics.

Food Has Always Been Political

Domestic science was one of the first strands offered within the school, and it came to be one of the last before the school was shuttered. As the coursework evolved, domestic science would become courses such as nutrition, dietetics, food science, and so on. The specific topics of courses within this strand varied; this was mostly due to this strand having the largest arena for applications among all the strands at the school. A student could be prepared to work as a registered dietitian and see patients; test recipes and equipment for corporations; run commercial kitchens in institutions such as schools or hospitals; teach students in secondary programs; and, of course, be prepared to manage the diet and food sanitation of their own family. All of these areas required different skill sets, and the school had to have the opportunity to prepare students for each arena.

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5. Megan Elias, *Stir it Up: Home Economics in American Culture* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 23.

The two most common themes to appear in courses from this strand were nutrition and food preparation. The majority of courses actually offered in the school could be divided into these two categories. However, this was not the only knowledge that students would walk away with. This is one of the examples of the crux where home economics professors found themselves: Constantly negotiating why they belonged in the university, how they were rigorous enough to belong, while also wanting to provide the practical knowledge that their field had become known for.[6] It is at this intersection of the theoretical and mundane where the professors needed to place the mooring for their courses. While theoretical aspects were taught within the school, students had to take courses in other departments in order to garner a more detailed understanding of the theories behind their content, particularly in the sciences, as well as to add rigor and prestige to their work. These courses were required for graduation and were generally made prerequisites for the upper-level coursework within the school. Some examples of this follow: For Advanced Food Preparation and Management, a student must have first taken Food Preparation as well as Chemistry I and Organic Chemistry I;[7] while Nutritional Assessment required Introduction to

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6. Ibid., 23.

7. FNCS 3623 Course Syllabus, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Nutrition, Advanced Nutrition, Organic Chemistry I, Biochemistry I, and Human Physiology from the zoology department.[8]

These courses started off as a way to prepare female students to become wives, mothers, and leaders of their households. When the coursework first started at the university, students did not major in one of the home economic specialties, or even in home economics itself; they graduated with a degree in arts and sciences with electives taken in the domestic science and art. The students had to take courses such as physics, algebra, geometry, and bacteriology. At this time, the program was geared towards "those who wish to become familiar with the general principles and facts of domestic science and domestic arts with reference to their application to homemaking; (or) those who wish to make a specialty of household economics for the purpose of teaching the subject in secondary schools."[9] During this time, students who graduated from the program were not expected to work as dietitians, nutritionists, or in any professional field other than secondary teaching. The main expectation was to become the leader of a home, either immediately after graduation, or after a short stint of teaching home economics in secondary schools.

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8. FNCS 4833 Course Syllabus, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

9. University of Oklahoma, "Announcement of Courses in Domestic Science and Art," *Quarterly Bulletin,* June 1915, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 1.

When the school first started, there were four courses in domestic sciences. These courses all dealt with the home specifically and did not delve into commercial food production or even diverse foods. There was one course on the preparation and selection of foods that also covered food safety and sanitation practices, such as food storage at different temperatures and prevention of foodborne illnesses. The other course on food preparation delved into the economic use of food and planning so that the household budget was not strained by food consumption of the family members. Dietetics was another course offered in the program that prepared its students to plan nutritious meals for the household while taking into consideration factors such as the age, sex, and activity levels of household members. This dietetic training was also partnered with the course on economic food use so that each household could have nutritious meals for its budget based on the members of the home. The last domestic science course that was offered at the founding actually focused on home nursing. This would prove vital to the future mothers, wives, and domestic leaders who took the course, since access to medical care was limited in the majority of rural Oklahoma.[10]

Between 1915 and 1929, the program went through some revisions and changes at the University. First, it was now the School of Home Economics within the College of Arts and Sciences. There was now an increased faculty, including the first with a doctoral degree, teaching a wider breadth of course

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10. Ibid., 6.

topics. As Dr. Helen Burton puts it, “Home economics training is valuable to a girl no matter what her plans are, whether she plans to teach home economics or in the grades, to manage her home, her own or that of her parents, to be a hospital dietitian, an interior decorator or ‘do nothing,’ for it teaches her to live more efficiently and more adequately.”[11] When you compare the two missions of the programs from across the years, you can see how home economics was starting to gear itself to prepare women to enter the workforce outside of the school house. This phenomenon played into what was happening culturally in the United States during the 1920s, when white women started to have freedom to work outside of the home. While the program had these options available to women who chose to partake, a woman still had the more traditional routes of teaching or becoming a housewife and managing the home.

Students still had rigorous science courses that they had to take, such as chemistry, human physiology, and bacteriology. The difference was that this time they had more choices for their major courses, being able to stack their studies with particular home economics courses that they liked.[12] We still see reference to domestic science in the course and administrative materials, and even some of the original four courses remain unaltered. Adding depth to the program were course

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11. University of Oklahoma, “School of Home Economics Announcements for 1929-1930,” *Quarterly Bulletin,* February 1929, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 13.

12. Ibid., 18.

options such as a year-long Foods course that covered the sourcing and preservation of ingredients and foodstuffs, along with composing meals.[13] Students learned techniques for handling food beyond the introduction course that would still be considered useful in everyday life, such as canning, food dehydration, and other techniques for preservation and efficient food usage to minimize food waste in the home. The advanced food course was an elective course that students could enroll in to learn about gourmet cooking methods, such as seasoning with spices and herbs and improving food quality and texture, as well as food presentation.[14]

Food preparation was not the only area that grew within the domestic sciences. The school also saw the addition of six courses in nutrition and dietetics. While some of these courses were required for all students, they mainly focused on the nutrition of the household and managing household members' diets. These other courses were created for students who wanted to work in institution management and dealt with subjects that aided in students being prepared to work in commercial settings producing large quantities of food. This included cooking en masse, specialized equipment and cooking techniques, budgeting and ordering food supplies, as well as other topics students needed to learn about to gain employment in this area.[15] It is interesting to note that courses in food and

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13. Ibid., 21.

14. Ibid., 21.

15. Ibid., 23

nutrition were the only ones from the school that could count towards one of the other degrees in the College of Arts and Sciences as long as they did not exceed twelve credit hours.[16]

Looking at the curriculum of this time, we notice that it is heavily geared towards domestic life and preparing students to manage the household, or to teach others how to manage their future homes. It is no surprise that the program is geared towards women, and the majority of enrollment was in fact women. This did not hinder men from enrolling and graduating with home economics degrees. Though they were few and far between, especially in the early years, they did find their way into the female-dominated programs. Take, for instance, John Fellers, as seen in figure 1, a senior student in the home economics program who specialized in nutrition. Fellers wanted to operate a banquet hall upon graduation and was active in the school during his time at the university. Originally an engineering major, he became the first male student within the nutrition program at the School of Home Economics, and graduated with a degree in nutrition in 1949.[17] Fellers continued to blaze trails by becoming the seventh male member of the American Dietic Association[18] and went on to a successful career in hospital dietetics and

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16. Ibid., 20.

17. "John Delphus Fellers," *Opelika Auburn News* online, July 12, 2009. https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/oanow/name/john-delphus-fellers-obituary?pid=129570298

18. American Dietetics Association, "People and Events-John Delphus Fellers, MS, RD," *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 109, no. 10 (2009): 1808.

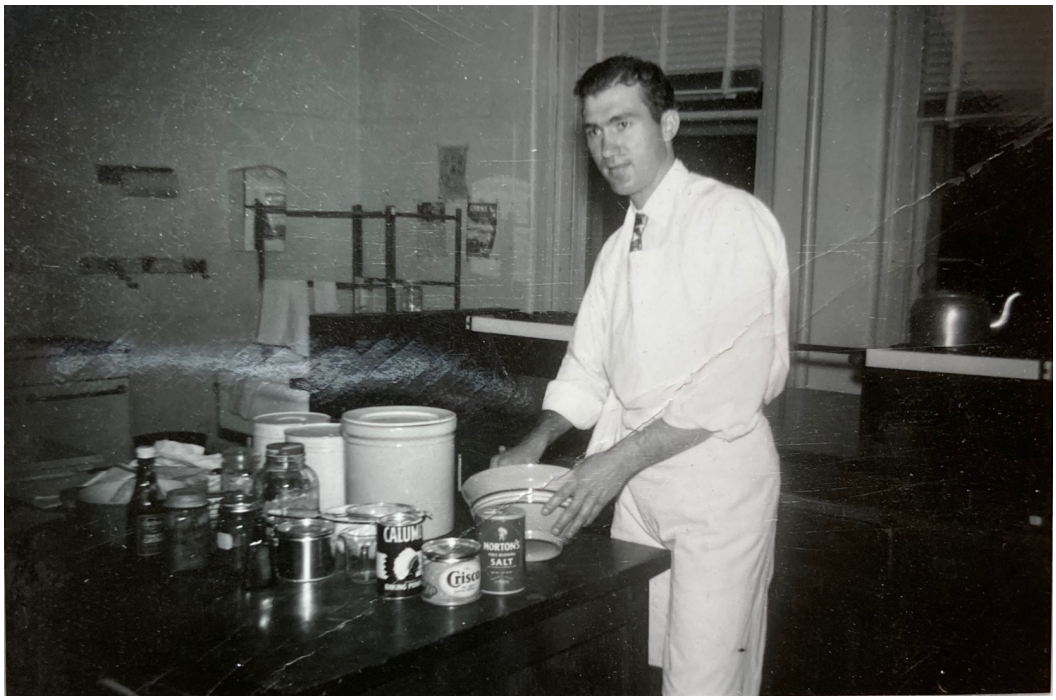

Figure 1. *John Fellers was named Omicron Nu's student of the month in 1948.* Source: Omicron Nu Scrapbook, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

institutional management. While the school remained predominately female, other male students did enroll in programs, usually the specialty ones such as nutrition, fashion, or interior design. Nutrition was also the area where the school found male faculty members in the later years.

By the 1970s the foods program evolved into multiple concentrations with topics in nutrition, dietetics, food science, and food preparation. The focus of these courses had primarily left the home and was geared towards preparing students to enter the workforce in the foods or nutrition industries. These new courses continued to find the intersection of the mundane and theoretical that had become synonymous with home economics curriculum. The new development during this time was that home economics courses were already incorporating the scientific theory that students had previously gone outside of the department to

garner. One such example was Chemistry of Nutrition; this course was taken after students had already taken elementary nutrition and introduction to chemistry. They would learn the principles and applications of organic and biochemistry in relation to human nutrition in the everyday environment they experienced. This course even used a biochemistry textbook to instruct students in the content.[19]

This time period also saw the introduction of other types of courses, as home economics programs were also able to introduce content that would have been considered less rigorous or not academic enough in the past. This change had a peculiar impact on the faculty in the area of food preparation. Previously, courses on the subject of food preparation had to come from a purely scientific viewpoint in order to be accepted in academia. Instead of focusing on the taste and quality of food, instruction had to be focused on the scientific aspects that could be controlled, such as texture, nutritional value, food efficiency, and other variables that could be tested during experimentation.[20] Now instructors could broach topics such as the taste and presentation of food. A course that demonstrates this is the Gourmet and International Foods upper-level elective that could be taken by home economics education and nutrition majors. This seminar demonstration course rotated topics such as vegetarian meals, history of cuisine,

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19. FNCS 3090/001 Syllabus, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

20. For more information on this phenomenon, please refer to the Square Meals section of the first chapter of *Stir it Up: Home Economics in American Culture* by Megan Elias.

international cooking, and specific advanced cooking techniques.[21] To see the complete progression of foods coursework at the university, please refer to the appendices for programs of study throughout the years.

Aside from the actual content of the courses, the methods of instruction employed in foods courses within the home economics program provide valuable perceptions on the educative norms. The foods courses drew on insights from the scientific core that students had to complete in order to graduate. For food preparation, this was mainly chemistry, bacteriology, and botany. This provided a knowledge base from which students would draw to understand the importance of food safety, what ingredients were edible to humans, and how to have these ingredients interact safely with each other. Students did not only need to understand that germs existed in the world; they also needed to know how to properly sanitize kitchen equipment so that foodborne illnesses were curbed. During times of economic hardship, either the families' own or during times of national economic crisis such as the Great Depression, families would come to depend upon food preservation techniques and efficient usage of foodstuffs. These all have a strong backing in the sciences, because one will need to know how to prevent bacteria from causing food to spoil, which parts of the plants that you grow are edible to reduce food waste, and at what different internal temperatures foodstuffs need to be cooked so that they are safe to consume.

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21. FNCS 3090/060 Syllabus, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Students learned techniques and how to apply this knowledge to hands-on demonstrations and laboratory coursework throughout their program.

Faculty members would plan instruction on the assumption that this background knowledge was attained by students prior to entering their classroom. Lectures would lay out specific information from theoretical coursework before introducing the specific concept from the home economics background. They would then integrate the two so that students would see how the theory was present in their application of the knowledge. All foods courses involved either demonstrations or labs embedded into the entire course schedule. Which one of these particular methods was utilized was dependent on the content that was being taught. For the most part, food preparation courses stuck with labs where students executed specific recipes, from start to finish, that were tied into the topic of the current lecture. While introduction courses typically followed the traditional model of lab science courses where there was a lecture during specific times of the week and a separate lab on another day or time[22], advanced courses would sometimes have a modified schedule where lecture and lab were integrated and could sometimes happen fluidly.[23] This could consist of having an extended period of time for classes or lectures that occurred in one portion of one day, and

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22. FNCS 2623 Syllabus, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

students would then have the remaining time to work on their own to complete their lab assignments.[24] Students would complete these labs wholly on their own or in small groups of two to three people. They would be responsible for the entire recipe, from gathering and preparing ingredients, to cleaning and resetting the labs to how they were at the beginning of the instruction time. As part of the lab, students would be required to taste the food that was prepared, regardless of the course that they were in.

Nutrition and dietetics courses operated differently from the courses in food preparation. These courses had a stronger foundation in the lab sciences, as they were presented and would come from a more clinical approach. The introduction course in nutrition would usually be presented as a strong theoretical course relating to the lab science courses that students would have to take from other departments. It was heavy in the lecture hall, sometimes incorporating a few demonstrations to solidify the connections among chemistry, physiology, and human nutrition. This was not always the case, and depended upon the instructor, semester, and budget available to determine if that section would be solely

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23. FNCS 3742 Syllabus, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

24. FNCS 3090/060 Syllabus, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

lecture-based or have demonstrations.[25] Advanced courses in nutrition would have demonstrations, and scientific labs more embedded into the curriculum than the introductory courses. Whether the students, or solely the instructor, led the demonstration was dependent upon the specific concept being conveyed through the lab and lecture. These were sometimes short labs that existed briefly within the class period; at other times, they would encompass the entire lecture for that day.[26] Unlike the food preparation courses, where the lab was generally on or at a different day or time, the lab was fully embedded into the course so that the schedule appeared to be that of a normal lecture seminar setup. Certain nutrition courses used textbooks from other fields of study and then depended upon lectures to convey the nutritional concepts.[27]

All of the coursework that fell under the domestic science strand utilized concepts that we would now identify as an experimental learning model. Students were not just learning about abstract concepts or listening to theories that tried to explain the world around them. They were receiving a hands-on approach to

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25. FCNS 1823 Syllabus, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

26. FNCS 4823 Syllabus, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

27. FNCS 3090/001 Syllabus, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

learning concepts through Kolb's Cycle of Experiential Learning. Students would go through the four stages of the cycle when they went through their program of study. As they worked through their general education, liberal arts, and lab science prerequisite courses, students were going through the first stage of the cycle. During their introductory home economics courses and lectures, they started to enter the second and third stages of the cycle. They entered the last stage of the cycle as they rounded out their coursework, completed labs, and were part of the practice house experience to fully cement their learning process.

Figure 2. *Student of the foodservice course partaking in a coffee service.* Source: Clippings, announcements, etc. 1959-1960, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Home economics students garnered hands-on experience from more than just the laboratory settings within their courses. They were able to apply the knowledge they learned into control settings that were similar to those that they would encounter in their future careers and in their domestic lives. For the foods courses, this could be catering meals, planning large-scale menus, or hosting events, just to name a few. In the advanced food preparation course, students in

one class were able to plan, prepare, and serve a large-scale meal service for the opening of the Firehouse Art Center in Norman.[28] As you can see in figure 2, students of the foodservice course were able to plan, execute, and experience different food service settings and what goes into them. This is also evident in the practice house that students were part of during the junior or senior year of their program. While the practice house encompassed several topics and skills that the students learned during their time at the university, for foods, they would plan, shop, and host an event every week at the practice house, where guests were invited.

Foods and nutrition courses within the school provided students with a wide array of experiences that left a lasting mark: From how they were taught, to the content they were exposed to, the memories they created while in the program were new to the students; however, they were not necessarily diverse. A problem that has existed in Foods education, and culinary arts as a whole, has been the lack of diversity and recognition of non-European, particularly non-French and non-Italian, food as worth noting and learning about. Culinary education is based on French terminology, cultural mores, and French cuisine as the litmus test that everything is compared to in achieving success. This also means that emphasis is placed upon middle and upper-class white families who favor this cuisine which continues to purpurate this notion of superiority within culinary arts. While

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28. FNCS 3623 Syllabus, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

students in the program did learn about economical food planning and preparation, it still hinged upon having access to certain types of foodstuffs and the ability to properly prepare these meals.

The only time this was slightly different was during the Great Depression and the rationing that occurred due to World War II. Faculty members such as Dr. Helen Burton completed research on how to make less desirable, but more readily available and cheaper, foodstuffs palatable to consumers.[29] The problem with Dr. Burton's carp recipe experiments as well as the curriculum of the food preparation courses is that they focused on the palatability of the middle-class white American. This was reinforced when courses such as gourmet and international foods focused only on French culture.[30]

While the School of Home Economics is now closed at the University of Oklahoma, a sliver of the domestic sciences strand lives on in a modern incarnation at the university today. Courses on food preparation ceased in the 1980s; however, nutrition and dietetics moved to the University of Oklahoma's Health Sciences Center campus, offering graduate coursework that leads to a masters or doctorate degree in the area of specialization. The program now focuses solely on the potential career aspects of nutrition and dietetics. Focus on

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29. Carol J. Burr, "Postscript. The Legacy of Burton Hall," *Sooner Magazine* 24, no. 4 (2004): 32.

30. FNCS 3090/060, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

the domestic life of women, where the program started, is all but a vision of the past.

Fashioning Domesticity

Domestic arts are the other curricula that started alongside domestic sciences in what would become the School of Home Economics. The domestic arts are divided into fashion and interior design, being grounded into how the wife, mother, and domestic leader of the home would utilize these skills to manage the home and family to be in line with societal mores of the time. Courses in fashion would cover the production of materials; drafting or following sewing patterns; preparing pieces for sewing; construction; and care of garments for the family. Later, these courses would shift to focusing on the career aspects of designers, as well as merchandisers, to work in the commercial fashion industry.

The first courses were geared towards students who either wanted to teach home economics in secondary schools or who wanted to have a higher education that prepared them for the societal roles of wife, mother, and domestic leader of the home.[31] During this time, students did not specialize in one area of home economics and were enrolled in courses that were comprehensive to the subject as a whole. At times, there may have been special upper-level electives that students could take in their preferred area; however, these were subject to schedule availability and were not available to students on a regular basis. When the

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31. University of Oklahoma. "Announcement of Courses in Domestic Science and Art," *Quarterly Bulletin,* June 1915, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 3.

program first offered fashion courses, students were not encouraged to take them until their final year of study.

During this time, it is also interesting to note that the courses did not refer to fashion; rather, they were aptly referred to by the colloquialism of "costume." This ties into the overarching struggle within the industry among the terms "costume," "dress," and "fashion," that Lou Taylor describes as the “great divide”[32] that is happening to this day. This divide seems to be rooted in the different disciplines that scholars who approach the field come from,[33] which further demonstrates that faculty within home economics were constantly having to prove that they belonged in academe. When this is brought into the coursework that the school offered, it is important to note that costume design does not refer to theatrical costumes; rather, costume during this period usually meant “a term used to indicate the appearance… which distinguished a particular class.”[34] Choice of how to refer to courses was a large consideration for the faculty due to the gender ideologies that are attributed to home economics. It was not just to show that they were enough (academically rigorous, culturally relevant, demanded as a course of study, etc.) to be part of the university; faculty also

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32. Lou Taylor, *The Study of Dress History,* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2002), 65-71.

33. Negley Harte, “Review: John Styles, The Dress of the People,” *Costume: The Journal of the Costume Society* 43, no. 1 (2009): 176.

34. Valerie Cumming, C.W. Cunnington, and P.E. Cunnington, *The Dictionary of Fashion History,* 2nd ed. (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2017), 73.

needed to demonstrate the distinction between their university programs and the likes of vocational programs, apprenticeships, and just plain domesticity within the home. What they called it and how they approached the content played a big role in demonstrating this distinction to the public.

In 1915, when the domestic arts courses were first offered, there were four that fell under the topic of clothing. Two were about textiles, while the other two dealt with costume design. The first of the textiles was Art 22b, which focused on the textiles themselves: from how they were constructed, to the fibers utilized, to the application of these textiles to home life.[35] (It is important to note that this would be an abbreviated course in textiles by today's standards due to there only being natural fibers, as nylon, the first synthetic fiber, was not invented until 1939.) This course would also be a chance to introduce students to fibers that they would not normally have seen based on their class and geographical limitations. Domestic science 23a, in contrast, focused on the economic implications of textiles.[36] It prepared students to manage the needs of their future homes within their budgetary constraints, as textile products were going to be needed for clothing, accessories, and home furnishings, including draperies. The care of these products would also fall to the wife.

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35. University of Oklahoma. "Announcement of Courses in Domestic Science and Art," *Quarterly Bulletin,* June 1915, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 8.

36. Ibid., 8.

The other two courses in clothing focused on the design aspects and were suggested to be taken back-to-back in the final year of study. Art 22a was Costume Design, which focused on the principles and elements of design, as well as other aesthetic factors and the reasons behind design choices in garments.[37] This course served as an introduction to design, laying the groundwork for design of clothing for the family. Students learned how to design for themselves in this course so that they could then take these principles and apply them to other members of their families. Art 22b was also titled Costume Design; however, it focused on applying the design principles from the previous course to other family members, as well as on more advanced techniques to expand the repertoire of the student.[38] Both of these courses were suggested for the final year of university with the other courses that could have been seen as a bonus for those who chose to leave early to concentrate on marrying and starting a family. These courses in the last year were not necessarily of the most importance to learn how to manage a home as compared with those suggested earlier in the program. The majority of the courses in the final year were either specifically for those wishing to pursue the teaching route, or were not important for the day-to-day life of the American housewife at the time. It is important to note that neither of these courses focused on the construction of garments.

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37. Ibid., 8.

38. Ibid., 8.

Costume design focused on just that, design. For the most part, women of that time were taught how to sew at home and during classes in secondary school. By 1915, sewing machines were common in most white American homes, and owning one was no longer seen as a status symbol, as affordable sewing machines had become widely available as early as 1902. Yet women were still expected to make and care for the family's clothing; thus, girls were taught how to sew at a young age. While there was some ready-to wear-clothing available for purchase at this time, it did not become more accessible to those outside of sprawling port cities until the latter part of the 1910s, and even then, did not really take off as we know it today until after the U.S. Bureau of Home Economics released its study on the standardization of women's sizes in 1940 under the Roosevelt administration. Until then, the purchase of mass-produced or ready-to-wear clothing was mainly oriented towards foundational pieces (undergarments, shirtwaists, accessories such as girdles, pantyhose, and so on), as well as the more simplified outer clothing that one would wear during those times. The other garments were either purchased from a local tailor or dress shop or were still made at home. This is one of the biggest arguments for clothing to be included in collegiate home economics curricula, since it still partially fell under the woman's role within society. At the same time, construction was not included for numerous factors, chief among them that it was not deemed rigorous enough, since dressmaking was taught in vocational programs for Women of Color,[39] while also

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39. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 55, 217.

still being a career option for lower-class white women (men's tailoring was also taught in some of the vocational programs for Men of Color).[40] A smaller factor could have been the space and monetary allocations required to have classrooms devoted to teaching these skills that require specialized equipment that cannot be stored out of the way whilst not in use. As such, the university opted for a lesser-taught aspect of clothing, design, which was considered a more sought-after skill since it was not widely known by women or regularly taught in compulsory education. Thus, it added to the status, or elitism, of having a collegiate degree in home economics.

By 1929, the School of Home Economics had expanded the offerings of courses in clothing to nine, as opposed to the four that were offered fifteen years prior. This expansion included offering courses on the construction of garments. The school still had to fight to prove that it was rigorous enough to belong in the university; the clothing courses aided this by developing a stronger backing in the lab sciences (mainly chemistry), as well as construction techniques that would go beyond what was taught in standard vocational programs and be more in line with Parisian ateliers and couturiers. The difference between the food preparation and clothing courses of these two time periods is that while food preparation courses remained relatively similar and were merely expanded upon in the 1929 updates, the clothing courses were completely different (except for a few names, due to the process of course approval within the university), almost having a different

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40. Ibid., 216.

modality in how they were designed. Out of the 1929 courses, the introductory textiles course was the closest to its 1915 counterpart. The difference is that this course specifically mentioned the chemical reactions involved in the production of textiles, taking a scientific perspective as opposed to an aesthetic one. It also incorporated the economic aspect of textile selection from the second textile course of 1915.[41]

The other course in textiles, Advanced Textiles, focused on being able to perform chemical testing on textile products, as well as utilizing chemical principles to apply dyestuffs and the removal stains.[42] In order to take this course, students needed to have taken the Introduction to Textiles course, as well as General Chemistry and Organic Chemistry, in order to have the depth of knowledge required to apply these principles to textiles. The remaining courses in clothing dealt with the design and construction of garments. Costume Design served as an introductory journey into the techniques for planning and designing new garments, including the research of trends, silhouettes, and color, as well as the visual representation of these designs prior to pattern drafting.[43] Advanced

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41. University of Oklahoma. "School of Home Economics Announcements for 1929-1930," *Quarterly Bulletin,* February 1929, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 21.

42. Ibid., 23.

43. Ibid., 22.

Costume Design, which primarily served as a costume history[44] course that also introduced the hygienic care of clothing,[45] was taken the next semester. This yearlong study introduced students to the basic concepts of clothing design; however, the majority of pattern drafting was left to be taught in the construction courses later on. The other difference between this version of the courses and the previous iterations is that they were suggested in the second year of study as opposed to the fourth.

The first course that delved into the construction of garments was Clothing, which introduced the use and maintenance of sewing machines, as well as the basis of preparing drafted patterns for construction. Safety around sewing equipment (including the identification of equipment) was one of the first topics within the course, so that students could properly utilize equipment during their studies. It is important to note that this course was designed for students who did not take a course in sewing during their compulsory education and therefore was not taken by all students in the program.[46] The first construction course that was

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44. While the course specifically mentions costume history in the archives, this was the standard during this time (please refer to Lou Taylor's *The Study of Dress History* for more information on this particular topic). The author would like to note that many would categorize the curriculum as dress history due to its approach and the fact that it did not cover other cultures.

45. University of Oklahoma, "School of Home Economics Announcements for 1929-1930," *Quarterly Bulletin,* February 1929, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 22.

required for all students in the program was Elementary Dressmaking and Tailoring. This course covered the basic techniques of garment construction that students would build upon in later classes, including various seams, closures, technical lines such as darts, and finishing garments, just to name a few.[47] For students to take this course, they needed to have previously taken Textiles, Costume Design, and either Clothing or a unit of sewing in their high school career.

The rest of the courses in clothing construction were considered upper-level electives that were not required to graduate with the bachelors in home economics. Advanced Dressmaking was a continuation of the Elementary Dressmaking course that covered topics such as boning, various sleeves, application of trims and embellishments, as well as differing the fullness of skirts.[48] Children's Clothing went over the challenges of the construction of children's garments. Students learned how to plan for the growth of children that can affect the sizing of garments with tricks such as making adaptable clothing that could be more easily modified or altered as the child aged.[49] Millinery was the last of the construction electives offered on a regular basis. This course covered the construction of women's hats as well as when the different styles of

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46. Ibid., 22.

47. Ibid., 22.

48. Ibid., 22.

49. Ibid., 22.

hats should be worn, along with selecting styles that suited one's features.[50] These three courses were not required to earn the Oklahoma teaching certificate that was offered through the school; they were merely an opportunity for interested students to gain more knowledge. This was the start of the slow crawl of the curriculum of the school to move towards a more career-minded focus as opposed to the domestic one that existed previously. Over the next decade to decade and half, we start to see the slow introduction of more of these career courses as the school starts to offer majors that are intended to prepare students to enter the workforce outside of teaching.

Coursework is not the only thing that changed over time at the school. The majority of students in home economics had been white women. While this remained constant throughout the duration of the school, we did start to see men enroll in some programs. James Wayne Fuller, professionally known as Wayne Fuller, was the first male student in the fashion design program. Graduating in the fall of 1947, he preceded John Fellers who graduated in 1949 from the dietetics program, making Fuller the first known male student within the school. In figure 3 we can see Fuller with an assistant, selecting fabrics for a new collection. Fuller was active within the school while he was a student, which he carried on into various alumni activities. He continued his work in fashion after leaving the

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50. Ibid., 22.

Figure 3. *Wayne Fuller working with an assistant on new designs.* Source: "Fashion Designer Wayne Fuller and an Assistant Select Fabrics for his New Spring Collection," Sooner Magazine 33, no. 9 (1961): 13.

university, eventually starting his own line.[51] Presently, there are several examples of his work held in costume collections, as well as vintage pieces being available to purchase from various merchants. Fuller was not the only success story from the school, which in part led to growing programs and the adapted curricula we see later on.

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51. Connie Burke, "His Own Design for Success: Fashions by Wayne Fuller are Receiving Acclaim from the Critics in a Highly Competitive Field," *Sooner Magazine* 33, no. 9 (1961): 14.

By the 1970s, courses in clothing were now under the Fashion Arts & Clothing Textiles (FACT) Division that offered two undergraduate degree options: the Bachelor of Science in Fashion Arts & Clothing Textiles with an option in Merchandising, and the Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Arts & Clothing Textiles with an option in Fashion Arts. The school also offered a Master of Science in Clothing Textiles, where students could pursue research projects that fell under both undergraduate degree options. The school was now fully focused on majors that correlated to careers outside of the domestic sphere or just secondary school teaching. The merchandising option was for those students who were more interested in the business side of fashion, pursuing careers that promoted the sales of fashion products; whereas the fashion arts option was geared for those students interested in the design and production of clothing, including the visual communication of fashion products through the means of illustration. When the two programs were designed, there were some courses that overlapped, primarily due to foundational knowledge that was needed for the field as a whole. After these introductory courses, students mainly took separate courses, except for the rare few who took certain classes as upper-level requirements.

The introductory courses that both designers and merchandisers needed provided an overview of the fashion industry as whole whilst also instilling basic skills that were needed to be successful. These skills were not necessarily common knowledge to incoming university freshmen. The reason for this skill gap is partially caused by the very industry that they were training to enter. With

the rise of the American shopping mall, ready-to-wear clothing became more widely accessible to the average American, which led to fewer people relying on sewing skills to produce their own clothing within the home. This was partnered with the changing secondary home economics curricula that meant not every high school offered courses solely devoted to sewing so that students could learn garment construction skills outside of the home. To compensate for this fact, the school needed to offer standardized introductory sewing courses, so that all students knew the same baseline information before proceeding to the advanced courses.

Clothing Construction was the answer to these needs within the evolving landscape of the school. Design as well as merchandising majors needed to take this course early on in their program; home economics education majors would also take this course while the major was offered. Unlike 1929, when students could skip a course if they had a unit of sewing in high school, all students needed to take Clothing Construction regardless of skill. Clothing Construction provided an overview of the garment construction process whilst also including machine maintenance, sewing safety, preparing fabric pieces, reading sewing patterns, basic sewing techniques, and various topics to improve efficiency in the sewing room.[52] For design majors, the need for these skills is paramount, as all other courses, including professional work as a fashion designer,

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52. FACT 1463, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

rely on the basic understanding of how flat pieces of fabric come together to cover a three-dimensional body in a pleasing manner. Merchandisers needed this understanding to successfully perform their professional tasks, ranging from how to determine if garments they were buying for their companies were quality, to what features to highlight for marketing a garment for purchase.

The next course that all students needed to take was Dialectics of Fashion. Serving as the introduction to the fashion industry as a whole, all students needed to understand the hierarchy of the industry, regardless of the area they wished to specialize in. As the fashion industry extends beyond the scope of just fashion designers and the different people assembled to market the items, this course helped them understand just how far the branches spread out and were intertwined together. History of the industry was taught; it should be noted that this is different from the history of dress, as this course taught the developments of the field as well as why the industry was important to the economy and culture,[53] as opposed to how styles of garments have changed, which is covered in the later history of dress course. After taking this course, students would be prepared to enter any other course within the program with a clear understanding of process and the future of the fashion industry, including career options available to them. This last piece was important to have early on, as the students had more leeway with elective courses due to the more career-focused mission of the programs in

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53. FACT 1423 Dialectics of Fashion, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

comparison to the domestic focus of the past. Students would be able to cultivate projects and experiences to garner leverage when entering the job market after graduation.

Textiles was the next course that all students had to enroll in regardless of concentration within the program. This course delved into identifying fibers and the various types of fabrics, understanding textile construction, and the selection and care of textiles.[54] It was, and still is, imperative that all who work in the fashion industry know about textiles at least at a perfunctory level. The particular reason for this is due to the fact that textiles are the backbone of the entire fashion industry.[55] All things that are purchased from the industry are constructed out of fibers and textiles; without these products, there would be nothing to market, and thus all of the careers within this program would become obsolete. Fashion designers needed to know the characteristics of the various fabrics available to them, including why they would choose one textile in order to create a desired effect within a design. As we can see in figure 4, instruction of how the textile drapes is a cornerstone for the design of a garment, as it changes how the finished product will appear. This is incorporated into multiple courses within the program

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54. FACT 2443 Textiles, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

55. The author would like to note that the global fashion industry was worth 1.5 trillion U.S. dollars in 2020, and is projected to grow to 2.25 trillion U.S. dollars by 2025.

Figure 4. *A demonstration is being prepared for students to understand drape in textiles. This demonstration was prepared for students in Textiles, and Fashion Illustration courses.* Source: Announcements, News Clippings, etc., 1957-1961, Scrapbooks, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

due to the many facets of textiles and the implications they can have in the various stages of the fashion pipeline. Merchandisers needed to understand when different textiles would be appropriate for various occasions. Dresses made of silk chiffon are not intended for everyday use; therefore, a resulting order of said dresses would not end well if your target market is the average American. Textiles also presents its own plethora of careers available to students, whilst reaching out to adjacent industries. This course served as a gateway into the technical knowledge needed in order to be successful in the fashion industry even for the most circumspect individual who was interested in these career pathways. The

other courses provided a foundational knowledge that could be circumvented if a person wished to work hard in order to counteract this lack of knowledge. Textiles, however, was the knowledge that would make one destitute if you were without.

The rest of the classes were mainly divided into the two specialties that were more tailored to the specific learning needs of these career-specific programs. Merchandising had fewer options to take within the school, as they also needed a background in other subjects, mainly business, due to the nature of their career field. However, the school still sought to provide courses that homed into the needs of these students that were not being met by the business college. Sometimes this was due to specific details needing to be left out since they did not pertain to other aspects of majors offered in business; at other times, it was related to business seeing fashion as too feminine for a man's world.[56] The faculty at the school found ways around this by offering courses that delved into the topics that the college of business circumvented, in which students could learn without these biases present. One such example is Fashion Salesmanship, which was a special topics course that took the shell of a professional selling course from business and added information relevant to the fashion industry. This course focused blending business principles with fashion knowledge in order to make a targeted instruction

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56. It should be noted that fashion did not have as much of the market share during the time of the School of Home Economics. Fashion has been a rapidly growing industry both domestically and globally (refer to note 57). During 1990, there were an estimated 34.2 million jobs within the U.S. fashion industry; by 2014, there were an estimated 57.8 million jobs.

of the selling process so that students could be successful in both sales and negotiations in order to best represent their employer.[57] Whether the student became a buyer for retail stores, or the showroom representative for a designer, these salesmanship skills were paired with the knowledge of how textiles changed the garment being sold, as well as how the overall production of garments worked.

Merchandisers were able to take more than just one-off seminars that were created to offset the lack of opportunity within the college of business. Two of the regularly offered courses that were developed to meet career-specific skills were Visual Merchandising and Buying Process. Visual Merchandising taught students how to present garments and other products in a pleasing manner to entice customers to purchase.[58] As we can see in figure 5, students would need to incorporate their knowledge of textiles, garments, and marketing in order to create successful interior store or window displays for customers. While fashion illustration was not a required skill for merchandisers, a rudimentary proficiency could aid in presenting display ideas to others, which could aid in securing freelance employment. Buying Process overviewed how retail stores purchased

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57. FACT 3090 Fashion Salesmanship, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

58. FACT 3423 Visual Merchandising, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Figure 5. *Student work example of an interior display design plan.* Source: Shadowbox (Sketches), 1950, Scrapbooks, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

garments and fashion accessories from vendors, including timelines and how to plan and allocate inventory for a successful sales period.[59] This was important for those who wished to become buyers or showroom representatives, but it was

59. FACT 3463 Buying Processes, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

useful for any merchandiser to understand in detail how products got from the production factories into the hands of consumers.

The majority of other courses in the FACT program were designed, or at least heavily geared, for design majors. These courses covered the design and production of textiles and garments. The first series of courses within this concentration dealt with the textiles themselves, from which the designer's creations would come. While ready-made textiles were available and were the most cost-effective, the Decorative Arts, Textile Design- Weaving, and Textile Design- Print & Dyeing courses taught designers how to be creative with these materials so that their designs could be unique whilst also expressing their true desired effect. Modifying existing fabrics would generally be the most cost-effective route that yielded a desirable outcome, while creating their own textiles from scratch ended with a truly one-of-a-kind design that others could not steal. Decorative Arts broached how the principles of art applied to fashion, how students should incorporate them into their designs, as well as the overall aesthetic theory involved in fashion design.[60] This course homed in on surface design, which aided students who took Textile Design- Weaving and/or Textile Design- Print & Dyeing. In Textile Design- Weaving, students learned how to design, plan, and execute original designs for both two- and three-dimensional

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60. FACT 3123 Decorative Arts, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

fiber constructions.[61] In Textile Design- Print & Dyeing, students learned to understand contemporary surface design of textiles and learned how to apply techniques to achieve their original designs.[62] These courses would come together to provide students with skills to meet the current demands of the market. As industrialization and automation of the fashion industry ramped, textiles became streamlined in order to produce at a faster rate. This resulted in consumers clamoring to these new cheaper fashions, which would become the start of the 'fast-fashion' trend that carries on to the present day. After a few cycles, this led to high-end consumers wanting to break away from the now mass-popularized designs, wanting something different that started at the textile level. Students who were able to learn how to either produce their own designs in textiles, or to set up the patterns for mills to make their designs, would have an advantage over other designers who did not have these skills.

The remainder of the courses in the FACT program were devoted to the designing and construction of garments. Starting with History of Costume Design & Textiles, students would learn how the styles of western dress evolved, which would be a precursor to understanding trends within fashion.[63] This was essential

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61. FACT 4113 Textile Design- Weaving, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

62 . FACT 4133 Textile Design, Print and Dye, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

for designers to know, as they would be working on their collections years ahead of the release to the public; if they were not in style, then they would not sell. Flat Pattern Design is where students learned how to draft patterns that would be laid on the table prior to being graded (scaled to the various sizes within the company's size chart) and cut out for production.[64] This technique is the most common in mass production as well as in commercially available patterns for home sewers; however, it can be paired with draping. The Draping course introduced the more complex and technically challenging concept of draping to students. This is where the fabric is draped across a dress form in order to see how the textile drapes, or falls, in relation to the desired design prior to the pattern being drafted.[65] This technique is more commonly found in higher-end and couture clothing. Fashion Illustration had a unique place in the world of design, since it was used by designers to communicate ideas to people involved in production, as well as by merchandisers to advertise to fashions. The school had two survey courses on the subject. Beginning Fashion Illustration introduced

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63. FACT 4493 Historic Textile Design, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

64. FACT 3483 Flat Pattern Design, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

65. FACT 4443 Costume Design Draping, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

fashion figures, how to capture the essence of fabrics, and primarily stuck to one medium.[66] Advanced Fashion Illustration expanded on the types of media used in order to express characteristics of the fabric and garment that encompassed capturing the life and movement of the piece, as opposed to just the basic representation that was taught in the first course.[67] As we can see by comparing figure 6 to figure 7, the school did a good job of preparing students to render professional-level illustrations as found in the industry.

The fashion courses were similar to the other home economics courses in that they folded hands-on experience laboratories into the curricula, with some courses being solely the students getting to demonstrate their skills and mastery of the content. When the school first started, these courses had a more lecture-based approach due to the duplicity of the field, being at the university whilst not belonging due to the feminized view of the curricula causing many to believe that it was not enough to belong in higher learning. Fashion was also the home economics subject that was least incorporated in the practice house that students needed to participate in prior to graduation. Around the late 1920s, more hands-on

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66. FACT 2423 Beginning Fashion Illus., University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

67. FACT Advanced Fashion Illus., University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Figure 6. *Student fashion illustration work example.* Source: Shadowbox (Sketches), 1950, Scrapbooks, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

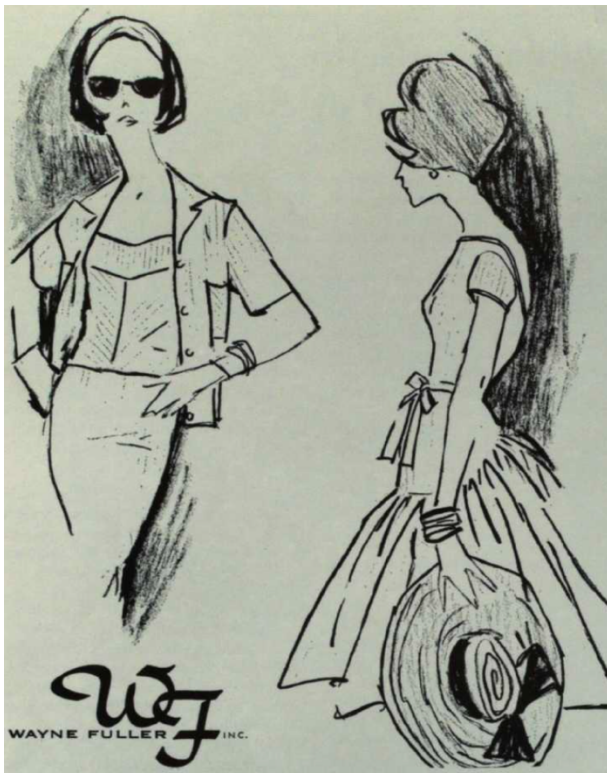

Figure 7. *Wayne Fuller illustration of new collection for his company*. Source: Wayne Fuller, as found in, "Fashion Designer Wayne Fuller and an Assistant Select Fabrics for his New Spring Collection," Sooner Magazine 33, no. 9 (1961): 12.

learning was happening, but it was still limited at the time, as the faculty were building up the fashion curriculum while still having to fight for it not to be considered frivolous. Courses were still strongly backed in lab sciences, and the majority of courses dealing with construction were electives that were not regularly offered. It was not until the late 1930s and early 1940s that we truly started to see the break away from the domestic-focused courses and the fashion

program growing into multiple concentrations. While the program was now thriving in terms of coursework, faculty had to get creative due to the limitation of materials available for projects caused by the rationing program in World War II. Blending lectures with hands-on experiences still occurred, just with different or recycled materials. This is also when half-sized designs became popular in courses. Students would still create new designs, but they would now use scaled mannequins so that less material would be used while also making an accurate representation of the garment.[68]

By the 1970s, the stand-alone majors had been created, with each set needing its own approach in order to be successful in the modern fashion industry. Merchandisers took introductory courses laden with what we would now call experiential learning, from making garments to identifying various textiles with thread counters. This experiential learning continued into upper-class coursework that was also interwoven with courses from the college of business. In Visual Merchandising, students had to make displays inside of Burton Hall, while also working in teams to create four to five displays in local stores (both window and interior).[69] In Promotions, students had to stage fashion and style shows, along

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68. The author notes that this is not when half-sized designs were invented. Various iterations of this concept can be found throughout history, including when designers would make clothing on dolls to be sailed over for ordering during the Colonial times.

69. FACT 3423 Visual Merchandising, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

with other promotional events, that garnered the attention of notable alumni and the media.[70]

Merchandisers were not the only ones who had pressure placed upon them to complete their hands-on education from the school. Designers were constantly in courses with extended time that blended lecture and creating products. Design-A-Line was a course that involved no direct instruction. Students would have a semester to design and produce a small collection (usually around six to eight looks) that would debut at the Shadowbox Style Show.[71] This collection could not include any previous designs from courses such Custom Costume where students created a complete look (including accessories) based on the theme or inspiration they were assigned.[72] Meanwhile, the faculty liked to push the students outside of their comfort zones so that they could learn new things. They offered chances for students to work alongside them whilst working on large-scale projects that would gather a large amount of attention. This can be seen in figure 8 when a student is working alongside Dr. Jo Uptegraft on recreating dresses from the first ladies of

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70. FACT 4423 Promotions, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

71. FACT 4440 Design-A-Line, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

72. FACT 3473 Custom Costume, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Figure 8. *Dr. Jo Uptegraft working with a student to cut fabric pieces for a recreation of gown worn by one of the former first ladies of Oklahoma*. Source: "Designing Women," *Sooner Magazine* 8, no. 1 (1988): 28.

Oklahoma for an exhibit that gained a statewide spotlight. The school continued to offer this instruction until the Fashion Arts, Clothing and Textile program was suspended in 1988, allowing the 151 students to finish their degrees.

As we can see from the complex history of the fashion curriculum within the School of Home Economics, the ideology of what we envision when thinking of a fashion program is not what always existed in higher education. Faculty members were constantly negotiating the balance between the domestic ideal of a white woman within society, and careers that these women could have outside of the home and, eventually, secondary education. For more than half of the school's timeline, the faculty had to lean more into the incorporation of lab sciences in

order to be deemed studious enough to belong in academe. However, as Megan Elias notes, there is more to this conversation than meets the eye. While home economics had a role in creating these opportunities for white women, it still had ties to domesticity. Elias states, "textile science and clothing design have a less obvious and more problematic connection. Including these courses in home economics represented a traditional connection of women with textile work."[73] This created an interesting dynamic caused by what the field was struggling with internally: How do we create these opportunities to leave the home while also staying within the home due to it being what was acceptable in white American society? This is contrasted with the constant fight home economists were having externally with other fields in higher education, which was how do we prove that we are rigorous enough to be here.

This particular struggle stems mainly in the early half of home economics as the field slowly became more career-oriented and shed the domestic housewife persona of the past. While the field managed to somewhat shed that persona, the problematic still lingered, partly due to looming public misconceptions of what home economics is, and partially because it then raised the question of does fashion still belong with home economics. The root of this dilemma stems back for the majority of history, with the first major step in women no longer being tethered to this work occurring less than a century before the school was started. "Until the market revolution of the 1820s, American women had been responsible

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73. Megan Elias, *Stir it Up: Home Economics in American Culture* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 37.

for producing most of the textiles used by their families… were central in women's lives."[74] While white women were still associated with the care and production of familial clothing in 1915, they were slowly gaining the ability to do more things than just cook and sew, although clothing was still strongly associated with the domestic homelife.

These things beg the question, did the inclusion of textile science (fashion) in home economics actually further fashion domesticity for white women? In the beginning of the curriculum, it was purely to prepare for that domestic housewife skin that women would don after leaving the program. Later, it was that women could work in certain jobs (generally education) for a few years before also donning on the housewife position, with the degree being able to serve as a signifier that they were of a higher status and were better equipped to handle this role. Thus, they were able to leverage for higher amounts of power based on proximity to whom they married as well as their status of being trained in proper womanhood through home economics. Finally, in the last stage of the school they were able create more opportunities outside of the traditional; however, they were still controlled as to which careers they could seek and the proximity of power that they could gain. When we look at the fashion industry, the driving force is women. The majority of products are for women, with fashion constantly changing in the options for women, whilst men stay relatively the same. Familial clothing is still largely purchased by women, either directly or through

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74. Ibid., 32.

consultation. Women also make up the majority of entry-level and workhorse jobs, with few gaining notoriety or executive positions in comparison to their male counterparts. So, our curriculum is preparing an industry that is focused on women, produced by women, and is still managed by men. Men have the ability to say what women wear, which plays a role in social status and how women are perceived by the world, thus still exerting control over women.

Therefore, is the way that we educate fashion in fact fashioning the domestic hats that women wear?

Chapter III

THE OTHER DOMESTIC ARTS: BABIES, HOUSES & TEACHING

Do you ever feel frustrated like this? Wondering what you can say to interpret your chosen field to others. Today in the brief time that I have you I thought I'd give you some lively facts and figures that could help you.[1]

- Mary Warren
Professor and Chairman, School of Home Economics, the University of Oklahoma

The School of Home Economics taught more than stitching and stewing. Three other subjects were included in instruction at the school: Interior Design, Child Development, and Home Economics Education. Nationally, there were lesser-known subjects associated with collegiate home economics, such as journalism and public health. The University of Oklahoma offered the five more commonly associated areas within the school, with the other subjects being offered in other parts of the university. This stems back to the interdisciplinary nature of the home economics field due to faculty members coming from various backgrounds. As Barbara Solomon notes, this was caused by female faculty members being siloed from other academic fields, not allowing them to participate in their subject since they were women.[2] The resulting curriculum

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1. Mary Warren, *Lively Facts and Figures,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics, Box 3, Folder 2 Publicity Files, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

2. Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986).

make-up of home economics greatly depended upon the female faculty members who were allowed to work at each institution, as well as that particular university's politics of how administrators treated women.

While the school of home economics closed in the 1980s, there are still some remnants left on campus. Interior design was moved over to what is now known as the College of Architecture, where it maintains undergraduate and master's programs, as well as being part of the doctoral program in planning in construction. The Institute of Child Development was transferred to the Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education under the department of instructional leadership in academic curriculum. The nutrition and dietetics program was transplanted to the College of Allied Health at the health sciences center campus; as of 2016, only graduate programs were offered in this area.

Gutting the Interior

Interior design is regulated in the United States by the Council for Interior Design Qualification (CIDQ), who define interior design as "a multi-faceted profession in which creative and technical solutions are applied within a structure to achieve a built interior environment."[3] Interior designers and interior decorators are two different career fields that most use interchangeably.[4] While there is some overlap, the key distinction is that in the majority of states, an interior designer is

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3. Council for Interior Design Qualification, "Definition of Interior Design," cidq.org, January 2019.

4. This is an abbreviated definition. For a more detailed definition and explanation of the interior design career field, please visit the Council for Interior Design Qualification or the American Society of Interior Designers.

one who obtains the National Council for Interior Design Qualification certification (NCIDQ) after completing an accredited education program, clocks a specified number of supervised work hours, and passes the NCIDQ exam. This allows interior designers to focus on more than the visual appearance of a space such as drafting plans for new or remodeled dwellings, incorporating space planning and allocation, as well as other tasks that can be involved in intensive construction projects. Interior decorators, on the other hand, are professionals from any educational or work background who are hired to focus solely on the aesthetics of an interior space. The interior design program at the University of Oklahoma was one of the first accredited programs in the state to prepare students for this career path. This program has an interesting back story, as the modern iteration comes from two separate programs within the university that were melded together in 1950. This complexity is unique within the school but is still evidence of Solomon's identification of home economics being locations of siloed programs within the university. Dorothy Kirk was a faculty member for the interior design program that started outside of the School of Home Economics. Kirk states that "the original majors in interior design were taught by Dorothy Kirk until 1950 when all women's interests were transferred to the School of Home Economics."[5] Prior to the consolidation, the two programs existed with some interaction but remained mostly independent, with two separate aims. To

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5. Dorothy Kirk-Preston, "History of the Interior Design Program," University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics-Department of Human Development, Box 2, Folder 12, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

aid in clarity, we will first focus on the program that started in the domestic arts, since it was started first, then move onto the separate program for which Kirk was the instructor, before discussing the final merged program.

In 1915 with the development of courses in the Domestic Arts and Sciences, courses in domestic arts were offered in two areas of domestic life. Clothing, as discussed in the previous chapter, made up part of domestic arts. The other part was the house, which was comprised of four courses. The first course was Home Architecture, which surveyed the history of housing for humans, understanding the aesthetics of homes, and the role of home spaces within the family.[6] This course required prior training in drawing, as students would make floor plans and rough sketches of homes. Special Problems in Home Architecture was an elective course available to students that covered the planning out of rooms, including how to efficiently use the space through the placement of equipment and resources.[7] The last of the courses within the home group was Home Decoration, which was divided into two courses. The first unit covered the design of walls, floors, and windows within the home to make an inviting space that is also tied to the style of the family.[8] The second unit was a continuation that highlighted furniture and décor, as well as service ware and other details to aid in

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6. University of Oklahoma, "Announcement of Courses in Domestic Science and Art," *Quarterly Bulletin,* June 1915, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 6.

7. Ibid., 6.

8. Ibid., 7.

entertaining.[9] It should be noted that there were two required courses in botany that were designed for this curriculum. Household Botany instructed students how to care for ornamental plants, including breeding plants for decorative purposes.[10] Landscape Gardening instructed on the aesthetic principles and civic morality in having proper exterior plants.[11]

As we can see from the courses offered during this time, the main intention was to prepare students for domestic roles within the home. The only career for which these courses aided in preparation was to be a secondary home economics teacher, with the intention that these women would eventually enter the domestic role as well. These courses were intended to be taken during the junior and senior years of study. Home Architecture preceded Home Decoration, noting that it was more important for students to gain the foundation of how spaces should be utilized before learning how to fill the space to please the eye. There is also something that could be said that this layout of courses is a signifier of importance, as a student who does not complete all four years of study will not have that specific aesthetic component but would still be able to properly plan and utilize spaces within the home.

The courses within the home group were shuffled around in 1929. There were now four courses available, with only two required for graduation. Home

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9. Ibid., 7.

10. Ibid., 7.

11. Ibid., 7.

Architecture taught artistic principles as they applied to the home, with interest given to existing structures.[12] Home Decoration was the other required course, which focused on the selection of wall and window treatments, as well as materials and aesthetics of flooring options.[13] The other two courses that were offered were continuations of the two required courses. Home Architecture II encompassed the care, selection, sanitation, and utility of equipment for the home whilst also keeping in mind the budgetary constraints of the household.[14] Home Decoration II was the last course available in this area. It instructed students how to maintain the beauty of home furnishings, including how to repurpose existing furniture through means such as reupholstering.[15]

During this time, the focus of these courses was still domestic, with those who wished to take more career-minded courses needing to opt into the other program offered within the School of Art. These courses were now suggested to be taken during the first year of study, in part due to the expansion of coursework in other areas, primarily food science and child development. The Great Depression also had an impact on the restructuring of these courses. During this

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12. University of Oklahoma, "School of Home Economics Announcements for 1929-1930," *Quarterly Bulletin,* February 1929, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 21.

13. Ibid., 21.

14. Ibid., 21.

15. Ibid., 21.

time, courses needed to focus more on repurposing existing items within the home, as opposed to purchasing new items. The faculty also had more limited resources to use for demonstrations within the curriculum. The interior courses would need to take a lower priority in comparison to those in foods and clothing construction as the Great Depression progressed. As noted in the *From Domesticity to Modernity: What was Home Economics?* exhibit from Cornell, "home economists…educated thousands of impoverished families about ways to maintain proper nutrition and make decent clothing with very little money."[16] This shift would take course over the next few years as the faculty found balance between providing these services to the public whilst also preparing students with the knowledge that they needed. While this was happening in the School of Home Economics, similar courses were proving to be popular with students at the School of Art.

The other courses that would combine with the domestic architecture courses to make the interior design major in 1951 were in the program for the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Domestic Art. The Domestic Art program was started in 1916 as a hybrid of the program found in the School of Home Economics and the Fine Art program within the School of Art. It primarily focused on the aesthetic expression of the home and came from the perspective of an artist, as opposed to

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16. "What Role Did Home Economists Play in the National Emergencies of the Twentieth Century?" *From Domesticity to Modernity: What was Home Economics?* Division of Rare & Manuscript Collections, Kroch Library, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY.

the functional perspective of the domestic woman living in the home.[17] This program still had no specific career tied to it, as the interior decorator profession was newly minted and did not require any form of educational background to enter.

Interior design as a profession is relatively new, starting just after the formation of home economics. Interior decorators were the first jobs available in this field and did not have any oversight or regulatory features, which still carries through to the modern day. Anyone can call themselves an interior decorator without any specific training, education, or licensures, as opposed to interior designers. In the early 1900s, a person mainly relied on their natural talent, keen eye for taste, and connections in order to become a successful decorator. There were very few courses available to assist in this area; the first known course was offered at the New York School of Applied and Fine Arts (presently known as the Parsons School of Design at The New School) in 1904.[18] These courses were few and far between, being mainly offered at Art Schools that were attended by more affluent individuals. As noted by Cheryl Robertson,

> Just as facility at the piano keyboard—a traditional amateur accomplishment of middle-class females—could be transposed easily to manipulation of a typewriter keyboard as a paid office clerk, so too other feminine refinements taught in girls' schools and seminaries since the eighteenth century had applications in the workforce. For instance,

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17. "Interior Design at OU, 1916-1971," University Archives Collection, University Archives Vertical File, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

18. "A Brief History of Interior Design," idlny.org, Interior Designers for Legislation in New York, https://www.idlny.org/history-of-interior-design

> training in drawing, composition, color harmony, and painting could yield gainful employment in the home-furnishing sector.[19]

However, this did not necessarily correlate to gaining work in the field, as there were still stigmas around women working outside of the home. Elsie de Wolfe is the first known decorator to be paid for their services, in 1905; however, it was not until 1982 that the first laws regulating interior design were passed.[20] The push for the professionalization of interior design and associated activities was an act to break ties to its domestic perception by the public.[21] This gradual break from domesticity can be seen throughout the evolution of the curricula within the university stemming back to 1921, when the new degree was revamped for the first time.

The Bachelor of Fine Art in Domestic Art was changed to Decorative Design in 1921[22] with Dorothy Kirk noting how these changes came to be.[23] Kirk

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19. Cheryl Robertson, "From Cult to Profession: Domestic Women in Search of Equality," in *The Material Culture of Gender/ The Gender of Material Culture,* eds. Katharine Martinez, and Kenneth L. Ames (Wilmington, DE: Winterthur Museum, 1997), 98.

20. "A Brief History of Interior Design," idlny.org, Interior Designers for Legislation in New York, https://www.idlny.org/history-of-interior-design

21. Grace Lees-Maffei, "Professionalization as a Focus of Interior Design History," *Journal of Design History* 21, no. 1 (2008), 12.

22. "Interior Design at OU, 1916-1971," University Archives Collection, University Archives Vertical File, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

23. The author would like to note that are some discrepancies between Dorothy Kirk Preston's recollection of events and the archival records available.

noted that Dr. Oscar Brousse Jacobson, director of the School of Art, noticed "the need for increased educational opportunities for women… (for a) course he thought might interest girls who enrolled in the Art School."[24] Dr. Jacobson's observation occurred towards the end of the women's suffrage movement that resulted in the ratification of the nineteenth amendment on August 18, 1920.[25] The planning for this revamped program came alongside, as it was premiered after regent authorization in 1921. As the field was so new, the first faculty members of the major were not graduates of existing programs; rather, they were from adjacent areas of expertise, such as painting, sculpture, and other fine arts. This added to the curriculum being based in aesthetics and Robertson's notion of feminine refinements, as opposed to the functionality basis in modern-day praxis.

The first courses focused on the instruction of aesthetic principles, such as coordinating color palettes, or sourcing furnishings and decorative accessories, with a strong emphasis on principles and elements of design that create these pieces. As the courses grew, they slowly transitioned the focus towards content more specific to interior decoration. As we can see in figure 9, students were

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While I do my best to reconcile these discrepancies, there may be parts of the history that are lost from the narrative due to these inaccuracies.

24. Dorothy Kirk-Preston, "History of the Interior Design Program," University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics-Department of Human Development, Box 2, Folder 12, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

25. From the formation of Oklahoma as a state in 1907 until 1918, white women in Oklahoma could only vote in school board elections. On November 5, 1918, Oklahoma passed a constitutional amendment to allow white women to vote in all state elections. Black women did not gain this right until 1965.

Figure 9. *A student upholstering a chair in class.* Source: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

taught to upholster furniture prior to the 1951 changeover to interior design. This skill provided knowledge that could be used to help inform clients, including offering the services themselves. This form of presentation and development is what was brought in by incorporating the curriculum model from Parsons that Dr. Jacobson and Dorothy Kirk started to blend into the university's curriculum in

1925.[26] The infusion of this model with their own strides in instruction led the university to be a leader in teaching interior decoration, with several others requesting information, guidance, and even permission to observe the program so that they could start their own.[27] The program continued to flourish at the university as it continued to progress towards modern-day interior design curriculum.

In 1938, the degree in Decorative Design was changed into the majors of Interior Decoration and Art for Industry.[28] The courses for these majors were a bridge between previous iterations and what we would see in the present day. Interior Decoration courses were the farthest departure yet from the aesthetic focus based in studio art, slowly incorporating more of the profession of interior decoration. Art for Industry was a hybrid between the Interior Decoration major and the studio art majors from the School of Art, also being referred to as Applied Design, where students were still heavily based in aesthetic inquiry that just happened to involve interiors. This change came as the growing interior decoration profession gained traction, with more clients signing on for commercial (non-residential) interiors, expanding the possible client pool. 1938

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26. Dorothy Kirk-Preston, "History of the Interior Design Program," University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics-Department of Human Development, Box 2, Folder 12, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

27. Ibid.

28. "Interior Design at OU, 1916-1971," University Archives Collection, University Archives Vertical File, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

also saw the addition of the first male faculty member in the area. Roger de Corsaw was a ceramic artist on faculty with the School of Art who started teaching occasional courses for the program,[29] mainly for the Art for Industry major; there was, however, the sporadic design course that he taught.

There was not much change in the program from 1938 to 1950, except for the growing enrollment numbers. In 1950, the Interior Decoration and Art for Industry majors were moved over to the School of Home Economics; another change was unofficially phasing out the Art for Industry major.[30] In 1951, the Interior Decoration major was merged with the home courses within the school and restructured into the new Interior Design major.[31] This major focused on preparing students for a career within the field that was pushing for professionalization, with the term "interior designers" being minted in the 1930s and being used by professionals increasingly throughout the 40s and 50s, resulting in the first professional association that used the term to form in 1957 after splitting from another association. The new Interior Design curriculum was the precursor to what we see in the modern-day program, with students learning about designing both residential and commercial spaces. As we can see in figure 10,

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29. Ibid.

30. Dorothy Kirk-Preston, "History of the Interior Design Program," University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics-Department of Human Development, Box 2, Folder 12, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

31. "Interior Design at OU, 1916-1971," University Archives Collection, University Archives Vertical File, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

students are learning drafting techniques that they will need when they enter the workforce as professional decorators. Drafting involves making scaled drawings of floor plans as well as elevations (renderings of a wall or façade) or perspectives (3D renderings of the view of a room or space). These scaled drawings are needed so that clients and other workers can accurately see what the space is going to look like once completed.

These curriculum changes are what established the foundation of the current courses at the university, as interior design was the only program still offered as it was originally seen during its time at the School of Home Economics. This program remained at the school for almost thirty years before being slowly transitioned over to the College of Environmental Design (known today as the Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture). The courses that were implemented in the 1950s largely did not change in the specific content; they were mainly just further refined as the field continued to develop, including the practice settings that were in the studio courses. While there was a larger shift within the profession nationally of commercial interiors being regularly included, this program still had a strong focus on residential design. This could be seen as a precursor to the conflict between associated professions that occurred whilst trying to pass interior design regulations later in Oklahoma. These changes mainly occurred within the studio courses, which were courses in which students were given different design scenarios that they used to meet criteria through design deliverables (design elements such as floor plan renderings, elevations,

Figure 10. *Interior Design students learning drafting techniques prior to the client presentations.* Source: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

perspectives, concept boards, etc.) that the client in the scenario could view. Each studio course had a series of scenarios usually being centered around a theme or practice setting for that studio (i.e., Studio IV could be centered around environment design; or the atmospheric, acoustic, lighting and other elements that compose the lived environment that the interior would be set in). Other courses that were introduced at this time included the likes of Furniture Design, where students designed or redesigned furniture to meet the client's needs, as well as the objectives of the concept. As seen in figure 11, students were making detailed renderings of their design that could either be used when communicating with furniture makers, or placed in concept boards (displays containing information of

the design idea to the client, such as fabric swatches, paint chips, furniture pictures, furniture layouts, or other information needed to illustrate these ideas), which can be seen in the background of figure 12. These concept boards are not just utilized in school, they are integral to the designer-client relationship and can be used to secure clients or to communicate as the project progresses.

The methods of instructions had a wide variation due to the differing backgrounds that they came from. The home courses from Domestic Arts in the 1915 were mainly based in lecture, with some demonstrations occurring. The courses within the school did have students' complete renderings for some of the assignments, but did not feature the same level of laboratory and hands-on experiences that are found in later courses.[32] The botany courses had a stronger basis in lab sciences, as the courses were offered in collaboration between the two departments. The 1929 courses within the school would start to feature more hands-on experiences for the students, with faculty demonstrations.[33] However, these would start to be reduced by the onslaught of the Great Depression, which resulted in fewer resources within the department, as well as the change of focus to courses that better helped the general public handle the economic fallout. The

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32. University of Oklahoma, "Announcement of Courses in Domestic Science and Art," *Quarterly Bulletin,* June 1915, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

33. University of Oklahoma, "School of Home Economics Announcements for 1929-1930," *Quarterly Bulletin,* February 1929, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 21.

Figure 12. Students reviewing custom furniture design renderings from course assignments. Source: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Figure 11. *Students finalizing concept boards for design presentations within the courses*. Source: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

The Decorative Design/ Interior Decoration courses were strongly grounded in studio art instruction, with students being enrolled in smaller courses to complete renderings, samples, and projects such as those featured in figure 11.[34] When the

34. Dorothy Kirk-Preston, "History of the Interior Design Program," University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 2, Folder 12, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

programs were merged in 1950, the courses featured a blend of lecture, demonstrations, and hands-on projects similar to the other majors offered within the School of Home Economics. Students were being prepared for specific careers within the industry by the projects being completed as part of the coursework. As part of this preparation, part of each assignment was completed individually and the other part as a group, so they were ready when they entered the workforce.

The Interior Design major did not remain with the School of Home Economics until it closed. The slow transition to the College of Environmental Design started in the late 70s, with it slated to being fully transitioned out of the home economics school by the fall of 1984.[35] Interior Design being moved over to architecture programming is peculiar due to the rivalry between the two professions, especially in Oklahoma where this relationship reached contentious levels multiple times. Oklahoma did not pass interior design regulation legislation until 2006, even though attempts to pass it can be traced back to 1984. Many attempts for passage were thwarted by fellow coalition members through the decades, including the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the State Home Builders Association, The Lumberman's Association, and the General Contractors Association. The AIA Oklahoma chapter proved to be one of the biggest speed bumps in the road to passage within the state, as it brought on several objections

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35. "Proposed Programmatic and Curricular Changes in the School of Human Development," University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics – Department of Human Development, Box 11, Folder 44, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 1.

or actions to derail attempts, even after being brought on board multiple times.[36] Moving the Interior Design program over allowed the program to remain as part of the university; however, it did have subtle influences on the curriculum that would not have existed had the program remained independent.

These changes that occurred within Interior Design at the school allowed it to have an intertwined, complex history within the school and the university at large. Paired with the push for professionalization of the field in order to separate design from domesticity, it helped the School of Home Economics push itself away from the domestic imagery that it had been so entrenched with at the time the move happened. This consolidation of programs that occurred so that all of the women's interests could be found in one location[37] is one of the flashpoints that led to the school being able to further move the rest of its programs towards career focuses and away from domestic housewifery. These drastic changes within the school are what metaphorically served as gutting the interiors, as the programs, focus, and outlook were renovated by this addition. The same would happen when the program left the school for the College of Environmental Design, serving as the catalyst for the school to reform again into the School of Human Development with a reworked vision.

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36. "History," Oklahoma Interior Design Coalition, accessed November 29, 2020, https://www.oidc.info/history

37. Dorothy Kirk-Preston, "History of the Interior Design Program," University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics-Department of Human Development, Box 2, Folder 12, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Domesticating Humanity

The program area that became the most prominent within the school was human development, to the point where the school changed its name to it for the last few years of existence on campus. In the beginning of the program, the focus was on childhood, with the scope expanding to encompass the entire lifespan as the program progressed. Interestingly, this is the program area that had the smallest representation within the curriculum when the school originated. When the program was started in 1915, just like the other programs within the Domestic Arts and Sciences, the mission was focused on domestic life., catering to students who "wish to become familiar with the general principles and facts of domestic science and domestic art with particular reference to their application to home making."[38] While it was an option for students to complete teacher preparation training as part of the training, it was clear that the focus of the program was to make a white girl into a refined and marriageable woman. This training could serve as a signifier to eligible bachelors that they were prepared to start a family and to assert status amongst other white women that they were well versed in proper womanhood. This status continued for a large portion of the school's history.

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38. University of Oklahoma, "Announcement of Courses in Domestic Science and Art," *Quarterly Bulletin,* June 1915, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 3.

In 1915, when the first domestic courses were being offered at the university, there was actually no singular course devoted to child or human development within the program. The education program offered a course that was required of all Domestic Science students, but also an option for those pursuing other education training at the university, dependent upon which area of education a student was pursuing. This course was Child Study, which taught stages of child development, with special interests in the "motor, social, moral, and religious development" of children.[39] This course was to be taken in the semester of study focusing more on the educational aspects of development over the physical aspects that would be the focus in later courses within the school. The only other content that students were introduced to during their studies was in a portion of the Home Administration course. This course taught students how to manage the home by covering how to organize the household and divide responsibilities, as well as systems of efficiency in housework.[40] During instruction, students received a snippet of how to care for children whilst carrying out this work and age-appropriate labor division of the housework for children. This division would be one of the slowest growing over the years before fast-tracking to be the largest program within the school.

By 1929, there was not much growth in the human development curriculum. There were four courses that fell under the umbrella, with only one of

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39. Ibid., 10.

40. Ibid., 7.

them being required; the other three elective courses were more aligned to the care and health of the body. Care of Children, the required course, was divided between the developmental factors of children and the health of the growing child.[41] This course was taken in the last semester of study alongside the apprentice teaching course, and was the only course offered at the time that directly dealt with physical human development concepts. Mental Hygiene was an elective course that taught students how to conduct techniques, both personally and within the household, that helped to cleanse and calm the mind.[42] The mental hygiene movement was the start of the mental health movement that is still prominent today, starting around 1908. This course served as a bridge between the types of courses that we would see within modern human development and the home health courses that were incorporated. The other two electives dealt with the physical health of members in the home. Home Nursing taught specific interventions needed whilst caring for ailing family members, including basic medical terminology and practices.[43] Family Health explored problems that the mother would encounter in the home, aligned with modern-day community health courses.[44] These health courses could be found in home economics curriculum

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41. University of Oklahoma, "School of Home Economics Announcements for 1929-1930," *Quarterly Bulletin,* February 1929, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

42. Ibid., 23.

43. Ibid., 22.

44. Ibid., 22.

across the country. Depending on the state, they could have had an impact on modern-day family and consumer sciences courses, with some states having courses such as medical terminology in the regular rotation of high school offerings; this is not the case in Oklahoma.

Between 1929 and the early 40s, there was slow growth of curriculum for human development, with the majority of instruction occurring when students needed to take care of the practice baby, figure 13, when they stayed in the practice or home management house. These babies would be procured in different ways, with the two most common being that they were leased for a set amount of time (usually from one to two academic years), or were sent there by the parents or agency in charge of the baby's care. The babies would remain in the care of the students and faculty staying in the practice or home management house. This practice was common in home economic programs across the country, with both the Oklahoma Agricultural & Mechanical College (modernly known as Oklahoma State University)[45] and Oklahoma University. There was a particular practice baby that was sent to the practice house while his mother went to Elmore City (around 72 kilometers away from Norman) to teach.[46] It is unclear if this arrangement was caused by the Great Depression, which was in its height during this time, or if these arrangements were caused by other external factors.[47] The

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45. Mary Phillips, "The Archivist: Home economics classes once included a real 'practice baby,'" *The Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City, OK), March 26, 2012.

46. "Oklahomans at Home and Abroad," *Sooner Magazine* 6, no. 2 (1933): 32.

Figure 13. *One of the practice babies that were part of the practice house experience for students within the program.* Source: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics-Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

name and year that the child in figure 5 served as the practice baby is unknown, but this child, like all practice babies, would have been cared for around the clock, with a detailed schedule of when different students or faculty members were to care for them with the latest child rearing techniques.

By the 1970s, the coursework in child development had exploded, with three concentrations available for students to study within the school: Child

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47. The author would like to note that while we have clear evidence of practice baby arrangements being made without the exchange of money, there is no concrete evidence that this university engaged with leasing babies. There is slight circumstantial evidence that hints this may have been a possibility at one time.

Development, Family Relations, and Early Childhood Education were all available within the Individual and Family Development (IFD) program as part of the Bachelor of Science in General Home Economics. These concentrations were related, but focused on specific facets within the career prospects of this field, so that students would be strong candidates once they left the university. There were courses that were required for all concentrations, and then there were the specialized ones that aligned with a particular concentration. Students would be able to add electives as well as selecting projects and practicums to tailor the degree to themselves and their goals.

Human Growth and Development was a course that covered the entire lifespan, from conception to death, with interest in the cognitive, physiological, and psychological development of humans as they move through different stages of life.[48] This was an introductory survey course that was either required or strongly encouraged for all majors to be taken in the first year of study. It laid a foundation for other content that connected to the development of humans. This course was one of the most popular for students from outside of the program area and school. There were specialized courses that dived into the different stages of the lifespan that would be taken by students to understand development that was relevant to their concentration. One of these specialty courses that was in all of the concentrations was Early Childhood, which detailed cognitive, psychological,

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48. IFD 1403 Human Growth and Development, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

and physiological development in children aged two to five (or preschool and kindergarten years).[49] Contrastingly, courses such as Adulthood were only taken by those in the Family Relations concentration, which covered the theoretical and empirical changes throughout the periods of adulthood.[50] These courses that covered development through the lifespan served as the theoretical foundation that all other courses in the Individual and Family Development area would build upon, that the other threads of knowledge would be woven into.

The program had courses that did not always sit well with members of the university and community at large. These controversial options were mainly based in morality and the cultural status quo within society that went beyond the university itself playing into the national conversation. These courses were Alternative Lifestyles and Sexuality, with the latter being the most controversial based on multiple talking points within the class. Alternate Life Styles delved into theory and research behind American adult lifestyles that were outside of the normal patriarchal structure.[51] Some of the structures discussed within the course

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49. IFD 3413 Early Childhood, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

50. IFD 3443 Adulthood, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

51. IFD 4603 Alternative Life Styles, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

are so common nowadays that they are now considered normal within American society, such dual-career households. This was the first structure discussed within the class after the history and theoretical perspectives of family structures were covered. As the Pew Research Center notes after analyzing United States census data, 1980 was the break-even point where there were roughly the same number of families that had only the father working as families that had dual careers; with 1990 being the census year where the majority of households had dual careers.[52] This course topic was taught alongside topics such open relationships and marriages, divorces, communes, cohabitation, as well as homosexual relationships, all of which were interwoven in the same course as alternative to the norm. This presentation continued to portray these relationships as problematic and to "other" those who chose to engage in these relationships.

Relationships is not the only the only place that the school instigated problematizing or drew controversy from the community. Human Sexuality was a course that instructed students on the physiological, sociological, and psychological aspects of human sexuality within American society.[53] Exact topics within the content, as well as how the topics were approached, were dependent upon the instructor, with lessons ranging from anatomy to intimacy, contraception

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52. Pew Research Center, “The Rise in Dual Income Households,” *Pew Research,* June 18, 2015, https://www.pewresearch.org/ft_dual-income-households-1960-2012-2/

53. IFD 2603 Human Sexuality, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

to those living with a disability. Part, if not all, of this course was groundbreaking at the time, as it provided access to information that was not readily available prior to this point due to legal and cultural barriers that were in place. However, this course also continued to reinforce the ostracization of those on the fringe of society while perpetuating morality and community roles. The content that was being presented reinforced specific views that were "more closely to the heterosocial rather than the sexual aspect of heterosexuality."[54] Teaching this course was not as grounded in liberation as it was in ensuring that the 'ideal' versions of morality, identity, and gender were what prevailed in the cultural landscape.

Sex education was slowly developing during the 1970s to be more direct on human sexuality. This was embraced in some instances, whilst also bringing in opposition to some or all of the components. Some of these barriers included the Second Red Scare, which perpetuated that Communism was behind sex education as a means to destroy the holistic American family; as well as the *Roe v. Wade* ruling becoming tied to sex education and American politics.[55] With Oklahoma being located strongly in the Bible belt, views on the evolving curriculum of sex education would lean to the conservative and religious. The late 60s and early 70s is when this curriculum started to involve more than the 'scientific facts' of sex,

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54. Susan K. Freeman, *Sex Goes to School: Girls and Sex Education before the 1960s* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press: 2010), 79.

55. Peter Scales, "Sex Education in the '70s and '80s: Accomplishments, Obstacles and Emerging Issues," *Family Relations* 30, no. 4, (1981): 557-559.

involving ethical or moral concerns while also being tied to marriage and family.[56] This fight was not isolated to Oklahoma, nor even to the Bible belt, with members of the Anaheim Union High School District receiving death threats due to society not being able "to see sex education as anything but the vanguard of a communist takeover threatening the community at its essence."[57]

The Human Sexuality course, that was introduced in the late 1970s, taught other topics that led to the hurly-burly aside from the anticommunism wrought into American society. Birth control had become available to the public by this point; its inclusion in the curriculum caused people to believe that this would encourage women to partake, thereby limiting their ability to be successful wives by not bearing children to start a family. This further intertwined the identity and meaning of what it meant to be a wife, a mother, and a woman. Homosexuality, specifically male homosexuality, was paralleled in the course alongside sexually transmitted diseases including Gay-Related Immune Deficiency (GRID) or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). This blending furthered the aversion to AIDS, as it likened the disease to the decline of morality and the status of families within the country, which some viewed as full-on assaults on their ideology and livelihood, furthering the censorship on the subject.[58] These events,

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56. Sharon Lamb, "Just the Facts? The. Separation of Sex Education from Moral Education," *Educational Theory* 63, no. 5, (2013): 444-445.

57. Natlia Mehlman, "Sex Ed… and the Reds? Reconsidering the Anaheim Battle over Sex Education, 1962-1969," *History of Education Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (2007): 212.

as well as the way they were presented, would further lead to reaffirming homosexuality, AIDS, and other topics as deviances from what we should be as white Americans. Further reinforcement of this occurred when the movement of anticommunism, specifically the John Birch Society, asserted that sexuality education courses inclusive of "sexual methods is followed by encouragement to experiment and practice."[59]

The human development courses did not just focus on the years in later life; the entire lifespan was covered with a concentration focusing on the education of young children. The Early Childhood Education (ECE) major prepared students to be teachers and administrators within daycare and preschool programs. This major was housed within the School of Home Economics, with it being managed by the both the school and the College of Education in later years. Attached to the program and also utilized by other majors within IFD was the Institute for Child Development. The institute is a working pre-school program where ECE students can observe and interact with children ages two to five in a clinical setting. Both the Institute of Child Development and the Early Childhood Education major were transferred to the College of Education following the closure of the School of Home Economics.

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58. Peter Scales, "Overcoming Future Barriers to Sexuality Education," *Theory Into Practice* 28, no. 3 (1989): 175.

59. Luther Baker, "The Rising Furor over Sex Education," *The Family Coordinator* 18, no. 3 (1969): 215.

Many of the courses within the ECE major involved students either working in or observing at the Institute of Child Development in order to be prepared for their future careers. One of the first departmental courses that students took was Creative Activities, where students learned about the creative process in young children, as well as preparing activities that helped to enhance this process at developmentally appropriate levels for children within the various classes.[60] As seen in figure 14, children within the institute enjoyed various activities that aided in the expression of creativity whilst also exploring their roles through play. This course was to be taken at the end of the second year of study, being an introduction into what it was like inside of early care programs as a professional, with the students having some background knowledge from previous courses that informed them of what to look for in their observations. Another course that utilized the institute was Program Planning and Leadership, which instructed students on overseeing and administering a successful early care program.[61] Program Planning was to be taken in the last year of study, preferably before the Teaching Experience course, so that students could be prepared to apply knowledge from all of their coursework into planning, implementing, and

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60. IFD 2202 Creative Activities, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

61. IFD 4203 Program Planning and Leadership, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Figure 14. *Early care students engaging in play at the Institute of Child Development*. Source: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

overseeing the various activities and elements that are part of an early care program. The goal was for students to be able to recreate the type of community and environment as seen in figure 14 within their own classroom before eventually becoming directors of programs.

Out of the different topics covered within the School of Home Economics, human development was the area that was grounded the most in lecture-based instruction. This was also the area that grew the fastest within the school, as it became central to the school's mission. The 1915 course was heavily based in developing psychological and pedagogical traditions of the time that did not approach the subject of child development outside of educational settings. The 1929 course addressed this missing gap by focusing on the development of the

child within the home, including how parenting can impact development. The 1929 Care of Children course still utilized mainly lecture-based instruction to cover the mostly theoretical content of the course, with students gaining more hands-on experience with the practice baby when it was their turn to be part of the practice house. Demonstrations alongside student practicing skills were utilized in the home nursing courses for a couple of years before being pared down to mainly instructor demonstrations. This change was mainly due to time constraints, with some students choosing to practice these skills outside of instruction time.

1935 saw the introduction of the Institute of Child Development to the university. This provided an experiential learning site where students could both observe and interact with young children. With the introduction of the institute, more courses in child development were slowly added to the school in order to better prepare students for this experience. The addition of these courses meant a shifting focus within the school as each of the areas slowly broadened, which is part of the reason that the home nursing courses were slowly phased out of the school. By the 1940s, there were courses in child development, the practice house, and the institute that were staffed by full-time professionals with help from home economics students and oversight by faculty members. These courses continued to grow, expanding to cover the entire lifespan, resulting in the creation of the multiple concentrations, in line with trends within collegiate home economics.

In the last years of the school, there were a large number of courses with a wide variety of instructional methods. Theoretical courses were sprinkled throughout the offerings, creating a balance so that they were not all in the front

or back half of the program of study, unlike other programs within the school. The rest had a mixture of demonstrations, observations, and project-based learning, as well as experiential learning occurring within the instruction. The practice house and institute provided sites of experiential learning for the students to apply their knowledge while also being prepared for their future lives outside of the university. The beginning of the 1980s saw many changes for the program and the school at large. In 1981, the faculty decided to change the school name to the School of Human Development, restructuring the school along the way so that human development cooperated with the other two remaining programs incorporating how the lifespan impacts the specialty. This even went to the new graduate programs that were implemented during the last decade of the school. The master's and doctoral programs in Individual and Family Development were to be the only programs that came from a human development background and focus only. The programs at Oklahoma State University were grounded in home economics education, while the offerings at the University of Oklahoma were rooted in education or psychology.[62]

Human development and childcare were not stand-alone parts of the home economics curriculum within the school initially. Yes, childcare was incorporated into certain aspects of the curriculum in regard to what it meant to be a mother

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62. “Proposed Programmatic and Curricular Changes in the School of Human Development,” University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics – Department of Human Development, Box 11, Folder 44, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 4.

and a successful wife. Development of the child itself was not introduced until later, and only basic parenting was covered, as it was expected that you would either learn from your own mother, or that you would hire someone to do the majority of this work for you. Courses focusing on human development were not added until after the other program areas started to expand, branching out of their domesticated positionality and entering more professionalized curriculum. This addition occurred around the time that the university rounded up all of the women's interests on campus into the School of Home Economics. The way in which the school approached some of these topics could be seen as an attempt to domesticate humanity. While they made certain topics available, it was done so in a controlled manner, continuing to perpetuate their view of the material–for example, the Alternate Life Styles and Human Sexuality courses that continued to reinforce what the acceptable family structure was and how people should behave in order to belong in society. "Othering" those who lived outside of their version of acceptable life as deviant or alternative was an attempt to corral these people into a domesticated human experience, saying that those outside this experience were not enough.

Building a Home (Things We Lost in the Fire)

The last of the five areas taught within the School of Home Economics was home economics education. This was a comprehensive experience that took on classes from each of the areas, adding specific home economics methods courses alongside the required courses from the College of Education in order to graduate with a teaching credential within the state. Due to the requirements of

this major, it eventually became managed by both entities whilst remaining housed within the school. This would also become the first major eliminated from the school near the end as the school fought to remain open.

In the first iteration of the degree in 1915, there were only two courses where the students dealt with content specific to domestic science, which were both housed within the education program. The Teacher's Course in Domestic Science presented information on how students could successfully lead instruction in the domestic sciences, including supervising students in tasks such as cooking and sewing, which could be dangerous in a group setting.[63] This course was to be taken in the beginning of the last year of study and was required by all who wished to teach after graduating from the School of Education. Practice Teaching was the other course where students would teach under supervision in preparation for teaching on their own.[64] This course was similar to modern-day student teaching, with a few differences. First, all students within the School of Education would teach at Norman High School, as opposed to sporadic placements at different schools throughout the state as is common in the modern day. Second, this course could be taken at any time during the last two years of study as long as certain course requirements were met, whereas we would now have a specific

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63. University of Oklahoma, "Announcement of Courses in Domestic Science and Art," *Quarterly Bulletin,* June 1915, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 8.

64. Ibid., 10.

time (generally the last semester of study) where students would enroll in this course.

By the 1929 update, the same two courses were still required, with the addition of two other courses and an option for those wishing to pursue a graduate degree. The only difference in the Teacher's Course and Practice Teaching was when they were offered, with Practice Teaching now at the end of study. The Teacher's Course was now called Home Economics Methods and would be taken after initial courses in home economics was taken, so students could prepare lessons for their Practice Teaching. The two new courses were Housewifery and Advanced Home Administration, which were to be taken sequentially. Housewifery introduced the application of knowledge from other courses into the practice of being a housewife. Students would sometimes tour or visit the practice home in preparation for their stay there.[65] Advanced Home Administration was where students stayed in the practice house for the semester. Students would have a rotating schedule of duties while they lived there.[66] Both of these courses were required for all home economics majors; however, preference in Advanced Home Administration would be given to education students in the event that there was not enough space in the practice house. Supervised Home Project was a course

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65. University of Oklahoma. "School of Home Economics Announcements for 1929-1930," *Quarterly Bulletin,* February 1929, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 22.

66. Ibid., 23.

available to students seeking graduate credit, where they would complete an independent project that demonstrated the application of home economics education principles.[67] This was strongly recommended for those wishing to pursue teaching home economics education at the university level.

By the 1970s, there were some updates and restructuring of the home economics education courses. The main courses were still in the content areas from the College of Education required for certification through the Oklahoma State Department of Education. There were only two courses for home economics education specifically, with one being the updated teacher's course/home economics methods Teaching of Home Economics, and the other being a Directed Readings course. Teaching of Home Economics was officially brought over to the school and heavily rewritten to meet the updated needs of teaching home economics in Oklahoma. This included incorporating the Future Homemakers of America (FHA) into the classroom, budgeting allocations from the State Department of Vocational Education for classroom resources, and instructional considerations that were unique to home economics.[68] During this course, students would also practice instructional techniques on each other, as seen in figure 15. This would allow students to have additional practice before entering their student teaching at the end of the program. Directed Readings was the other

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67. Ibid., 23.

68. HEED 4323 Teaching of Home Economics, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Figure 15. *Students practice proctoring an assessment.* Source: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

course that was to be taken concurrently with student teaching; students were to read at least one book on classroom discipline (management) and one on home economics methods.[69] Students would use these readings along with observations from their student teaching to provide self-reflective feedback on three of the units that they developed and taught as part of the student teaching experience.

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69. HEED 4990 Directed Readings, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box

These courses incorporated lecture with hands-on experience for the students to learn from. The practice home became the signature piece of collegiate home economics programs across the country, offering students the chance to apply knowledge, learning mastery through a simulated experience that they would then take with them and use in either their own teaching or as domesticated housewives. Through these classes, students would graduate with useable lesson plans, as well as instructional tools for use in their own classrooms. Students would also be experiencing what it was like to be a teacher through the instructional sessions within the methods course prior to entering the full role-playing occurring in their student teaching with an experienced teacher.

The home economics education was one of seventeen programs within Oklahoma in 1979.[70] This is when the faculty of the school, in consultation with the university and the Oklahoma Department of Vocational Education, decided to phase out the program due to declining enrollment, which was a national trend. In comparison, at the time of this writing, there is only one program remaining in Oklahoma where students graduate with a full degree in home economics education, now referred to as family and consumer sciences. Otherwise, a student will have to seek alternative teacher certification with a degree in a related area.

15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

70. "Proposed Programmatic and Curricular Changes in the School of Human Development," University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics – Department of Human Development, Box 11, Folder 44, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 1-2.

Home economics education was the first program officially cut from the school, with the reorganization happening within two years of the vote, as the last students within the program were graduating. This was the beginning of the end for the school; losing the education concentration was like a fire to the School of Home Economics. The school was not able to recover after that decision, closing within ten years. Home economics education also served as a tool to spread the ideologies found within the school to younger students, since these courses were required for the students in order to become teachers, and the pool of knowledge on which they would base their instruction would likely include these influences. Home economics teachers from this program created a large ripple effect as they would garner positions in schools throughout the state, even entering neighboring states. Often, they were the only home economics teacher in the school, so they would instruct a large portion of the school's population. This influence brought many great things to the students and to society; however, it also brought downsides to students that they would either carry with them or attempt to unlearn. All of these things, the good, the bad, the history, the opportunity, the possibilities, were lost in the fire when the program, then the school, was closed at the university.

Chapter IV

MEET ME AT BURTON HALL

Yes??? You seniors? You really have something to tell about, some lively facts. You juniors? There is still time! You also have the potential for keeping these facts lively. What are you going to do? Who are you? What would you like to suggest as ways of making things more likely in home economics? What will you do to make them so?[1]

- Mary Warren
Professor and Chairman, School of Home Economics, the University of Oklahoma

The curriculum of the School of Home Economics was important to the school and how it operated. One of the things that aided instruction, almost as important as the instruction itself, was the physical space that the school resided in, along with the equipment utilized within the instruction. Home economics courses required specialized classrooms with equipment and other supplies that could start to add up in costs. The costs for the equipment, supplies, materials, and overhead such as additional insurance can be one of the reasons that home economics programs are cut when there are budgetary constraints at the institution. Once these programs are cut and the assets are liquidated or reallocated, it can become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to restart these programs, as these resources would need be purchased at once upfront, as opposed to rotational replacements when they are being maintained. This can be

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1. Mary Warren, *Lively Facts and Figures,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics, Box 3, Folder 2 Publicity Files, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

seen when the School of Home Economics cut the fashion program prior to the school's closure. A newspaper article announcing the decision noted that the reason was due to the program not receiving as many resources as nearby fashion programs, but remained hopeful that the school would restart the program in the near future.[2] This did not happen, and instead, the entire school closed within a few years.

While programs can be restarted, such as was the case with Oklahoma State University's (OSU) family and consumer sciences education, which was brought back in 2010, it is unlikely that the same will happen at the University of Oklahoma (OU). This is for a few reasons: The university would have to source equipment and space for almost all of the courses in the areas, as interior design is the only program that remains; unlike OSU, who still had all of the programs in the College of Human Sciences. Therefore, OSU only had to bring in one new faculty member and the courses for education. Contrastingly, OU would have to bring in all of the courses and multiple faculty members to instruct these courses, along with the equipment and space to make the courses happen. This is why space is so important to home economics, as these courses cannot occur just anywhere and be effective. The faculty members also hold these spaces in high regard and are heavily invested in how they are set up in order for instruction to occur the way they want it to occur.

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2. Al King, "School Suspends Fashion Program," *OU Daily* (Norman, OK), October 8, 1987.

Fashion Collection

The Fashion Arts, Clothing and Textiles (FACT) program within the school utilized more than just written curriculum. This program required specialized equipment and rooms for classes to occur. If the program had not had these, then it would not have been as successful, garnering students from across multiple states. Eventually, the program would start a prestigious partnership with the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York City, regularly recognized as one of the top schools of fashion in the world. Students in the program did not just walk away saying that they knew how to complete certain tasks associated with their curriculum. They had tangible proof, thanks in part to these exterior curriculum components. When the program first started, there was very little equipment, and the faculty had to make do with regular classroom spaces until the program gained traction. By the time the new home economics building opened, the fashion program had proven itself worthy of these additional resources.

Fashion is a multi-faceted industry, with university programs having various options to explore in preparing students for careers within the industry. The biggest question that a university program must ask itself when preparing curriculum for fashion programs, is which area(s) of the industry to focus on. Modern-day fashion programs within non-specialized fashion or art schools can generally be divided into merchandising and design. Merchandising can be summed up as the more business side of fashion, with students learning the marketing of items, buying and planning inventory for stores, promotional

techniques, and more. Design can cover both the planning and designing of collections as well as the production of fashion items. The School of Home Economics had both of these tracks, along with a fashion illustration track, for some time before they were phased out prior to the other programs. Fashion illustration as a major was becoming obsolete, as the job pool was shrinking and the few career opportunities still available in this area were generally going to graduates of fine arts programs as opposed to fashion students.[3] While this particular program required special equipment not needed in other fashion classes, the drafting tables and materials were used in some of the interior design courses as well as the fashion illustration courses that continued to be offered as a necessity for the design major.

The design major required specialized equipment such as sewing machines, dress forms, irons, and large tables for cutting patterns, along with space for students to store the projects, just to name some of the top things required. This resulted in a large classroom on the second floor of the new home economics building, with lockers for students attached so that the classes did not have to be broken into smaller sections as they did in the previous buildings that were not designed for this space. The lack of space could have been a small factor in the slower development of garment construction courses at the university. The

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3. "Proposed Programmatic and Curricular Changes in the School of Human Development," University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics – Department of Human Development, Box 11, Folder 44, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

main factor remained that home economics needed to make itself appear rigorous enough to belong in the university, which followed the national trend within home economics.

Design was not the only specialty within the fashion program that needed specific space for instructional reasons. Merchandising courses needed an area to practice making displays for various aspects of the future careers related to this area. Figure 16 shows the plans for a display case within the new building. There were many iterations of this design that faculty members meticulously toiled over to ensure that it was exactly what they were wanting. The case would be in a central location so that various students could see the contents on display. It was important that the case had ample room, with the ability to be easily changed to accommodate a range of displays. However, the case could not become an obstacle within the layout of the building, and it needed to be able to be secured for when valuable items were borrowed for display. All of this needed to happen while remaining aesthetically pleasing and with adjustable lighting that could be easily managed by students for the various displays they would create.

Sometimes the displays that were being put together by the school exceeded the display space within the building. This happened when Dr. Uptegraft and the fashion program put on an exhibition of gowns worn by previous First Ladies of Oklahoma. The official exhibition occurred at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City, which became the talk of the town after its premiere. The idea of the exhibition was to mirror *The First Ladies* exhibit at the National Museum of American History, part of the Smithsonian

system. This exhibit displays the inauguration gowns of First Ladies throughout history. Like the national version that it draws inspiration from, the Oklahoma version featured a mixture of original gowns and accurate recreations.[4] This project was made possible by a collaboration of OU faculty members, students, alumnae, community members, the Fashion Group International (FGI) Oklahoma City chapter, and funding from the Oklahoma Diamond Jubilee Commission. One of the community members who aided in this project was Shirley Bellmon, former First Lady of Oklahoma from 1963-1967 and 1987-1991. Mrs. Bellmon not only donated her own gowns that she made herself to the cause, but she also aided in the repair of the historic pieces that were ravaged by age.[5] This exhibition was a massive undertaking that took years of planning and sewing to execute and would not have been possible without the specific space afforded to the school in the home economics building. In the years prior to the premiere of the exhibit, samples were tested, and demonstrations of the process took place in the school's display cases, such the one in figure 16.

The First Ladies of Oklahoma exhibit was not the only time that the school partnered with the FGI chapter of Oklahoma City. Together, a substantial curated historic costume and textile collection was amassed, with a brochure

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4. Kathryn Jenson White, "Designing Women," *Sooner Magazine* 8, no. 1 (1988): 26.

5. Joy Donovan, "Mrs. Bellmon Donates Dress, Talents," *The Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City, OK), August 31, 1982.

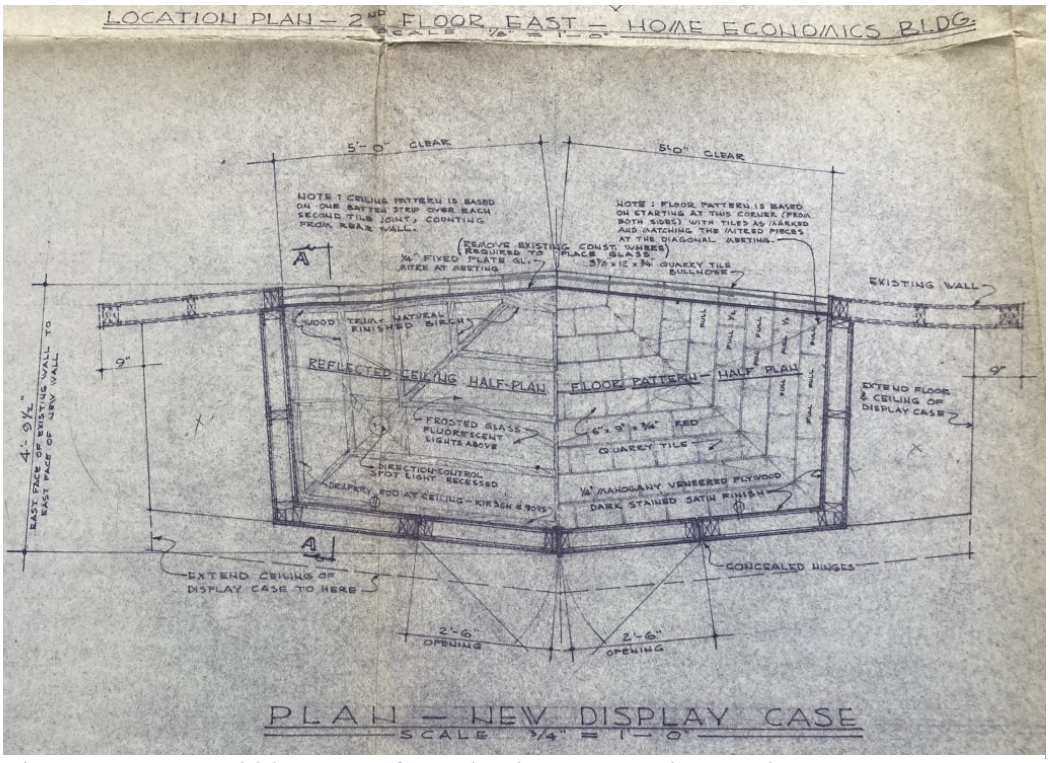

Figure 16. *Revised blueprints for a display case in the new home economics.* Source: University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 2, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

noting that it was the largest collection of its kind in the region.[6] This is interesting to note, since the time of this collection being curated was during the height of museums and other historical repositories taking the stance that fashion was not art and therefore not worthy of preservation or display.[7] This view still

6. Home Economics: Plan Your Future, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 3, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

7. *The First Monday in May,* directed by Andrew Rossi (2016; New York, NY: Magnolia Pictures, 2016), Film.

continues to this day from some institutions and professionals. It was even perpetuated by the university; when the school closed, the collection was relocated multiple times before coming to the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History, then being transferred to the Oklahoma Historical Society collections, where it resides as of this writing.

The FGI also worked with the school to help prepare students to be the future leaders of the fashion industry. This partnership is similar to the workforce education and business development relationships we see today in career and technology education settings. The members of the FGI would arrange internships, donations, industry connections, and so on. All of this was in efforts to facilitate fashion shows and study tours to New York and Europe, amongst other things. The presence of this relationship is one of the reasons that the School of Home Economics was able to be one of only a few programs in the country to secure the prestigious Fashion Institute of Technology's (FIT) Visiting Student Program. This program allowed students to attend FIT for their junior year to earn an associate's degree before returning to finish their bachelor's at the University of Oklahoma.[8] These accomplishments and connections were the reasons that the program was rapidly growing, with plans to implement a doctoral program, including the hiring of additional faculty, made in the mid-1980s.[9] Instead, the

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8. Joy Donovan, "Fashion Students Offered Year at New York School," *The Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City, OK), September 30, 1982.

9. FACT Faculty Meeting Minutes, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box

entire program was suspended, with Dr. Uptegraft, the only full-time fashion faculty member who also had tenure, being transferred over to the interior architecture program for other duties until she retired due to illness.

Institute of Child Development

The fashion program was not the only program within the school to receive additional space and resources for the students to learn from. Human growth and development had the Institute of Child Development, previously called the Child Development Laboratory. This setting allowed students to observe young (two- to five-year-old) children in a natural environment that allowed both the children and the college students to learn. This laboratory was a working pre-school that was founded in the 1930s with Hedwig Schaefer serving as the first director.[10] This particular lab was started before the human development program was fully developed; at this time, there were only a few courses on child development within the school. The opening of the institute could be due to two factors. The first is that the school was planning on opening a nursery school as part of the new building, which would coincide with the new courses in child development. The second is that the institute could serve as a resource for faculty, staff, and community members to provide reasonably priced childcare that would be safe during the Great Depression.

15, Folder 15, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

10. Establishment of Child Development Lab, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

When it was first founded, the institute was located in a small house that was once being considered as a possibility to serve as the school's practice house. The institute was eventually moved to the Acacia house, which had previously served as the Acacia Fraternity house before becoming one of the prior practice houses.[11] The building featured state-of-the-art amenities for the pre-school and was fitted with an observation booth with a one-way mirror and speakers so that students could observe the children at play without interference.

In 1995, the university tore down the buildings that housed the institute, as well as the old practice house/shadowbox building, to make way for the Elm Street parking garage.[12] By this time, the institute had already been transferred to the College of Education with the closure of the School of Human Development. The institute moved to the Cross Center before coming to its current location near the intersection of Boyd and Berry streets. As the institute grew and adapted over time, so did its philosophy. One point that remained constant through its history, just changing the words used to express it, is "to host a quality education which included hands-on experiences, raising questions within the learning experiences that enhanced a child's knowledge of the world in which they live."[13] The

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11. Move to Acacia House, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

12. Robert Medley, "Opinions Vary on Parking Lot," *The Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City, OK), November 14, 1994.

13. Letters and Miscellaneous Correspondence, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human

institute is still active today on campus, remaining as one of the few reminders of the School of Home Economics.

Practice House

The practice (also known as a home management) house served students in various home economics majors, in the beginning being required for all students before being tapered down to education or general home economics majors as the student population grew. The practice house was not a secret covenstead where students met under the cloak of darkness. Instead, it was a place where home economics students would go towards the end of their studies to demonstrate that they had mastered what they learned. Experiences might have varied for students who resided in the practice house depending on which faculty member was in charge for that semester.

Practice houses were prominent in collegiate home economic programs nationally, regardless of the size of the university. They were dwellings that were used in conjunction with an upper-level course similar to a capstone course today. In this house, a handful of students would live with a supervising faculty member. This would last about eight weeks to a semester, then the next group would come in, so that there was always a group of students residing at the house. While living in the house, the students would be in charge of every aspect, usually on a rotating basis, being graded on how they carried out their duties and the application of knowledge learned throughout the program. Some practice homes

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Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

even had a practice baby that would be cared for; this living baby would be sourced through various means. This faded away at participating schools after childcare laboratories gained traction, since more students could learn and more children with a wider age range could be housed in the laboratories.

The practice house at the University of Oklahoma was incorporated shortly after the first courses in the domestic sciences and arts were offered. The house was part of the Home Administration course that would be taken in the third or fourth year by Home Economics Education majors. In the beginning, there would be six students who lived at the residence for six weeks.[14] This would allow for there to be two groups of students each semester, with time to set up and organize between each group, with the groups consulting each other to aid in a smooth transition.[15] In some instances, this schedule would allow for three groups of students, on the rare occasion that there were simply too many students who had to have the course in order to graduate.

The house was watched over by one faculty member who was there to solely observe and ensure the safety of the students, as well as the practice baby when present. All tasks related to the management of the home were carried out by the students. A schedule would be established with the duties rotating each

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14. University Catalogs, University Archives Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

15. University of Oklahoma, "School of Home Economics Announcements for 1929-1930," *Quarterly Bulletin,* February 1929, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

week; this way, each student did everything at some point during their stay in the house. While the titles and specific duties changed throughout the years, the following are an example of the roles and responsibilities: The food manager planned and prepared the menus, made the shopping list, bought the food, and oversaw the preparation of the meals. The assistant food manager helped the food manager, helped to make sure that the shopping list was within budget, helped to ensure that the menu was nutritionally balanced, and prepared the food. The housekeeper made sure that the home was clean and sanitary, and cleaned woodwork, shelves, floors, and dishes. The hostess planned activities and parties, ensured that the décor created the right ambiance for the occasion, changed the flowers, and managed the guest list. The clothing manager was in charge of the laundry and mended any garments in disarray. The furnishings manager was in charge of the layout of furniture and the linens; any mending or pressing of linens was carried out by them.[16] While each student was in charge of one area, they could all help each other and accomplish all of their tasks. In years when a practice baby was present in the house, either the assistant food manager would become the one in charge of the baby's care, with the previous duties being absorbed by the food manager; or the different tasks related to the care of the baby would be divided amongst the six girls.

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16. Beverly Beauchamp, "Coeds Have Complete Run of House, Receive Practical On-the-Job Training," *The Oklahoma Daily* (Norman, OK), March 2, 1959, p. 4. University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, School of Home Economics UA RG 40/24/01, Box 5, Folder 4, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Practical application of the skills learned in the program was the main focus of the practice house. The school said this of the house: "It is a frame house consisting of seven rooms, a large sleeping porch and screened in porch. It is modern, tastefully but simply furnished and contains many pieces of electrical equipment which are found extremely useful by the students."[17] This comes from a bulletin that would be sent to potential students to advertise the program, with heavy emphasis placed on the practice house and its importance for preparing students for their future roles as wives and mothers. This particular bulletin comes from a time period of exponential growth in the school, with there already being plans for a new home economics building, house, and nursery school.[18] While the house was fully supported by the school and its faculty, the university did not support the school or the house in the same way.

Prior to the new practice house being built, the university did not own the building and would instead lease a new house every few years. This would eventually be used as leverage against the faculty of the school each time a new house was being searched for. In correspondence between the purchasing office and the office of President Cross, "There are some concerns of selecting a new property. The ladies of the school are not being cooperative in choosing a

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17. University of Oklahoma, "School of Home Economics Announcements for 1929-1930," *Quarterly Bulletin,* February 1929, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma, p. 23.

18. S. Roy Hadsell, "Faculty Page," *Sooner Magazine* 12, no. 4, December 1939, p. 8.

location. They say that they do not want to purchase a house until they know more about the new building and its location. Apparently having it far away is too much for them."[19] They went on to talk about problems with previous leases and houses that had been utilized by the university. At times, there were different complaints about how difficult managing the needs of the practice house had been, and to look into stopping the program. All of this occurred on an inner-office memo that was postcard style, which easily could have been read by anyone without tampering with seals. The house that became the subject of this chain of memos can be seen in figure 17. This was the last of the buildings where the university would sign a long-term lease and then heavily renovate it to accommodate the needs of the program. After this, the university eventually made good on its promise to build a practice house located on campus and near the new home economics building, even though it was still a point of contention. Nevertheless, the faculty continued to fight for the house and the educational opportunities it provided the students. If you want to visit the last practice house that was owned by the university, just stop by the Elm Street parking garage, as the house was torn down in 1995.

The practice house was more than a temporary residence for the students. It created a community of learning where bonds were formed that lasted outside of the six weeks and the four walls. It allowed the students to put what they

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19. Interoffice memorandum, University Archives, Cross Presidential Papers Collection, UA RG 03/01/09, Box 46, Location 12614, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Figure 17. *University of Oklahoma practice house 1932.* Source: University of Oklahoma. "School of Home Economics Announcements for 1932-1933," *Quarterly Bulletin,* February 1932, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma. p. 8.

learned previously on its legs so that they could see what they were able to accomplish. This space allowed for more than reinforcement of prior curriculum; students were able to practice applying techniques and ideas that would help in the future situations these students would find themselves in. For the education majors, it allowed them to see how to create hands-on educational experiences where their own students could learn in a safe environment before being left to their own devices. While they would not have their own high school students living in a house for a period of time, they would be in an environment where they same ideologies were applied.

These were the educational principles that lay at the base of home economics. All of the courses and curricula were tethered to the idea of preparing students for life. Home economics would take these students on a whirlwind of

career opportunities that were previously closed off or not a reality for women, from food chemists in test kitchens to home economists developing products and feedback for manufacturers of home goods. Home economics took students out of the home while keeping them in a space that they were familiar with and safe in, a home in and of itself. The practice house was about more than learning how to manage a home: it was about learning how to create that space and taking it with them wherever they went.

While it did create educational opportunities that were positive for the students, the practice house continued to perpetuate certain points of motherhood and the domesticated housewife. The practice babies served as the center for many of these points, as they brought up this rhetoric of who could be a mother. Practice babies were living babies that would be used for a certain period of time and were sourced in various ways. This could be leasing the baby for a small rental fee from middle to lower class families, to obtaining babies from the foster care system, as well as numerous other methods. While it is unclear how the University of Oklahoma procured the children utilized in the practice baby program on a regular basis, there is one account where the baby belonged to a young woman who needed to move away to teach during the 1930s. Most of the time, the biological family members of the babies were only allowed to visit a few times each year for a specified amount of time. The latest theories of child development were utilized for the care of the practice babies, which at times

included regimented schedules without unnecessary holding and physical contact of the children.[20]

Class Buildings

For years, the School of Home Economics had been housed in Old Science Hall, sharing space with other departments and programs. The school had outgrown its space and was looking to move to a building of its own. The faculty had been continuously appeased that a new building was coming; they just had to wait for this or that. In the 1920's, they were outwardly optimistic, even writing in the bulletin, "The plans for the future include a new Home Economics Building located on the southern part of campus near the new library and the Residence Halls, and a new Practice Home and Nursery School, both to be situated near the Home Economics Building. All three buildings will embody the best ideas in structures of their type…."[21] The waiting continued for many years until the new buildings were opened in 1952.[22]

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20. Lisa Grunwald's *Irresistible Henry House* serves as a depiction of the home economics practice house outside of the purely clinical gaze of some scholarship. While a fiction book, it does have accurate representation of the role of the practice house within the program, as well as some implications of the practice baby program for both the child and the university members.

21. School of Home Economics, University of Oklahoma Bulletin 1929. University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, School of Home Economics UA RG 40/24/01, Box 2, Folder 3, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

22. Carol J. Burr, "The Legacy of Burton Hall," *Sooner Magazine* 24, no. 4, Summer 2004, p. 32.

The faculty members were relentless in preparing for their move to the new building; as seen in figures 18 and 19, faculty members were very particular about the details of their new space. They prepared countless drawings and diagrams of how each space should be designed, often going back and forth with the architects on the project. The department also gathered numerous data to support their claims for the need of the new building, garnering the support of the community and alumnae along the way. Dr. Burton was the biggest advocate for this need, being at the forefront for all the actions that led to the eventual opening of the new home economics buildings.

The spaces that were afforded the school were used in multiple ways. When its original purpose was no longer needed, the faculty would find a new use for it, innovating by finding ways to incorporate multiple aspects of the school. One example of this incorporation was that in the practice house, students from the interior design courses would be able to use the furniture found within the house to learn upholstery techniques. When the practice house was no longer needed, the faculty members turned it into a store run by the fashion club, Shadowbox. The Shadowbox Store, as seen in figure 20, was a place where members of the university community could sell items that they made on consignment. The merchandising students would work on displaying the merchandise as practice for their future careers, while many design students would sell garments and accessories in the store. You did not have to be a home economics student to sell at the Shadowbox. The store also had informational displays about home economics as a form of advertising the school to customers.

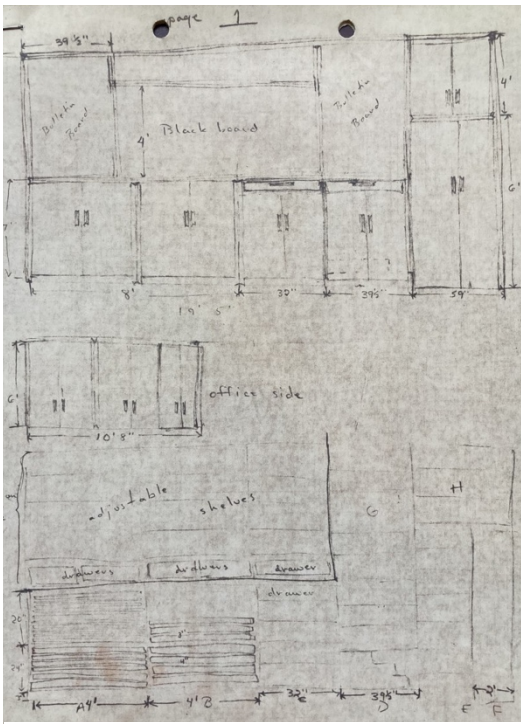

Figure 18. *Faculty sketches classroom cabinetry for the new building.* Source: Department needs, building, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics-Department of Human Development, Box 2, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Figure 19. *Faculty sketches classroom shelving for the new building.* Source: Department needs, building, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics-Department of Human Development, Box 2, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

For home economics, physical place was very important, and is at times tied to the identity of the field. As you walk around Burton Hall, you can still see the presence of its previous tenants, if you look closely.

Legacy of Helen Burton

Dr. Helen Brown Burton was the director of the School of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma from September 1927 through June

Figure 20. *Students preparing the Shadowbox Store for its first opening after serving as the practice house.* Source: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

1949.[23] Dr. Burton was an influential force within the school and field of home economics. She was the fourth director of the school, and the first to have a Ph.D.[24] While her service and advocacy went to supporting the field as a whole, or broadfield as it is referred to today, her research interests were in the areas of Food Science and Nutrition. Born on January 7, 1889, in Chicago, IL, Helen B. Burton was the daughter of Frank and Lena Burton. Helen was the eldest of four

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23. University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, School of Home Economics UA RG 40/24/01, Box 5, Folder 4, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

24. Ibid.

children, having two brothers and one sister.[25] She received an A.B. Degree from Indiana University and a B.S. Degree from the Lewis Institute in 1915. Burton attended the University of Chicago for graduate school and received an S.M. in 1922 and a Ph.D. in 1929.[26]

Dr. Burton came to the University of Oklahoma in 1927. She was named the fourth director of the School of Home Economics, succeeding Mrs. Vera Idol Moore. With the appointment, Dr. Burton was also awarded full professorship and tenure, and was the first faculty member of the school to have a doctorate.[27] Prior to coming to the university, she had worked at the West Texas State Teachers College, the Lewis Institute, the University of Chicago, and the Wayne, Nebraska Teachers College.[28]

The School of Home Economics at the University of Oklahoma was founded in 1919, with courses in Domestic Arts and Sciences having been offered since 1915. Upon Burton's arrival, the school was housed in the Old Science Hall building and had a practice house on Lemmon. In 1928, there were six other full-

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25. "Memorial ID 146088630, Dr. Helen Brown Burton," Find a Grave, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/146088630

26. Mary A. Warren, "Dr. Helen Brown Burton," *In Memoriam,* Proclamation of the Oklahoma Academy of Sciences for 1968, http://digital.library.okstate.edu/OAS/oas_pdf/v49/p223_224.pdf

27. University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, School of Home Economics UA RG 40/24/01, Box 5, Folder 4, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

28. "Dr. Burton's Day," *Sooner Magazine* 9, no. 23, (1951): 9-10.

time faculty members in the school, whom Dr. Burton oversaw;[29] and by 1939, that number had doubled to twelve faculty members, all women.[30] At the time, this was the only school or department on campus that was comprised solely of women.[31] In her time at the university, Dr. Burton was active within the university and field of home economics but left an indelible mark on the community. She utilized her skills and knowledge in service to the university by participating on multiple committees and by creating community-based research projects.

Dr. Burton stepped down as the Director of the School of Home Economics in 1949, being succeeded by Miss Mary A. Warren.[32] Burton remained on staff as a professor and researcher in the school until her retirement in 1958. Throughout her time at the university, Dr. Burton had traveled the globe and brought these experiences back to the students and community. She would host talks about different cultures at places such as the YWCA.[33] During her

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29. School of Home Economics, University of Oklahoma Bulletin 1929. University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, School of Home Economics UA RG 40/24/01, Box 2, Folder 3, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

30. S. Roy Hadsell, "Faculty Page," *Sooner Magazine* 12, no. 5 (December 1939): p. 8.

31. Ibid.

32. University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, School of Home Economics UA RG 40/24/01, Box 5, Folder 4, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

33. Helen B. Burton, "Women Smoke Cigars," University Archives, University of Oklahoma Archives Vertical File Collection, Burton, Helen Brown Folder, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

travels, Dr. Burton would mainly look at dietetic information since that was her specialty, but she would also look at all of the cultural differences in order to gain a full picture of the culture. She did this in an almost ethnographic way, having the food and diet be the main subject, with the background being painted by the culture, and the foreground being the fads and sights. She noted on a trip to Copenhagen that the women loved to smoke cigars, and even commented on the tobacco taste preferences differed from the United States.[34]

Dr. Burton went above and beyond what was expected of the typical faculty member of the university. Even though the University of Oklahoma was not a Land-Grant University associated with the Morrill Acts that would have required extension work and service, Dr. Burton served in this capacity for the community residents of Norman and Oklahoma. She and her students would focus on things that could help improve the lives of the community that could be easily spread and done. For example, she stressed the importance of trying to eat as many freshly cooked meals as possible and veering away from reheating leftovers in order to keep the most nutrients.[35] Dr. Burton would put it in a way that the average person would understand it. She knew that if the community was going to use and benefit from this knowledge, they must be able to comprehend it the first time; otherwise, they would ignore it.

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34. Ibid.

35. Helen B. Burton, "Economy Meals," University Archives, University of Oklahoma Archives Vertical File Collection, Burton, Helen Brown Folder, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Dr. Burton's research was within the Food Science and Nutrition specialty of home economics. One of her main research agenda items that went throughout her career focused on the absorption and retention of minerals in the body (particularly calcium and phosphorus, and the role they played in our health and well-being). Some of Dr. Burton's research in minerals included the Vitamin C content in oranges and the influence of cereal on calcium and phosphorus retention.[36] Dr. Burton also liked to perform research specific to her current location and the nutritional effects throughout the body. While she was in Texas, she examined the ascorbic acid content of east Texas tomatoes and blackberries. Comparing and contrasting the differences between home canned and commercially canned, Dr. Burton looked into how this region of Texas varied from other regions and ascorbic acid's effects on the body.[37] She continued her research as she moved to Oklahoma and looked at the Vitamin A content of home-canned Oklahoma apricots, and the ascorbic acid content of canned Oklahoma peaches.[38] This community spirit went on as she made Oklahoma her home and worked to improve the lives of her fellow citizens.

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36. Helen B. Burton, "Articles in Professional Journals," University Archives, University of Oklahoma Archives Vertical File Collection, Burton, Helen Brown Folder, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

37. Helen B. Burton, "Academic Research Articles," University Archives, University of Oklahoma Archives Vertical File Collection, Burton, Helen Brown Folder, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

38. Helen B. Burton, "1957 Biographical Information," University Archives, University of Oklahoma Archives Vertical File Collection, Burton,

She worked with her students to find alternate food sources such as crushed eggshells or dry skim milk, and tried to bring up the popularity of other food sources that people were not interested in. In one instance, she looked at carp and why people were not eating this particular type of fish, selecting more expensive varieties instead. Dr. Burton noted, "I do not understand why people do not prefer carp, it is a very meaty fish that does better in chowder than the typical cod or salmon."[39] She went on to research how to preserve and freeze carp, and recipes that would best prepare carp for consumption. The majority of this work was being done during the Great Depression, with the hopes that she would be able to help citizens eat well and affordably. This is also when she wrote an editorial called "economy meals" that was sent to media that would help the reader spend the least amount of money for the most amount of food and nutritional value.[40]

Dr. Burton became a fellow of the Oklahoma Academy of Sciences and was one of the only members of the field of home economics to do so at the time. Other organizations that she was involved in were Sigma Xi, Delta Kappa

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Helen Brown Folder, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

39. Helen B. Burton, "Carp, It's What for Dinner," University Archives, University of Oklahoma Archives Vertical File Collection, Burton, Helen Brown Folder, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

40. Helen B. Burton, "Economy Meals," University Archives, University of Oklahoma Archives Vertical File Collection, Burton, Helen Brown Folder, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Gamma, Omicron Nu, Iota Sigma Pi, Kappa Mu Sigma, State Nutrition Committee, Norman Chamber of Commerce, American Home Economics Association, Oklahoma Home Economics Association, National Education Association, the Oklahoma Educators Association, and the American Dietitians Association.[41]

Dr. Burton had been a relentless advocate for the school from her first day. The School of Home Economics actually had a shockingly fast advancement period prior to Dr. Burton joining the university. In 1915, only a few classes in Domestic Arts and Sciences were offered. In 1919, the school was founded. In between these two points in time, there was not the academic progression usually seen in institutions. There was not a major that then became a department and eventually grew into a school. It went from courses that could have consisted of a loose minor to its own school. Despite this rapid growth, the physical environment of the school did not meet the same praise. It remained in a few rooms in Old Science Hall from the beginning until it received its own building in the 1950's.

Under Dr. Burton's guidance, the school continued to grow and eventually took over an entire floor, plus numerous rooms of the other floors. Despite this, there was still not enough space for the school and the courses that it provided. Dr. Burton knew this and continuously advocated for its own building during her

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41. Helen B. Brown, "1941 Biographical Information," University Archives, University of Oklahoma Archives Vertical File Collection, Burton, Helen Brown Folder, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

entire tenure as director of the school, stating that if the current and future needs of the school and the field of home economics were to be met, they would need ample space with the current equipment and environments that the students would be dealing with once they left the university. The earlier rooms lacked the equipment that high school teachers would teach with, and thus put their future students in danger if they did not know how to properly manage and teach the equipment that was in the classroom.

Finally, the ground was broken on the new home economics building and the school moved in 1958. After Dr. Burton's retirement, Mary Warren, the new director of the school, began to petition that the building be named after Dr. Burton in dedication to all of her work in the field of home economics, the University of Oklahoma, and the School of Home Economics. The initial petitions were denied due to a standing policy by the regents that no building be named after a living person. Nevertheless, Mary Warren and the faculty, students, and alumnae of the school continued to ask that the building be dedicated to Dr. Burton. The regents finally changed their policy, and the building was dedicated in 1964 and renamed Burton Hall. Dr. Burton remained as a full-time faculty member and researcher until 1958, after stepping down as the Director of the School of Home Economics in 1949. After 1958, she would sporadically teach courses through correspondence when needed by the school. Dr. Burton fully retired in 1966 to Sun City, Arizona before passing away in 1968.

Dr. Helen Burton's legacy is more than just the contributions to the field of home economics or the school that she helped to create at the university. She

created a network of relationships that surpassed her tenure at the University of Oklahoma, really establishing a community within home economics that can be seen in figure 21 and will be explored in the next chapter.

Figure 21. *Home economics students gathered in the lounge of the new building, dedicated to Dr. Burton.* Source: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Chapter V

SOONER WIVES: THE WOMEN OF THE SCHOOL OF HOME ECONOMICS

Each of these graduates is a member of a family – responsible for strengthening it. A citizen. No other area would prepare her better for this two or more fold role that she is playing and that you are or soon. will be playing.[1]

- Mary Warren
Professor and Chairman, School of Home Economics, the University of Oklahoma

As much as curriculum and the buildings mattered to the school, it was the people who were the driving force of home economics. Members of the school forged a community throughout the years that continued to grow and serve as a foundation for the school. This community encased all students, regardless of major, along with faculty past and present. Together, they did more than just meeting to reminisce or discuss current affairs over tea. The main reason for the school receiving its new buildings was because of this community and the collective influence that it held. Faculty members also reached out to alumnae in hopes of recruiting new students for the school, particularly home economics education.

The main source for building this community was Dr. Helen Burton, the director of the School of Home Economics from 1927 to 1949. In some of her writings from her time as the director, she spoke to a feeling of not being enough

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1. Mary Warren, *Lively Facts and Figures,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics, Box 3, Folder 2 Publicity Files. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

for the students, and the changing needs of society that the field needed to address. This feeling of being inadequate is not new, nor was it isolated to just Dr. Burton, with various sources within home economics alluding to it. In a handbook of home economics published by the Oklahoma Department of Vocational Education in 1928, the writers mentioned "a fear of not being enough to meet the needs of students. For our students will need the courses to become a complete mother, wife, and member of society"[2] Having a fear that they were not serving their students' needs helped Dr. Burton to become who she was. This introspection allowed her to become a driving force in the curriculum and programs that were revised or created in the following years.

Newsletters

One of the ways in which Dr. Burton helped to establish the connection of the alumnae was through annual newsletters that were mailed out to all, even to those who graduated before she became the director. These newsletters included updates on the state of the programs' curricula, the lives of current and past faculty members, what was happening on campus; and, most importantly, every letter had updates on each individual student. If any names, addresses, or other updates were missing, she asked for alumnae to notify her so that these omissions could be corrected; those who had connections to people missing from the list were asked to reach out. These updates included the addresses of students, as well as name changes so that they could stay in touch with each other and not just with

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2. Oklahoma State Department of Vocational Education Home Economics Division, *Courses in Home Economics for High Schools,* 1928.

the school. While the letters started with Dr. Burton, they did not end when she left the university. The directors and professors who followed her wanted to keep this connection alive, and felt it embodied the essence of the school.[3] The university archives feature a large portion of these newsletters; a select few will be used in this analysis, ranging from 1933-1949. These letters frequently delved into the more personal lives of the faculty and alumnae, rather than just focusing on pure business updates from the university. Through this, we are able to gather a sense of the thoughts of the faculty members as home economics continued to change and grow.

These letters created a sense of care and connection within the school, its students, and alumnae. From these connections, we see how the future and current professionals felt during this time, when home economics was constantly evolving and changing. One thing remained the same: The School of Home Economics became home for many. It remained this way until the closure of the school in the 1980s, and through the letters, we see the reactions of the faculty and students, and their thoughts leading up to this time. Through the correspondence between the students and the school, we are able to see the impact their time at the university had on their lives. For them, it was more than an alma mater; it was family. It was more than home economics; it was home.

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3. Mary Warren, *Faculty Meeting Notes,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 3, Folder 13, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Home economics has always been a gendered field by its nature. With courses catered to teaching young girls to become successful by becoming married and having children, this was the definition of success that they created for their students, which will be discussed in further detail later. While these courses were geared towards women, at different times home economics became accessible to men based on the venue. From the 1949 letter, we see the department's positioning on their gendered existence.

> Possibly all of you are not aware that we have had fewer women in the University the past 2 to 3 years than formerly. In spite of that, our enrollment, especially the number of majors, has increased slightly. We are urging all of you to interest high school girls, (those that are good students) in home economics at the University. We have several new curricula and some planned programs that combine home economics and some other field that we feel add considerably to our value to women students.[4]

This came around even though home economics in Oklahoma secondary schools had been including both genders for some time. Starting in the early 1930s, an initiative to offer courses that boys would find beneficial had been instituted by the department of vocational education.[5] However, the School of Home Economics still viewed itself as a place for women. The faculty and curriculum

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4. Helen B. Burton, *1949 Letter to Alumnae,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folders 14 & 15, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

5. Oklahoma State Department of Vocational Education Home Economics Division, *Courses in Home Economics for High Schools,* 1935.

continued to reinforce their ideals of what it means to be a white woman, including what success should look like for their students.

Gender aside, we see the care and relationships being established in each of these letters. Even though Dr. Burton wrote these letters and was the first faculty member of the school to earn her doctorate, she still went by Miss Burton or Helen to her former students. In fact, Dr. Burton regularly referred to females as Miss or Mrs., males as Dr. or Professor; and if a woman she was referencing in the letters happened to have a doctorate, then she would be Miss/Mrs. Jane Smith, PhD. The faculty members continuously provided their personal addresses and telephone numbers, with open invitations for all former students to stop by.[6] If alumnae were ever in town, not only could they catch up with their former professors, but they could also get a personal tour of the school and see what had been happening. These letters home created a space for former students that they were able to carry with them. Through these letters and the space that was created, the gap between not being enough and being great started to be filled.

When we break down the letters year by year, a clear narrative starts to form, including the state of mind during two different 'once-in-a-lifetime' events, the Great Depression and World War II. 1933 was a few years into the Great Depression and would become its height, with 12,830,000 people unemployed in

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6. Helen B. Burton, *Letters to Alumnae,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folders 14 & 15, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

the United States.[7] The letter for this year was written a little earlier than most and still had a positive tone to it. This was also the last of the alumnae letters to be written in an extended long format, more like a traditional letter, with a conversational narrative rather than the more standardized newsletter format that it would take on for all letters following this one. The format would become a warm greeting; any change in faculty; update on faculty lives and travel; university-related work of the faculty; updates on campus; updates on the status of getting a new building; teas and banquets; student groups and honors; and then updates on address and marital/family changes of individual alumnae. When we place the 1933 letter in conversation with the curriculum, faculty meeting minutes, as well as some other artifacts from that year, it starts to make the letter come across differently. The way in which Dr. Burton was writing almost reads as an escape from reality, as if they were living in a vacuum with all of the negatives being stripped away and only the positive still existing. After the brief update on the faculty, the main focus was the students and new opportunities that were being created for them. The information was presented more along the lines of promotional materials for the alumnae who became teachers to share with their current students in hopes that they would attend the school. [8]

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7. FDR Library, *Great Depression Facts,* FDR Library and Museum, www.fdrlibrary.org/great-depression-facts

8. Helen B. Burton, *1933 Letter to Alumnae,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folders 14 & 15, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

The 1934 letter introduced the new format while keeping the mostly positive tone throughout. As part of the new format, it read less like a promotional item and took on a mixture of conversational and informative narratives to express the news items to the alumnae. Both this letter and the 1935 one mentioned the current practice babies within the university practice house by name and talked about how they were doing. In 1934, Dr. Burton wrote that "he is very popular both with the young women and the young men students and probably is the most photographed person on campus."[9] Throughout the letter, she talked about the baby almost as if he were a mascot, either for the university or the school. In both letters, the child who was serving as the practice baby was talked about in this in-between space of not being a fully humanized child, but not being an inanimate object. The presence of a clinical gaze of the child in their care was almost omnipresent, with the practice baby usually talked about without a name, sometimes even using subject numbers, as if they were experiments. It is also interesting to note that this is one of the few times in the entire collection of Dr. Burton's alumnae letters in which she referred to women as women and not girls, while she always referred to men as men or young men.

The 1935 letter was the first time that the tone did not stay positive for the entire duration; it was somewhat positive, but with neutral or clinical distance mixed in. Both the previous and current practice babies were mentioned, while

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9. Helen B. Burton, *1934 Letter to Alumnae,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folders 14 & 15, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

stating that that the practice baby program must be a hit, because they had numerous inquiries by people wanting them to care for their babies. It is unclear if the effects of the Great Depression are what led to this; however, this was the first letter that mentioned the effects of the economy on the school. A formal open house would now be offered every other year instead of annually; some banquets would be less frequent or turned into teas; and the initiations for the three student organizations would now be held simultaneously, all in an effort to conserve resources.

This year, the school also held a Hard Times Tea. Hard times parties were seen at various times throughout history, including the Great Depression, and were a take on the Calico Balls of the Civil War era. These parties or teas would usually serve as fundraisers, where the host and attendees would spend less money on new clothes or other frills that would have been the norm, and donated the money that would have been spent to the cause. The Hard Times Tea seemed to be raising money for the purchase of equipment for the program. In keeping with displaying a positive tone, or escape, the newsletter did not harp on these and presented them as fun activities for alumnae to attend, whereas other internal documents from this time showed that the school was under greater duress than what was depicted in the letters.

It was also revealed that Dr. Burton had made a habit of being what they referred to as “at home” on the first Friday of each month for home economics students. This was a time where students could drop by in the afternoon and talk with Dr. Burton, as well as any other guests who were present, informally as a

way to establish relationships. This would take place in Dr. Burton's own home and continued throughout her tenure at the school; however, it was stressed that alumnae were free to drop by anytime. These relationships were one of the reasons they believed the school had a growing enrollment, to the point where those in home economics education had to have additional options for student teaching. Previously, students could only student teach at Norman High School or the University High School; now, students could go to an approved vocational home economics program to complete this part of their training. It was at this point that Dr. Burton expressed her shock and surprise that students would wish to continue their university schooling even after marrying a man. This further reinforced the school's stance on the gendered existence of women and the role that they were to play in society according to the image they had created for what a proper white woman was.[10]

The letters from 1936 to 1943 are very similar in style and tone, as well as news. Dr. Burton started to pare down individual news items during this time and focused on two main points: a new building and recruiting new students for the School of Home Economics. 1938 was the first outright mention of the need for new buildings for home economics to the alumnae, coupled with ideas for what alumnae could do to aid in this endeavor whilst also asking for any suggestions that the alumnae might have in this regard. This would continue in the letters as a

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10. Helen B. Burton, *1935 Letters to Alumnae,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folders 14 & 15, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

growing theme until the groundbreaking of these buildings in 1951. While it would be referred to by different terms throughout the letters, the recruitment of students would be categorized in today's terminology as establishing a pipeline. In fact, many of the tactics Dr. Burton mentions would resurface in modern family and consumer sciences recruitment. The underlying modality relied on high school home economics teachers to urge students they deemed as superior in home economics to enroll at the university.[11] This pipeline recruiting method was part of the reason the newsletter could come across as promotional material for the program, as it was designed to be shared with potential students in an alumna's class.

The 1944 letter was the next one that presented a large change in tone. At the time of its writing, the United States had been part of World War II for a little over two years. This had led to some changes in the university that were being shared within the letter. The first was the university changing to a new streamlined format with three semesters. The faculty and students continued to aid in war efforts, with the main thing being the nursery school. The nursery school had been open for a few years but was now opening for longer hours to aid the community. The morning would feature a nursery program, while the afternoon would host a kindergarten. The faculty had also switched its research to focus on developing and producing materials and techniques that the average housewife

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11. Helen B. Burton, *1938 Letter to Alumnae,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folders 14 & 15, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

could use during these times.[12] This was the first time that the newsletter did not have a positive tone; in fact, it reads as if all hope had been lost. There were few embellishments in the details provided, just facts, with a dismal outlook even on the notes of recruitment and attempting to get a new building. While these things were mentioned, it was not the same as the other letters and felt very detached. The 1945 letter was similar, but it did have moments of neutral tones mixed in to help lighten it some, while remaining detached. 1946 was the first letter since the end of the war with tone and content serving as a transition from the war times to future letters. It had a reverent tone that spoke to rebuilding and focused on helping each other during this time. Many of the news items were in regard to updates on the families of alumnae post-war, and how alumnae could help their communities adjust to their new normal.[13]

1947 was when the tone and content of the letter returned to its pre-war style. There were some changes to program and curricula in response to the war, which were conveyed in the newsletter in case any alumnae wanted to participate or share with other women they knew. One of the post-war activities that was discussed was a banquet that was held where current students could mingle with

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12. Helen B. Burton, *1944 Letters to Alumnae,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folders 14 & 15, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

13. Helen B. Burton, *1946 Letter to Alumnae,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folders 14 & 15, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

young male students from across campus. Figure 22 shows home economics students conversing with young men, some of whom were members of the university's Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program. This mingling was not only encouraged, but sometimes set up by the faculty members of home economics. Dr. Burton continuously referred to marriage as being the prime objective of female students throughout the entire collection of letters, sometimes more subtly than others, but still there. The 1947 letter is when this started to be directly expressed for students, with phrases such as "we are running a race with Cupid,"[14] or "Cupid is our keenest competitor."[15] This was not isolated to the University of Oklahoma alone. Nationally, collegiate home economics programs would strive to marry off their students and would sometimes even have a matching program, so to say. These programs would sometimes be free, and at other times charge a varying fee, where the faculty could select suitable home economics students as mates for men. While new, young male faculty members were sometimes the prime customers for this service, it would include men from a variety of backgrounds. The idea behind it was that women who had studied home economics, even partially, would make ideal wives, as they were trained in

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14. Helen B. Burton, *1947 Letter to Alumnae,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folders 14 & 15, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

15. Helen B. Burton, *1948 Letter to Alumnae,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folders 14 & 15, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Figure 22. *Home economics students mingling with male students before an informal tea.* Source: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

managing the home, entertaining, and so on. This way, if a husband was to invite over colleagues, clients, or anyone else for the evening, an appropriate party could be had at the drop of a hat. Due to this, departments that charged would sometimes sort students into categories based on multiple factors, which usually included a mix of mastery of home economics, how good a hostess/conversationalist they were, carriage, and personality, as well as beauty; they would then charge different amounts for matching based on the category that the student was in. This money would then generally go into the department fund to purchase equipment and other resources for use in courses. It is unclear if the

University of Oklahoma's department charged for these services, but it did hold banquets, teas, and other large gatherings, as well as small gatherings where select home economics and male students would be invited.

As the dynamics of the university were changing post-war, the curricula within the school had to change as well. Dr. Burton stated that the enrollment at the university was rising and that there were "two girls to every seven men."[16] Part of this curriculum change was that there were now programs for the wives of veterans; she asked that the alumnae help in distributing word of this to women in their area. One of these programs to help the veterans' wives was an option to complete the practice house experience in their own home, so that even married women could complete a degree in home economics. Another thing that the school was doing was hosting a banquet at the end of the year to celebrate the end of the war; all alumnae were invited. The money raised from the banquet would go to aid school-run programs focused on veterans and post-war life.

Matchmaking and caring for veterans were not the only time that husbands were mentioned in the letter. The 1947 letter saw a renewed vigor of attempting to get new buildings for the school. To this end, Dr. Burton asked the alumnae to use their influence over their husbands to reach out to university administrators, university regents, Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education, legislators, and other influential people within their circles to communicate the urgent need for these

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16. Helen B. Burton, *1947 Letter to Alumnae,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folders 14 & 15, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

buildings. Hoping to persuade the alumnae to act, Dr. Burton referenced various points in order to pull at their heartstrings. These points included mentioning the dearth of students to fill the future teaching vacancies, mainly due to marriage, within Oklahoma home economics classrooms; and how schools were having to close their programs due to not having qualified teachers available. This was also the first time that Dr. Burton directly mentioned men studying home economics, with "I know you all hope for your daughters and for your sons to have a nicer place to study home economics than you had."[17]

In 1948, we saw the same fervor to attempt to obtain the school new buildings. This time it was mentioned if anyone, or the husbands, "knew a wealthy friend who would like to gift us this direly needed building, to please let us know."[18] They also asked for any other suggestions in what could be done to aid in this, as the currently classrooms were becoming quite unseemly. This would also be the first year since the beginning of the war that they would be resuming their regular alumnae meetings. The efforts of faculty and alumnae must have paid off, as the 1949 newsletter states that the school was slated to receive a new building as part of the university's ten-year plan. However, there was now a new building problem. The school did not agree with its placement, wishing to be higher on the list, where it believed it rightfully belonged. Thus, Dr. Burton asked

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17. Ibid.

18. Helen B. Burton, *1948 Letter to Alumnae,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folders 14 & 15, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

the alumnae to activate again to reach out to their contacts, their husbands, their husbands' contacts; and, significantly, to have school administrators from their current or former employers as well as their local schools reach out to advocate for raising their location on the list.[19] The only other new update was starting the tradition of a Trousseau Tea within the department. This was a pre-wedding tradition that stems back to the Victorian era to wish the bride a happy and blissful marriage. The department's tea was being held for students and seemed to be another place where matchmaking could occur. In some drafts of the 1949 letter, this tea was referred to as a Hope Chest Tea. A hope or trousseau chest was a furniture item that single women, or their families, would use to gather various items that they believed were needed for married life, such as clothing, silverware, linens, etc. This further reinforced the importance of the school's students to become married and play a specific role in society.

Announcements

The school was not the only one to send out updates; the students kept the faculty members apprised of what was going on in their lives. Many sent announcements of marriages, births, and moving, along with other regular communication. Figure 23 is one of the multitudes of announcements that the faculty were sent of an alumna who gave birth. Pregnancy announcements were another large pile that the faculty kept, with one resembling court case filings as

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19. Helen B. Burton, *1949 Letter to Alumnae,* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences Collection, RG 40/24 School of Home Economics, Box 2, Folders 14 & 15, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

this particular alumna was able to "snag herself a lawyer" from the university's law school.[20] By far the largest pile of announcements that the faculty had were those of marriages, some of which were sent, while some were clipped from newspapers. Figure 24 shows one of the announcements that one of the faculty members had found in the paper and saved.

It is apparent through the school records that marriages were their crowning glory. Mixed in with these announcements were some of the invitations that students had sent to their former teachers so that they could be part of their big day. Announcements aside, the faculty members also received regular letters and notes from former students over various topics that they would converse about. The relationships that were formed within the School of Home Economics lasted beyond a student's time at the university, as we see through the newsletters and communications. The alumnae were instrumental in various things happening at the school, including the new buildings, curriculum revisions, connections for career placements, donations for resources, and numerous other things. While some of these are common within the university, family was part of what it meant to be a home economics alumna.

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20. Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Figure 24. *Birth announcement sent from an alumna to Dr. Burton.* Source: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Figure 23. *Alumna wedding announcement clipped from newspaper by one of the faculty members.* Sources: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Student Organizations

Building these relationships did not start when students graduated; it started when they enrolled at the university. One of the ways that these relationships were built was through home economics student organizations. Eventually, there were three organizations that students could either join or offered an invitation to. These were Omicron Nu, Oikonomia, and Hestia. Omicron Nu was a national honor society for home economics that established a chapter in the school shortly after the school was founded. (The national organization is now known as Kappa Omicron Nu after merging with another home economics honor organization in 1990; there is no longer a chapter at the University of Oklahoma since the closure of the School of Human Development.) Oikonomia was a local organization that was open to home economics majors from the university that would later have blurred lines with Hestia. Oikonomia, when translated from Greek, means "household management," and was coined by Aristotle. Hestia was the last organization for the whole school. Founded in 1931, it was open to anyone who took a home economics course, regardless of major. Hestia would also become the university's local chapter of the American Home Economics Association and be active in state and national initiatives.

Figure 25 shows a photograph of the three organizations together. Starting in the 1930s, the organizations began to combine initiations and meetings to

Figure 25. *Student members and faculty advisors of the three home economics student organizations Omicron Nu, Oikonomia, and Hestia.* Sources: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

conserve resources. This move also made sense due to the majority of students being a member of two or all three organizations. Because of this longstanding tradition, the separation of Hestia and Oikonomia would become difficult to define internally, with it often being condensed into one organization after Dr. Burton and Mary Warren left the school. Outside of the university, community members would often believe that all three were one organization. Starting in the late 1960s with the professionalization of the curriculum, there would sometimes be specialized student organizations for the various majors, such as Shadowbox for fashion, and a local chapter of the American Society for Interior Designers (ASID) for the interior design students.

School Closure

The School of Home Economics had been through many changes during its time at the University of Oklahoma. Table 1 shows the list of directors who helped to create the school into everything that it was. This dissertation unfortunately was not able to explore the entire legacy of the school; however, its pages contain a glimpse of the curriculum and relationships that made home economics a home for many. While it is easy to pinpoint some of the precise dates for things, the official closure has not been clear through the artifacts available. Part of this is due to minutes of the Regents of the University of Oklahoma never addressing closure outright. The last detail that it brings up is the retirement of the last director, Dr. Maggie Hayes, in 1990. The faculty mention a time when one of the regents, Dee A. Replogle Jr., had made accusations about the school and moved for its closure.[21] This happened prior to the name change of the school and could have been a secondary source for the restructuring of the school; the accusation that the faculty mention could not be found in the corresponding regent's minutes by the time of this writing. Figure 26 shows students after meeting discussing the closure of the school. There were many emotions regarding the closure, especially since the program was targeted for closure by other departments from the College of Arts and Sciences so that other

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21. Faculty Meeting Minutes, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 8, Folder 25 Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

departments could remain.[22] For some, this was a shock, as the school had been continuously growing in the years prior to these events, with new doctoral programs and faculty to be added. At the time that the fashion program was suspended, two positions had already been posted, with initial screenings underway. While it may no longer be taught at the university, home economics left a lasting impression on the community.

Title	Name	Years
1st Director	(Miss) Harriet Hopkins	1915-1919
2nd Director	(Miss) Avis W. Gwinn	1919-1921
3rd Director	(Mrs.) Vera Idol Moore	1921-1927
4th Director	Dr. Helen B. Burton	1927-1949
5th Chairman	(Miss) Mary A. Warren	1949-1974
6th Director	Dr. Eugenia M. Zallen	1974-1980
7th Director	Dr. Dortha Killian	1980-1981
8th Director	Dr. Patricia A. Self	1981-1988
9th Chairman	Dr. Maggie Hayes	1988-1990

Table 1. *List of directors for the School of Home Economics.* Sources: History of Home Economics HE ED University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 2, Folder 8, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma. & Oklahoma Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Bylaws and Procedures, Oklahoma State University Archives Collection, Oklahoma Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Records Collection, 1995-087, Box 4, Edmond Low Library, Oklahoma State University Libraries, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

22. 1988 College of Arts and Sciences Strategy for Excellence, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 9, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

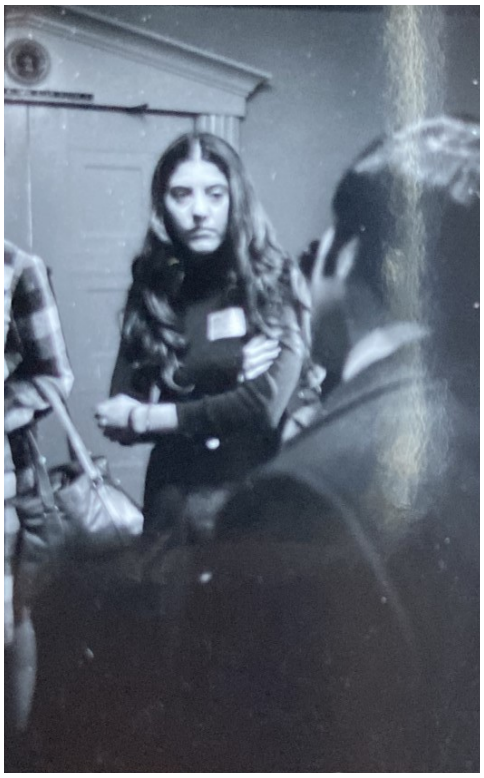

Figure 26. *Students after a meeting discussing the closure of the School of Human Development.* Source: Clippings, announcements, University Archives Collection, RG 40/24/01 School of Home Economics- Department of Human Development, Box 6, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION: CLINICAL, DETACHED DOMESTICITY

Once there was a University of Oklahoma Home Economics major who really felt frustrated – lots of people couldn't understand why she was a Home Economics major – they couldn't even understand what home economics meant. or what a graduate, a home economist, really did.[1]

- Mary Warren
Professor and Chairman, School of Home Economics, the University of Oklahoma

Home economics provided education for white women in a time when there were not that many opportunities out there for white women. Not all of these opportunities resulted in absolute freedom however, they were still curated in what was available and what was expected of white women. These opportunities were more than others had, as the existence of the school came at the cost of excluding Black and Brown women from partaking in these experiences. This allowed the school to exist and to create these opportunities, while also reinforcing ideologies that lead to and allow systemic oppression to operate within the university and society. Throughout the history of the School of Home Economics, it continued to reinforce its own notion of white womanhood onto its students which had a chance to ripple out through the students who would go onto teach or enter the workforce and spread these ideologies to others. Meaning that any of the inherent harm caused by the educative process was not isolated to those

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1. Mary Warren, *Lively Facts and Figures.* University Archives, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Home Economics, Box 3, Folder 2 Publicity Files. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman, Oklahoma.

who walked into the school's classrooms. The faculty of the school at times would take on a detached presence between the students as people and as wives to fulfill the machine of society. This detachment is similar to the one that Megan Rosenbloom postulates as the reason that medical doctors were able to view their patients as objects leading to the creation of the majority of verified anthropodermic books.[2]

This detachment started with a clinical gaze separating the doctor from the patient. This same form of clinical gaze can be seen at different times from the faculty within the School of Home Economics. One of these times can be seen in the alumnae letters, 1944 particularly had detached, separated almost clinical tone that was illustrated by the oversharing of personal information and bewilderment of women who would choose not to marry during university. Stripping away the humanity of the students and viewing them as inanimate possessions that could just be prized to the best suitor. This detached, clinical gaze continued in how the practice babies were viewed in the school, with the faculty continuously dehumanizing the child to be viewed as a subject. This clinical tone did not occur overnight, especially in the letters to fellow home economists. There is a transitional period that occurs within the letters written during World War II, where the warm feminine persona is slowly replaced by the purely rational scientist persona that was developed for other spaces of academe. Whether this

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2. Megan Rosenbloom, *Dark Archives: A Librarian's Investigation into the Science and History of Books Bound in Human Skin,* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020).

transition occurred as a result of a defense mechanism to the loss of hope caused by the war or due to other factors, it does not excuse the stripping away of humanity in order to fulfill their idealized notion of white womanhood. The clinical gaze was first developed almost as a survival instinct in order to make it within the university. In order to prove that home economics belonged faculty needed to focus on the scientific aspects of the curriculum and less on the humanistic, taking up these scientist personas. While at times this was generally reserved for the interactions outwardly facing and with other academic counterparts, interactions within home economics were different lacking that same level of detachment. It was not until the World War II era that the scientist personas became less of an outward façade and more of an inherent personality at all times, regardless of who they were interacting with. The detachment and clinical gaze could also allow the exclusionary practices to occur as the faculty could have used this to either not object or question practices that led to excluding Black and Brown students. These practices could be from the university or from how they framed themselves and their curriculum; while it might not have been inherent or overt, the types of careers and curriculum topics included pandered to white women and white womanhood. Thus, the detachment could have allowed the faculty to see these practices as a means to an end as their students, white women and some men, were able to get ahead. This continues to this day as home economics has to continue to prove itself as worthy of belonging within the United States education system amidst institutions cutting programs. While in

some instances this persona adoption has softened, we need to make sure to reinsert humanity with how we interact with home economics curriculum.

All of the curriculum strands taught reinforced the image of white womanhood that the faculty wanted the students to take up. Whilst it might not have been the clear intention at the time, the domestication of white women continued as it was clear that it was expected that all female students would eventually become wives and mothers. This is something that home economics needs to be cognizant of in the future. Not everything about home economics is bad, in fact, the majority of it is inherently neutral and it is the intention behind how it is engaged that determines the societal outcome of home economics. As we work on the future of home economics, we can use Rosenbloom's findings of the clinical gaze as a warning sign of the things that could come from it. We already have to rebuild home economics due to multiple reasons that range from the mass retirement of professionals with limited replacements from fewer academic programs; to the updating and addition of curricula in order to address changing societal issues. As we build this future, let's build the home economics that we can be proud of and that we deserve, that our society deserves. If we continue to over-separate ourselves to try and prove our place in academe, as we had to when we first started, then where could that lead us? We already dehumanized babies that were placed in our care, we treated our students as objects or property to be matched to male suitors. Let us go out and build our home economics, let us have these tough conversations, and look at our past so that we do not repeat past mistakes or transgressions. If we continue the detached, clinical domesticity that

we had to adopt in the beginning in order to survive in the beginning would create the next thing that society views with the same horror and disgust as anthropodermic bibliopegy?

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