



Huth-Bocks, whose research on infant mental health aligns perfectly with the mission of MPSI. Director Huth-Bocks started on January 1, 2023.

## **REVIEW**

In accordance with the Board of Governors Wayne State University Statute 2.23.01 *Centers and Institutes: Policy on Creation, Operation, Review, and Discontinuance*, MPSI underwent a formal review by the Center and Institute Advisory Committee-II (CIAC-II) in spring of 2023.

The CIAC-II subcommittee followed the guidelines provided by the Office of the Vice President for Research to assess the evidence and value of the MPSI as a freestanding unit at WSU. The review process involved a) the 2023 MPSI self-study documents; b) report from the 2017 CIAC-II review; c) guidelines for center and institute reviews; d) MPSI faculty funding summary data; e) MPSI re-charter document; e) a site visit at which CIAC-II subcommittee members met with the director, leadership team, senior faculty, junior faculty, community engagement and public awareness team, Early Childcare Center leaders, WSU collaborators, MPSI fellows and training director, internal advisory board and board of visitors.

The CIAC-II subcommittee report recommending that the charter for this Institute be renewed for a period of six years was submitted to and approved by the full CIAC-II committee. The full committee submitted a final report to the Interim Vice President for Research and to the Policy Committee of the Academic Senate. Both the Vice President for Research and the Policy Committee of the Academic Senate received the report and prepared a recommendation for a six-year renewal.

## **MPSI STRENGTHS INDICATED BY CIAC-II**

*Sustaining research excellence.* Research excellence was more than sustained. It actually grew, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of average publications per faculty per year and extramural funding, as detailed below.

*Strengthening the Predoctoral Training Program.* The predoctoral training program was exceptionally strong and is essentially unchanged. Some events were canceled or moved online due to the COVID-19 pandemic but are now back in person and/or in hybrid format, with the latter resulting in more attendees.

*Enhancing infant mental health research.* Infant mental health research remains a key focus of the MPSI research endeavors and aligns with the IMH Dual-Title Degree Program, the only one of its kind in the state.

*Sustaining the successful MPSI Early Childhood Center.* The MPSI Early Childhood Center has two sites, one directed by MPSI with a capacity for 52 students annually (MPSI-ECC) and one operated by the College of Education (COE-ECC) with a capacity for 32 slots during the academic year. Sustaining the ECC has required continuous grant funding to provide tuition assistance. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the MPSI-ECC developed a virtual learning platform,

including home activities. Capacity has not yet recovered (32 of 52 slots are occupied at MPSI-ECC), and the sites have not been available for undergraduate and graduate service-learning since 2020. Some 76 students participated in service learning during the period 2017-2019. The plan is to bring service-learning students back within the year.

*Enhancing community impact.* Community impact is one of the pillars of MPSI and remains one of its great strengths. MPSI programs such as Baby Court, the Social Work Family Clinic, training on infant mental health for caregivers, etc..., are critical examples. Many of the activities were necessarily suspended or shifted to a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One impactful outcome was the Parenting Moments newsletter, which is delivered monthly using the Constant Contact system to parents enrolled through the UPP (~1400). Parents were provided with facts and information about vaccination and social distancing, virtual schooling, and social issues. Programs that were suspended are now ramping back up, but the newsletter will continue based on the strong demand and open rate.

*Enhancing financial stability through fundraising and development.* MPSI accrued significant funds through gifts (\$920K) and endowments (\$670K) over the 2017-2022 period. This is important as the general fund support is limited to salaries for the MPSI director, the IMH Training Program Director, half-salaries for four dual-appointed faculty members, and a few other items. A clear plan for how to increase fundraising and development is not articulated.

*Restoring and enhancing the Freer House.* The Freer House, built in 1892, and adopted by the Merrill-Palmer Motherhood and Home Training School in 1920 upon Freer's death in 1919, is a major Historic Landmark that is in significant need of preservation. The focus has been on programming to enhance awareness of its cultural significance and raise funds to support its preservation. Many of these efforts became virtual during the pandemic, which resulted in greater and broader participation. The specific role of MPSI in the restoration and enhancement of the Freer House is not clear.

*Honoring MPSI through a Centennial Celebration.* The Centennial Celebration was held on May 21, 2021, as a virtual symposium due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A pamphlet describing the history and major events was produced, and a commemorative Pewabic tile was designed and made available for purchase. An exhibit commemorating the Centennial, which includes an extensive collection of original and historic materials, is permanently on display in the Knapp Building.

*The hiring of the new Director.* The hiring of the new MPSI director, Dr. Huth-Bocks, is a great opportunity for MPSI to re-define their mission and benefit from an outside perspective. The faculty, staff and students are all excited by her vision and contributions to infant mental health, a MPSI key area of research strength.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS BY CIAC-II FOR NEXT CHARTER PERIOD**

The CIAC-II committee agrees with the identified goals set by MPSI for the 2023 – 2029 charter period:

- Maintain research progress in areas of strength, including brain and cognitive development (prenatal through middle childhood); interventions to improve interactions between young children and their caregivers, and reduce high risk behavior; health inequalities.
- Increase collaboration among MPSI scholars and other faculty at WSU, specifically targeting relevant departments in the School of Medicine, as well as Public Health, Family Medicine, Nursing, and Education; increase collaborations with IOG for lifespan development research initiatives.
- Strategically grow the number of faculty lines to enhance diversity in terms of demographics and disciplines (currently 12 core faculty, not including Dr. Huth-Bocks).
- Re-instate undergraduate student learning opportunities for students in relevant departments (e.g., psychology, nursing, education, etc.).
- Continue the very successful mentored, research apprenticeship experience for trainees and fellows.
- Continue strong enrollment ( $\geq 25$ ) of graduate students at the Master's and Doctoral level for the Mental Health Dual-Title Program (IMH DT); establish a partnership with the WSU Master's in Public Health and other relevant departments (e.g., Nursing, Education) to recruit additional IMH DT students; create a virtual "certificate" program to be deployed across the nation for the purpose of increasing competence in infant and early childhood mental health among the early childhood workforce.
- Continue to reach out to professionals, parents and children each year (over 3000) to support professional and personal well-being through established mechanisms (e.g., Giant Step teen diversity conference, Training in "Baby Court" model).

In line with what MPSI stakeholders have recognized as areas to work on, the CIAC-II committee recommends that before the next review MPSI:

- Revisit a sincere effort towards a T-32 NIH training grant. Additional funding would enable more trainees to be enrolled in the highly selective programs administered by MPSI, which are presently limited by available funds. However, expectations of "Training Grant" should be evaluated in the context of available resources and feasibility. In this era of shrinking departments and centers, it becomes more and more important to focus on a limited number of strengths and leverage resources and expertise in other departments/centers on campus. A working group at the OVPR level should be established to assess feasibility of a training grant that might span different departments and centers, identify suitable leaders to direct the writing, and provide support in the form of personnel to assist with data collection and access to professional reviewing/advising to maximize the chances of success.

- Hire faculty in relevant medical fields (e.g., genetics) to contribute to the programmatic success of MPSI. MPSI is encouraged to work with other Centers and Institutes on campus to define a suitable theme for a cluster hire.
- Focus on re-opening programs closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; use workarounds developed during the pandemic to improve programming and impact. Particular focus should be on the UPP and the Woodward Corridor Early Childhood Consortium.
- Apply for a Pathway to Faculty position through the Provost's Office <https://gradschool.wayne.edu/postdocs/pathway> as a means to recruit diverse faculty.
- Develop and implement a clear plan or mechanism for targeting philanthropic support.

2.23.50 THE MERRILL -PALMER SKILLMAN INSTITUTE FOR ~~FAMILY AND HUMAN~~CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT; CHARTER

2.23.50.010 Purpose and Mission

There shall be a Merrill -Palmer Skillman -Institute for ~~Family and Human~~Child and Family Development whose mission will be to conduct state-of-the-art multidisciplinary research, education, and outreach in the area of child and family development, aimed at improving the health and well-being of children, youth, and families across the lifespan~~stimulate and facilitate interdisciplinary research, instructional programs and training, and service which focus on child development and family life, family life and human development, especially in urban and large metropolitan areas.~~

2.23.50.020 ~~In~~With regard to research, the Institute will both encourage and facilitate interdisciplinary programs of research on child development and family life. In particular, MPSI research will focus on urban populations at increased risk due to familial, environmental, community, economic, biomedical, and psychosocial challenges and stressors. ~~family life and human development.~~ It will also recognize and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, ~~particularly among scholars in the social sciences and in the human service professions, and health sciences within an eco-social framework~~bridging schools, departments, disciplines, and individuals.

~~- with the diverse perspective of both intertwined in the research process, so that knowledge useful to both might be generated.~~

2.23.50.030 With regard to ~~In~~ instruction and training, the Institute will encourage and support efforts to strengthen the teaching of child development and family life ~~family life and human development~~ in graduate and undergraduate curricula within the various disciplines and provide high-quality and challenging undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral research training consistent with the Institute's research and outreach Mission~~participate in education programs designed to further interdisciplinary research and practice, but will not offer courses for credit.~~

2.23.50.040 ~~In~~With regard to service, the Institute will provide research-based knowledge to the community, government, and private agencies by developing an empirical base of knowledge about effective prevention and intervention programs and policies, that is, MPSI will translate research into practices and policies to improve the lives of children and families. ~~research-based demonstration projects and policy studies,~~ and MPSI will also provide~~ing~~ workshops, seminars, and conferences on topics related to children and families to enhance community wellbeing and professional development within related fields. ~~family life and human development.~~

2.23.50.050 In pursuing this mission, the Institute shall seek to obtain and expand external funding support from both private and public sources.

2.23.50.060 Personnel

The Institute shall be managed by a director appointed by the President or ~~his/her/their~~ designee and report to the Vice President for Research (VPR) and serving at his/her pleasure.

2.23.50.070 The staff of the Institute shall include, as necessary, research faculty, ~~paid fully or in part from Institute funds, tenure-track~~ faculty and staff from University departments, research scientists, research associates and assistants, clerical/technical support, graduate research assistants, research and student assistants and such other personnel as may be needed to carry out the Institute's mission. In the case of a participating faculty member holding tenure, or with tenure-track status, ~~his/her/their~~ tenure or tenure-track status shall be in ~~in~~ his/her/their academic unit.

2.23.50.080 The primary responsibility of the staff in the Institute shall be to conduct research, instruction and training, and engage in community outreach and service in select areas of child development or family life ~~family life and human development~~, and to obtain extramural funding in support of the research. Staff paid fully from Institute funds are not required to undertake teaching responsibilities but are expected may have the opportunity to direct the research of undergraduate, graduate, or post-doctoral students or to engage in other teaching or training activities as may be mutually agreeable to them, the appropriate academic unit, and the director of the Institute. Staff may teach specialized courses and workshops from time to time as the need arises.

2.23.50.090 Governance

The primary responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Institute shall reside with the Institute director and shall also draw upon the advice and counsel of an advisory committee to be composed of University representatives. The internal advisory board will be appointed by the director after consultation with the President or ~~his/her/their~~ designee and will meet regularly with the director to give advice on the operation and development of the Institute.

2.23.50.100 The Institute shall have a Board of Visitors steering committee to give guidance and direction in setting priorities, in and in identifying new initiatives and in philanthropy. and opportunities. ~~Board Steering committee~~ members shall be appointed by the director after approval of the Board of Visitors and in consultation with the President or ~~his/her/their~~ designee and shall be composed of University and community representatives.

2.23.50.110 Operating and Financial Procedures

The Institute shall follow all operating, personnel and financial procedures that apply to academic units of the University.

2.23.50.120 In seeking external funding to support research and other activities, the Institute shall conform to the University's standard grant application procedures and to University research policies.

2.23.50.130 The Institute shall be governed by standard University budgetary and financial procedures; and it shall annually submit a budget for approval by the President and the Board of Governors in the course of the regular University budget review process.

2.23.50.140 The Institute shall be periodically audited by the Internal Audit Department. It may also be subject to such additional audits, by the state auditor or others, as are periodically conducted in the University or that may be specially conducted in connection with specific funding sources for the Institute.

2.23.50.150 Review

The Institute shall prepare ~~an annual~~ report, annually or bi-annually, for the Vice President for Research and University President or ~~his/her~~their designees describing its research, teaching and service accomplishments as they relate to its mission.

2.23.50.160 Every ~~six five~~ years following the adoption of its permanent charter, the Institute shall undergo a comprehensive review in accordance with the existing Statute Policy on Centers and Institutes approved by the Board of Governors.

### Legislative History

Adopted 5-0; Official Proceedings 32:4340 (10 June 1988) (text appears at 4342-43)

Rechartered 7-0; Official Proceedings 39:5141 (3 February 1995)

[Recharter Review \(7, December 2023\)](#)



2.23.50 THE MERRILL PALMER SKILLMAN INSTITUTE FOR CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT; CHARTER

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2.23.50.030 With regard to instruction and training, the Institute will encourage and support efforts to strengthen the teaching of child development and family life in graduate and undergraduate curricula within the various disciplines and provide high-quality and challenging undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral research training consistent with the Institute's research and outreach Mission.

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