

## MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE

### Report of the Child Care/Study Advisory Committee Executive Summary January 2008

**COMMITTEE CHARGE:** Evaluate the feasibility of integrating child care and child study (research and observation) into one facility and report back to the senior staff. The senior staff, informed by the work of the Advisory Committee, would then make the decision on how to proceed.

Representative members were appointed and the Child Care/Study Advisory Committee officially convened in June 2007 to develop its work plan and map a time line for its work on the premise that the committee needed to complete its work by the end of January 2008 in order to enable a reasonable transition plan to be implemented for next fiscal year.

- (1) Prepare Request for Proposal (RFP) to be sent to prospective child care/study providers – completed July 2007.
- (2) Identify prospective providers to include in RFP process – completed July 2007.
- (3) Responses to RFP due October 1, 2007.
- (4) Committee review of proposals October through mid-November 2007.
- (5) Host site visits. Bright Horizons, Children's Creative Learning Centers (CCLC), StonyBrook Children's Center.
- (6) Collect and review feedback. The committee received significant community feedback. In total, to date, the committee has received over 50 letters and e-mails with feedback from members of the community including faculty, staff, and students, members of the Psychology and Education Department, parents of children in the Gorse and StonyBrook programs, South Hadley and surrounding community members, and MHC alumnae.

After extensive review of materials provided by prospective providers, further follow up and discussion to clarify proposal specifications, and consideration of the range of community feedback received from the onset of campus discussions initiated in the Fall of 2006, the Advisory Committee decided to conduct further due diligence relating to Bright Horizons as a prospective provider. The outcome suggested overall high quality and positive client feedback regarding Bright Horizons.

The Committee decided not to further pursue the proposals submitted by Children's Creative Learning Centers (CCLC) and the StonyBrook Children's Center.

**FINAL CONCLUSION:** As a result of the work the Committee completed over the last seven months, we do believe that a merged program is feasible. Further, if the College decides to pursue this integrated model, we believe that Bright Horizons would be the most viable organization with whom the College could establish a partnership to operate an integrated program.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** If the College elects to establish an integrated program and pursue a collaboration and contract with Bright Horizons, there will be much work to accomplish both immediately following any decision and in the planning to ensure successful contract negotiations and minimal disruption in the transition period. In order to support these efforts, the Committee would recommend the establishment of an Oversight Committee which would be charged with such matters as managing campus communications about the decision and transition, guiding the negotiation and contracting process with Bright Horizons to ensure that the resulting program will meet the laboratory school function needs of the Psychology and Education Department, and ensuring that families who are currently being served by the Gorse and StonyBrook programs have continuity of care for their children.

In addition, it will be essential that the College maintain this Oversight Committee responsible to maintain an on-going effective partnership with Bright Horizons. This committee would maintain appropriate oversight and control in Center operations as the College deems necessary to ensure the quality of the program and especially in meeting our academic needs.