

Academic Support, Administrative & Operating Program & Service Appraisal (ASAOPSA)  
Program and Service Self-Study Report  
LINDGREN CHILD CARE CENTER

October 18, 2010

## **PROLOGUE**

Thirty years ago the St. Cloud State University administration entered into collaboration with the St. Cloud State University Student Government in response to adult and returning-student demand: provision of quality child care on campus.

Lindgren Child Care Center (LCCC) is an early care and education center located within St. Cloud State University. At Lindgren, Student Government and SCSU have committed to a powerful capacity-building endeavor focused on The Whole Person. The Lindgren Child Care Center is funded by student fee dollars that are allocated annually by the Student Fee Committee based on the thirty year agreement. We build capacity and invest in people's capabilities: in the children aged 0 – 5 who we serve; in capabilities of all the college-aged student parents who attend university while their children are in our care; in all the SCSU university student employees we hire, train, and engage inside, outside, and between the classroom; and in all of the practicum students who carry out classroom assignments in our classrooms/laboratory setting. Investments in this early childhood education and university student development enterprise are consistent with economic growth, workforce, and higher education development. Investing in quality early care and education programs is good for children, for families, for communities, indeed for St. Cloud State University as a whole.

*“We were eighteen years old when we graduated from high school, and I was pregnant. We knew college would never be possible for us as young parents. But this Vice President, the one with the white hair [Sprague] told us about a child care center at SCSU. We enrolled in the university, enrolled our child, and today we are both high school educators. We teach, and that was made possible because this university met us in our situation and enabled us to complete our degrees.”*

**QUESTION 1:** What are the functions and/or services that your program or service provides and to which constituencies/clients?

The **first level of function** and service Lindgren Child Care Center (LCCC) provides is to children aged 2 months to 5 years:

Lindgren Child Care Center provides a comprehensive wrap-around service for children and their families in a full-day, quality early care and education setting. These are children of SCSU student parents (and a few staff/faculty children) aged 2 months through 5 years. As a comprehensive center providing for typical children as well as those with special education and

mental health needs, we arrange for assessment and services to be delivered at the center in addition to connecting parents with community professionals required by school districts to provide for young at-risk children. If someone walked into the center on any day of the week between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., they would find a nurturing and caring infant room with 8 babies, a vibrant toddler room with 12 16 – 33 month aged children, and a captivating preschool room where 25 3 – 5 year olds are practicing their social skills and driving the curriculum with their own keen curiosity.

The **second level of function** and service LCCC provides is to the SCSU student parents of those children:

Ninety percent of our user families are St. Cloud State University STUDENT families. This means that at least one parent of the children in our care is a St. Cloud State University student. In FY2009 we provided just under 50,000 hours of child care to these SCSU students, which then enables the student to attend classes, labs, work study jobs, group meetings, events and do their homework. All of which leads to an integrated student success experience at SCSU. We find today what a 1988 SUNY study found<sup>i</sup>, that campus-based child care not only promoted initial consideration and the decision to undertake an education by student-parents but also played a critical role in their continued enrollment. Child care availability is crucial to student-parents enrollment at an institution. The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning finds the same in this decade: “exemplary practice...at an institution includes support services that address the life circumstances of the adult, e.g. child care...”<sup>iii</sup>The student parents petitioning the SCSU administration in the late-1970s to open a campus-based child care center had it right! In addition, student parents identified supplemental benefits of campus-based programs ranging from helpful social interaction with peers to the role of center staff serving in an advisory capacity—with regard to their successful navigation of the university as well as help with parenting.

From the 2007 Lindgren Child Care Center Annual Report, the following parent quotes are in response to the question “How have you benefitted from our program?”

*“I’ve been able to finish college with your help in giving me peace of mind and convenience. Now I know what to look for in selecting a preschool: this will be the model I compare others to.”*

*“I have been able to have peace of mind while I concentrate on school. My grades are consistently high and I am able to retain much more of the knowledge because I can take the time to do my assignments. My family and I really appreciate everyone at Lindgren. I honestly don’t know how we could have done it without you.”*

The **third level of function** and service LCCC provides is to the SCSU practicum students from the five university academic colleges who complete course practicum experiences at the Lindgren Child Care Center. Faculty from across campus are increasingly adding practicum experiences to their syllabi especially in our center, where students are afforded a professionally

supervised experience. The departments within the colleges that typically send practicum students to us are: Nursing Sciences, Child and Family Studies, Communication Sciences Disorders, Community Psychology, Special Education, Social Work, Community Studies, Honors, and Theatre and Film Studies. The increase in numbers of practicum hours accommodated by Lindgren can be seen in the following table.

<u>Year</u>	<u># practicum hours</u>	<u># departments</u>
2005	152	9 departments
2006	177	5 departments
2007	279	7 departments
2008	378	6 departments
2009	525	5 departments
2010	665	6 departments

The **fourth level of function** and service LCCC provides is the vast number of St. Cloud State University student employees that are employed at LCCC, both work study students and student employees hired using LCCC budget funds. These are the students who, along with the lead teachers, actually provide for the care and education of the children. Each year we train our 40 - 50 student employees to be competent and skilled paraprofessionals in the classrooms and offices where they work. Our annual training plan requires student staff to attend no less than 30 hours of training each year, in order to meet our high employment standards as well as national accreditation and minimum licensing requirements. Additionally, their position descriptions reflect the broader Division of Student Life and Development learning outcomes. Two examples of the expectations in student employees' position descriptions are: 1. articulate transferable skills from LCCC to academic pursuits; and 2. articulate academic goals to supervisor and work with them on reflection of goals. Lastly, the following assumptions guide our work with all of our SCSU students, both employees and parents: the individual student is unique and must be treated as such; the individual student must be considered as a whole; the total environment of the student is educational and must be used to help the student achieve full development; and the major responsibility for a student's personal and social development rests with the student and his/her personal resources.

**QUESTION 2:** What are the mission and main objectives of your program or service? How do they support SCSU's Strategic Action Plan and its four distinctive characteristics?

### MISSION

St. Cloud State University's nationally accredited Lindgren Child Care Center provides infant, toddler, and preschool aged care to the children of SCSU students, and a few staff and faculty members. As a place where theory is put into practice, Lindgren Child Care Center is a training

and laboratory resource to the entire campus, and a model of excellence for the community of St. Cloud.

#### *PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY*

*We believe **children** are entitled to receive loving care in a safe environment with an educational experience. At Lindgren Child Care Center, **SCSU parents** know their children are challenged by age-appropriate environments and activities based on knowledge of child development and developmentally appropriate practices, implemented by a **professional staff**. We are committed to ensuring children's health and safety, helping children establish trust in their environment, strengthening their self-identity, and igniting their curiosity through productive, satisfying activity. Through an excellent blend of professional staff and arranged environment, the curriculum helps children know their individuality, understand their special worth, develop self-discipline, and broaden their understanding of individuals different from themselves.*

St. Cloud State University student employees and practicum students likewise benefit from their engagement with the Lindgren Child Care Center. As a true living and learning community, student employees establish an emotional and relational bond to Lindgren Child Care Center that enhances their retention persistence to degree-completion at St. Cloud State University.

It is now clearly understood that children who have benefited from quality early care and education programs are more likely to begin school ready to learn and with well-developed social skills, so they do better in school. This investment at the beginning of the P-16 continuum is good for children, for families, for communities, for schools, for governments, and for society as a whole.

#### ST CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

##### *Characteristic 1: Accessibility that leads to success;*

Lindgren Child Care Center is totally devoted to meeting the child care needs of SCSU student parents, commuter, part-time, transfer, returning, and single-parent students. This student demographic tends to be low-income [half of the children using the child care center qualify for free school lunch], first-generation [shared personal conversations], and from communities of color [incidence of children of color in the center ranges 16 – 21%, compared to 7% in the general student body]<sup>iii</sup>. In other words our student parents represent underrepresented populations. Students report they need this service in order to continue their education at SCSU. SCSU student parents who use the Lindgren Child Care Center report an averaged GPA of 3.8

on collected Student Demographic Surveys, and using the ISRS data system we calculate their combined persistence/graduation rate to be 79%.<sup>liv</sup>

Access to higher education is of utmost importance to traditionally underserved populations, and demographically colleges and universities like St. Cloud State University must recruit students, described above, who are first-generation, low-income, or minority. However those students must not only get in to college but must also ‘cross the finish line’.<sup>v</sup> Our 79% combined persistence graduation rate clearly indicates that these student parents, when using Lindgren Child Care Center, achieve success by finishing the degrees they begin, clearly demonstrating Lindgren Child Care Center’s direct contribution to the **strategic priority service to underrepresented populations.**

We employ about 50 SCSU student employees at any given time who tend to begin their relationship with Lindgren Child Care Center as new entering freshmen or new entering transfer students. Most begin working with us via the federal and state work study programs. They typically work another job besides working at Lindgren. Many of the employed students come from first generation families. In fact this year roughly 14% of our student employees are students of color. For the past six years we have successfully received St. Cloud State University Cultural Diversity grants to enhance our ability to hire culturally relevant staff. When student employees work in a more diverse setting, students of color feel more comfortable in the work place. Because many of our children are from diverse families, it is important that they experience a diverse staff at Lindgren. Lastly, we hire students who have experience working in a child care center or because of their academic and career interests.

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<sup>1</sup> **Lindgren Child Care Center Student Parents**

Looking at persistence and graduation rates for our student parents is very different than having the ability to define students as NEF or NET. Our student parents are very hard to define. Quite rarely do we admit a NEF, at times we admit a NET, the most common of our clients are returning students. How they return also varies greatly, some are returning at the freshmen level while other are returning to complete their senior year. Because of this anomaly tracking persistence and graduation rates for a single class is very difficult. We have completed a **non-scientific study** of student parents beginning Fall Semester 2004 through Fall Semester 2010 and looked at persistence and graduation rates both as separate statistics and as one category combining persistence/graduation using the MnSCU ISRS system and obtaining student parent information from November billing statements of each year.

**Persistence Rate**

Beginning with Fall 2004 cohort, Fall to Fall persistence rates of LCCC student parents are as follow:

<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
95%	96%	91%	92%	85%	81%

**Graduation Rate**

When only graduation rates are calculated during the 2005-2010 period our non-scientific statistics show that 70% of student parents not currently persisting have graduated.

**Combination Rate**

When graduation rates are combined with persistence through 2005-2010 a total of 79% of our student parents have either graduated or are continuing to persist.

*“My love for early childhood came from working at Lindgren Child Care Center. I learned a great deal of hands-on and rich sensory activities for toddlers and preschoolers. I had an amazing experience working with exceptional educators in a nurturing, safe, and fun environment. My experience from Lindgren helped me become a better educator in a variety of early care and elementary school settings.”*

These student employees are trained and equipped with all of the knowledge, skills, and abilities to do the work we expect of them in addition to our expectation they fulfill the Division of Student Life and Development Learning Outcomes and Objectives. Students have the opportunity to meet with their lead teachers or administrators to discuss their career paths, and also to examine resumes. It is common for our full-time staff to individually check-in with each student employee regarding their academic work: how are their classes going? Are they experiencing any frustrations that we might help them address? Like student parents, once these SCSU students join our staff they tend to graduate as well. Using the same ISRS data, we calculate our student staff to have a 72% combined persistence/ graduation rate<sup>2</sup>, again achieving the **strategic priority service to underrepresented populations.**

It is evident that the integrated student experience of the student parent cohort, and the integrated student experience of the student employee cohort, clearly contributes to their high rates of persistence and graduation. What happens at Lindgren makes these SCSU students ‘cross the finish line’. And this is the first fundamental outcome of this program and service appraisal: to put students and their learning and success at the center of all we do.

*Characteristic 2: Character that reflects our region*

St. Cloud State University students who are the parents of the children for whom we care, attend classes, laboratories, work study jobs, group meetings, events, do their homework, complete their

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<sup>2</sup> **Lindgren Child Care Center Student Staff**

Looking at persistence and graduation rates for our student employees is again different than following a current group of NEF through to graduation. We typically have 20-30 new employees each year but these students comprise a makeup of NEF, NET, returning students with work-study, and at times upper classmen that have received work-study for the first time. Again, because of this anomaly tracking persistence and graduation rates for a single class is very difficult. We have completed a **non-scientific study** of student employees beginning Fall Semester 2004 through Fall Semester 2010 using the MnSCU ISRS System and obtaining student staff information from November payroll of each year.

**Persistence Rate**

Beginning with Fall 2004 cohort, Fall to Fall persistence rates of LCCC student staff are as follow:

<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
84%	85%	89%	88%	82%	85%

**Graduation Rate**

When only graduation rates are calculated during the 2005-2010 period our non-scientific statistics show that 60% of student employees not currently persisting have graduated.

**Combination Rate**

When graduation rates are combined with persistence through 2005-2010 a total of 72% of our student employees have either graduated or are continuing to persist.

academic programs and graduate from SCSU because their children are cared for at Lindgren. One of the functions that the center serves is to reduce the stress of student parents regarding the care of their children. Knowing that their son or daughter is in good care, assists in helping them focus on other academic and personal matters. **Because of our strong preK-16 partnerships,** we play an active initiator and supportive role in connecting those families to the community resources they need to assist their whole family function. The community resources typically include: Roosevelt Early Childhood Special Education services; SPOT Rehab, a private therapeutic clinic; or CentraCare's mental health services, who do early childhood interventions. We also assist these families in accessing campus services, whether family counseling from SCSU Counseling and Psychological Services, or evaluations and screenings available from the Communication Sciences and Disorders clinic on campus. Lutheran Social Services in St. Cloud has enormous capacity in assisting families with their needs, consequently we are continually **expanding our internal and external partnerships and collaborations** to best serve the needs of our SCSU student parents.

St. Cloud State University's first Professional Learning Community began 4 years ago as one portion of the Initiative Foundations' THRIVE Infant-Young Child mental health initiative. Since the beginning three members of the LCCC staff have been integral members of the initiative **collaboration, which also is focused on improving young children's mental health outcomes by providing support to their families** of origin in needed ways. Healthy families is a critically and growing important need of our community, and we continue to promote efforts for a Family Health and Development center located on campus utilizing the expertise of our many undergraduate and graduate-student interns and their faculty supervisors. As we pioneer new and useful ways to promote healthy families, all of the student parents, student employees, and practicum students benefit from these pioneering and innovative efforts. And the overall health of community families improves as we continue in these community engagement efforts.

Finally, the professional staff of Lindgren is committed to sharing their expertise with the regional early childhood community generally through the provision of professional development workshops. In years past we have continually been presenters at professional conferences. In January 2011, we will host our first annual Practitioners Conference, providing the management and oversight of the conference logistics, and also securing the professional collaboration of selected campus faculty to provide content in their areas of expertise. There is a need in the St. Cloud area among the many other early care and education centers to have available locally high-quality professional development. We see one of our roles as members of the SCSU campus community as organizers and providers of such training as civic engagement and assisting the region and community in enhancing child care support.

*Characteristic 3: Education that drives knowledge into action;*

For SCSU students who are the parents of the children in our care, we advise, support, educate, and refer, thereby supporting their whole development. Not only can we assist these student parents in their successful navigation of St. Cloud State University to graduation, but we also validate and celebrate their vital roles as parents and the work associated with parenting. In the process they learn appropriate child development expectations and techniques to manage their family's emotional health, **a partnership with these families to whom we are committed.** And these student parents are highly successful: as stated earlier, we calculate their combined persistence/ graduation rate across the past 6 years to be 79%, using the ISRS database.

The laboratory setting where theory is actually put in to practice is evident at LCCC. The Lindgren Child Care Center staff provides practicum and internship placements for such departments as Child and Family Studies, Nursing Sciences, Communication Sciences Disorders, Social Work, Special Education, Community Counseling, and Marketing. The volume of these placements has increased four-fold since 2005 when we specifically began counting (see chart p.3). Departments have seen the value of student practicum placements on-campus, that are professionally supervised, with an element of accountability and evaluation. In our setting, these SCSU students are exposed to professional modeling and mentoring, curriculum, behavioral adjustments, and the living example of experts in front of them every day.

Whether they are declared education majors or not, student employees learn theoretical and practical child development theories and practices. They are evaluated on their performance twice each year, by themselves and their lead teachers. They learn the soft skills of the work place and the life skills of managing their lives not as islands but as a part of a greater whole. We ask them how they are doing in class. They actually tell us because they know we care. We act on the information we receive from them: do you need to improve study skills? Do you need to enhance your time management? Shall we assist you in finding a tutor? We ask them about their career and educational choices and reflect with them about those choices. Yet in all of these efforts we are helping students themselves, not doing for them. We share our knowledge of the campus with them to enhance their own skills in making their educational experience the best it can be. As such, these students become **true members of this community of scholars known as St. Cloud State University.** And they too have a high rate of success. Using the ISRS data, we calculate their combined persistence/ graduation rate to be 72%.

For the children in our direct care, they learn the most important constructs that will ensure their P-16 success: social skills that will enable their self-regulation and emotional intelligence, and problem-solving skills. While each classroom, infant, toddler and preschool, has its own curriculum and program plan, the underlying philosophy for each child's learning is this: a child is naturally a scientist attempting to make sense of their world. As their curiosity drives them in this meaning-making, their environments are enhanced with the materials that will naturally

guide their literacy and numeracy; they will be introduced to the wonder of the natural world, and have their civic responsibility engaged in their care for that natural world. In their environment at Lindgren Child Care Center they will learn to care for one another and the world in which they live.

*Characteristic 4: A portfolio of distinctive programs;*

August 31, 2009, Lindgren Child Care Center achieved **accreditation** by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. “The administration, teaching staff, and families of Lindgren Child Care Center are all to be congratulated for being one of the first programs in the country to earn the mark of quality represented by the reinvented NAEYC accreditation system.” The accreditation decision report indicated Lindgren had scored at 100% or 100+% on all the criteria of the program standards. The report continued with commendations for thorough and excellent program and classroom portfolios. This accreditation is a clear mark of distinction, and the perfect scores a testimonial to excellence.

Of the **nine aspirational peer institutions** defined by St. Cloud State University’s Office of Institutional Advancement, eight have child care centers on their campuses, supported by their universities, to be used for student parents, some staff and faculty child care needs, and as laboratory settings. Lindgren Child Care Center is a prominent program holding great promise for contributing to our SCSU future success, holding a direct relational correspondence to our aspirational peer institutions. The culture and environment for sustaining and supporting these child care settings includes the following research.

Serving the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Student: luncheon keynote speech, Jamie Merisotis, president, Lumina Foundation for Education, April 27, 2010<sup>vi</sup>;

- Identifies the Big Goal of the Obama Administration: by the year 2025 want 60% of the American population to hold high-quality college degrees or credentials;
- America needs all types of students to succeed. This means a student-centered system, with flexibility, that is accessible, accountable, and committed to quality that meets each student where she is and offers the support she needs to succeed.

Access to Promote Postsecondary Success Among Low-Income Single Parents, findings of a paper by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, April 9, 2010.<sup>vii</sup> IWPR recognizes demographics of participants in higher education are changing. This research finds these latest trends:

- Female students over age 25 are the fastest growing population in higher education;
- 56% of post-secondary students are women;
- 35% of all female students are low-income; of these 53% are African-American women, 51% are Latina women, and 26% are Caucasian women;

- 78% of low-income women work while attending school, 40% work full time, and
- 59% of low-income female students are parents.

Within the same research, the findings amongst students with young children were revealing;

- 80% of student parents said availability of child care was important in their decision to attend college; 46% said campus child care was first priority;
- Focus group participants identified stable child care; personal support from friends, family, peers, and faculty/staff; and accommodating employers as leading factors in college enrollment, and
- Student parents with access to campus child care had a 26% higher achievement rate than the general population.

With Their Whole Lives Ahead of Them; Myths and Realities About Why So Many Students Fail to Finish College; A Public Agenda Report for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2009<sup>viii</sup>.

- Needing to work and family commitments are the major reasons young adults give for not returning to college once they leave. **Lindgren supports those family commitments by providing child care on campus for precisely those young adult students while they are studying and completing their university degrees.**

The creation of the Lindgren Child Care Center 30 years ago is yet today in complete alignment with the goals of Minnesota higher education policy, national policy, workforce and human capital development policy, and the success of transfer and adult students at St. Cloud State University. It is truly a distinctive program.

*Characteristic 5: Institutional capacity for excellence and innovation*

- We have a high-quality workforce with clear evidence of longevity
- We do annual strategic planning as a center, set annual goals, and are informed in this process by conducting 2 assessments of our parent population...one a satisfaction survey and one a demographic survey.
- We conduct evaluations of our student staff twice per year and solicit from them via surveys and focus groups ways we can continually improve our training and their experiences.
- We are nationally accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- We are licensed annually by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, known as a Rule 3 license.
- We conduct assessments on children to ensure our programs and curriculums are indeed assisting children in the acquisition of appropriate developmental milestones and social competencies.

**QUESTION 3:** How do your programs and services specifically support student learning and/or success?

Lindgren Child Care Center's most concrete evidence of support to student learning and/or success is our calculated persistence graduation of the student parents we serve and the student staff we employ .

- The 2009 persistence graduation rate of the student parents using the Lindgren Child Care Center was 79%;
- The 2009 persistence graduation rate of the student staff working at Lindgren Child Care Center was 72%;
- The general SCSU average one-year fall to fall retention rate is 71%, and the 6-year graduation rate is 45%.<sup>ix</sup>

*“Forty percent of our **student** families are single **parent families**. When those single parents-and they're almost all moms, with a few single parent dad families-when those single parents can go to college, they will get jobs they will keep, and that will mean that they can be productive members of society, and they are. I remember a mom that came when she was 18, and had her baby the August after she graduated high school. That little baby grew up with us for five years while mom earned her engineering degree. Mom had a job already after she did her internship between her junior and senior year, and IBM said, “Why even bother to go back to college? We'll hire you right now.” She said, “No, I'm going to finish my degree, because maybe IBM isn't the place for me for the rest of my life, so I'll need to have that degree . But she would have never been able to do what she did if we hadn't been here. We can't serve a lot of children because we're only licensed for 45, but for every single one of the families that can participate here, it matters because they persist to completion. They graduate, and I think that's the bottom line.”<sup>x</sup>*

The growing number of practicum student placements at Lindgren Child Care Center is another metric illuminating how the Lindgren Child Care Center supports student learning and/or success. This number has grown by 400% in 5 years. Campus departments and faculty throughout the five academic colleges clearly see the student learning experience value of student practicum assignments at Lindgren, and are increasingly sending their students to experience the intersection of theory and practice, the essence of a laboratory. For not only do those practicum students come into the center and carry out an observation or practice, they are modeled and mentored by a lead professional teacher in that effort, who then provides reflective consultation with them after their experience.

Staff evaluations and focus groups are conducted annually. Each tool indicates to us that not only is our student staff learning things, but the more they know the more they ask us to include in their training!

**QUESTION 4:** How do you measure success and performance? How do you review and evaluate the performance of your program and service and what is the frequency? When was your most recent evaluation and what were the results? How does this compare with peers and/or best practices of similar programs and services at other comparable institutions?

Measure	Frequency	Review & Evaluation Results
Program Accreditation from the NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation	Site visit every five years. Annual reports on the 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Accreditation date 8/31/09.	The percentage of met program criteria by Program Standards was at 100% or 100%+ for meeting emerging criteria. Percentages of met criteria for each classroom were: Infant 100%, Preschool 100%, Toddler 98%.
Minnesota Department of Human Services, Child Care Centers Licensure, MN Rules part 9503.005 to 95036.0170 (DHS Rule 3) and MN Statutes Chapters 245A & 245C. Limits enrollment capacity based on square footage.	Site Visit every other year, Annual Written Report in non-visit years. License is issued annually for 12 months. Last visit was November 2009.	Corrective actions made. Our license has been continuous since first issued in 1980.
St. Cloud State University Student Fee Allocation program review and budget recommendation.	Annual	Annual Affirmation of the Lindgren Child Care Center is evidenced in the success of maintaining our Fee Allocation budgetary support each year for the past 30 years.
City of St. Cloud Health Department	Annual	Yearly granting of permission to serve Food and Beverages
Lead Staff Longevity & Seniority		A quality indicator of the Early Care & Education industry is staff turnover. Ours is extremely low: Full time staff have 2, 12, 14, 25, & 30 years in these jobs.
Parent Satisfaction Surveys	Each Semester: one is demographic; one is qualitative.	We receive outstanding satisfaction surveys. See quotes p. 2.
Environmental Checklists	In years when we do not have an Accreditation Site Visit; 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.	Classroom Compliance. The preschool teacher deploys the ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale) and Infant & Toddler teachers

		the ITERS (Infant and Toddler Rating Scale). Continuous improvement of environments based on outcomes.
St. Cloud State University Student Parent and Student Employee persistence/graduation	Calculate annually 2009 & 2010	Our calculations reveal the following combined persistence/graduation rates between Fall 2005-Fall 2011. Student Parents: 79% Student Employees: 72%
Developmental Screenings	Completed within 30 days of a child becoming enrolled at the Lindgren Child Care Center	Infant and Toddler lead teachers complete DENVER II Screening Tool. A preschool room lead teacher completes MPSI (Minneapolis Preschool Screening Instrument.) Children with suspect screenings referred to community resources.
Child Assessments	Continual with bi-annual reporting through parent teacher conference	Development of each child is documented and analyzed using Creative Curriculum, an assessment system to be valid and reliable. This system is ongoing among parent, teacher, and child.
Staff Evaluations: MSUAASF	Annual	4 Outstanding 1 Successful
Staff Evaluations: Student	Twice a year.	
Practicum Student and Faculty Evaluations	Periodic	Anecdotal evidence. Shows high satisfaction made with these experiences.
Minnesota Department of Education Child and Adult Care Food Program Review and Application	Administrative review is every other year. Most recent March 22, 2010	We made corrections in only six findings.

## PEERS

### Mn SCU Schools

Five of the MnSCU State Universities have on-campus child care centers. They are:

- Bemidji State University
- MSU Moorhead
- MSU Mankato

- SCSU
- Winona State University

Like the campuses on which they are located, each of these centers is unique. The following generalizations can be made about them.

1. The enrollment capacity of the centers ranges 45 – 200.
2. Two of the five centers report to the student life and development area, three of the five report to an academic department.
3. All would be identified as comprehensive full-day child care and child development centers utilized by campus academic departments. Lindgren Child Care Center would identify the same.
4. All five have on-campus locations; Winona also has an off-campus site in collaboration with the local school district.
5. Four of the five centers are NAEYC accredited, including SCSU’s Lindgren Child Care Center.
6. All EXCEPT Lindgren Child Care Center care for community children as well as children of students, staff, and faculty.
7. All five receive in-kind contributions from their universities, taken to mean no center pays rent, custodial, or utility services;
8. Two centers, Bemidji and MSU Mankato receive M & E funds; three centers, including LCCC, receive student activity fee contributions; two, MSU Mankato and Winona receive department/college contributions.
9. All rely on parent user fees as well as the funding combinations listed above. Lindgren receives 100% of its operational budget from Student Activity Fees via the St. Cloud State University Student Government Fee Allocation Committee. Parent user fees off-set this fund outlay; the difference is the Student Government subsidy.

### **National Aspirational Peer Institutions**

St. Cloud State University’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness has identified for the campus community nine universities St. Cloud State University considers aspirational peers. Not only are these institutions like SCSU, but on selected overall university outcome measures, are doing better than SCSU. Of those 9 institutions, 8 have child care centers on their campuses. In summer 2010 Lindgren Child Care Center surveyed all 8 of these centers along selected parameters thought to be of interest in this ASAOPSA Appraisal. The survey was more overarching, and did not drill-down particularly deep into any specific area.

Six of the 8 aspirational peers with child care centers replied to the survey. They are in bold:

- **Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Michigan**
- **Montclair State University, Montclair, New Jersey**
- **San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California**
- **Texas State University-San Marcos, San Marcos, Texas**
- Towson University, Towson, Maryland

- **University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa**
- **Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois**
- Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky.

The following generalizations can be made from the survey information received from the six respondents:

1. The enrolled student headcount of the peer aspirants ranges 13,000 – 27,000 students.
2. The child care center capacity of the respondents ranges 32 – 176; at 45 Lindgren Child Care Center would be at the lower end of the range.
3. Two of the six respondents indicate that, in the university’s organizational chart, they report to student services, four of the six to academic departments. Lindgren Child Care Center reports to the VP Student Life and Development.
4. Five of the six self-describe as *comprehensive full-day child care and child development centers utilized by campus academic departments*. Lindgren Child Care Center would identify the same.
5. Four of the centers opened in the 1970s, one opened in 1985, one re-opened as a combined effort with the independent school district in 2005. Lindgren opened in 1980.
6. All six identify as being operated by and as integral parts of their universities; none is operated by an outsourced agency or vendor. They are all located on-campus. Lindgren has an identical profile.
7. Five of the six are NAEYC accredited; one allowed their NAEYC accreditation to lapse when it became too expensive. Lindgren is NAEYC accredited.
8. All are open 12 months year around. This is consistent with their eligible users; all allow use by community member children. Lindgren does NOT care for community-member children, only children whose parents are campus constituents. Therefore we are only open when classes are in session.
9. While there are various types of funding sources for each center, all five respondents indicated their center was funded by parent fees and university/college general fund. In addition, one received 24% of their funds from the student activity fees. Lindgren’s sources of funding are parent fees and student activity fees.
10. Total amounts of annual operational budgets ranged from \$200,000 - \$1,446,000. Lindgren’s annual operational budget is \$488,022.
11. No center pays rent to its institution, neither does Lindgren.

QUESTION 5: What changes occurred in your services and programs you provide in the last five years? What trends do you expect in the next five years? What research or information (if available) do you have to support these expectations?

#### CHANGES

- During the past five years we have enhanced our focus in programming for children and families in the natural world. Based on the work of Richard Louv, author of Last Child in the Woods, these additions include: the preschool classroom recycling project curriculum

which resulted in the Lindgren Child Care Center Annual Used Book Sale, proceeds subsequently funded:

- Reusable grocery bags for families and staff;
- Used oil receptacle that holds the fuel for the Husky Fried Ride;
- Three sets of upgraded recycling containers for the ECC Building.
- Sponsorship of the Family Nature Hikes in the Talahi Woods, where families and their children enjoy the familiarity of nature each of Minnesota's four seasons. We have extended our summer programs to young school age children [see bullet three in Trends, below].

## TRENDS

Prior to our center staff annual evaluation and planning meeting, we consult the Top 12 Trends in Child Care at <http://childcare.about.com>

As a staff we chose to focus on the following trends and responses:

1. *Child care is catering to budget-minded families.* We introduced a 12-hour per week registration and payment option for student families in direct response to this trend.
2. *Drop-in child care is more common, and more demanded by financially strapped families.* We have introduced just this semester the availability of drop in care at Lindgren, based on availability.
3. *Afterschool programs and care provide flexibility.* We will implement, in collaboration with Campus Recreation, a school-aged summer camp/program June 2011 focused on reconnecting children to their natural, outdoor world. We believe parents are looking for programs outside of the school hours, and we have experienced interest in such a program from 'alumni': kids who aged out of our program when they became school-aged.

## RESEARCH

There is a paradigm shift in the demographics of higher education students that needs to be addressed in this section about changes and trends. A number of factors appear on a convergence course to change higher education in ways we need consider. The supporting research is referenced previously in this report in "Portfolio of Distinctive Programs" on pp. 9-10.

Federal and state governments are asking that increased numbers of adult students receive higher education, either a high quality credential or degree. On October 12, 2010 Minnesota Public Radio reported that the MnSCU system office released information stating that the number of students in the system over age 25 increased by 8% 2010 over 2009. These students do not require less services than the traditional-aged student, and they require a very different set of varied services. For adult students, particularly single moms, on-campus child care is one of

those services. It also seems evident that universities must offer degree programs at non-traditional times and days in order for students who work full time to avail themselves of those degree programs. Again, on campus child care can support these efforts. As the Bush Teacher Preparation Initiative gains traction, it might very well come to light that the continuous mentorship and modeling relationship of the bygone lab school is one of the best ways to ensure good teaching practice in our teacher candidates. The Lindgren Child Care Center is an already existing comprehensive early care and education setting fulfilling lab school functions, for an even more diverse set of departments than just teacher development. It would be exactly the wrong time to limit or curtail the services of the Lindgren Child Care Center precisely when our dependence on transfer student enrollment of adult students will keep our enrollments stable, and will assist us in fulfilling our part of state and federal higher education policy. This is especially important at a time when those adult students will likely be African-American or Latina, precisely the underserved population the Office of the Chancellor has identified as priority.

**QUESTION 6:** What are the programs and services you depend on and what programs and services depend on you?

We depend on:

- Business Services: SCSU Business Services provides for the electronic posting of child care charges to student accounts, and for the collection and accounting of child care fees paid by users. They process 1400s for payment of our Child and Adult Care Food Program bills, and for special purchases from our 90080 account. Business Services provides the purchase card support for all of our supplies and equipment purchases.
- Student Payroll: provides to all of our Work Study student employees and also our regular student employees.
- Graduate Office: provides support for our Graduate Assistant.
- Scholarship and Financial Aid: provides work study students to Lindgren that matches the student's selected major with our needs. They also disseminate the Post-Secondary Child Care Assistance funds to needy parents, which assists parents in paying their child care fees.
- SODEXHO: they provide the catered lunches for our children, and also assist us with our Winter Breakfast and Spring Picnic.
- Maintenance: they provide all the tradespersons who provide repairs to the center, and upgrades to the facility.
- Buildings and Grounds: we receive custodial services daily from Buildings and Grounds.
- Several Minnesota County Human Services departments that provide funding to assist parents pay for their child care costs.

Depend on us:

- Every SCSU student parent for whom we provide child care depends on us. These student users can enroll their children full-time, part-time, or they can drop-in, depending on their needs.

- If they are apprehensive about their re-entry to higher education, we counsel them through their fears;
- If they are having academic struggles, we refer them to tutoring labs or assist them in connecting with personal tutors;
- If they are unfamiliar with campus, such as new transfer students, we share with them from our collective knowledge about campus services, personnel, and academic supports;
- If their child is experiencing developmental delays, we connect them to the appropriate community support services through referral;
- We provide peace of mind to SCSU student parents who have their children with us because of our on-campus location parents are always no more than five minutes away from their child.
- *“Without Lindgren I don’t think I would be in school right now. With my infant, I had to nurse him because he would not take the bottle, which means I would not be in school without Lindgren because it is located on campus. I think it has helped me be more successful in school because it has alleviated a lot of worry, because I know they are being well-cared for and they are so close.” [from a parent who is in her second year of school, and has had her children at the center for 1 ½ years]*
- Student employees who are either supported through the Work Study programs, or hired out of our budget depend on us for mentoring, both academic and personal advising, as well as developing their workplace skills for future job markets.
- Non-traditional SCSU student parents for whom we provide care so they can attend Non-Traditional Student Orientation.
- Academic departments schedule over 600 hours of practicum experiences at the Lindgren Child Care Center for their students, a clear benefit to the pedagogical work of their students.

**QUESTION 7:** What programs and services do you collaborate or partner with to do your work?

On-campus collaborations:

- LCCC collaborates with numerous campus academic departments to provide real-world practicum experiences for their students in our Lindgren Child Care Center. The number of these hours has increased significantly over the past 5 years, indicating both the academic department’s recognition of the value of the professionally supervised practicum experience, and the increased need for students to have real-world practicum experiences. The chart tabulating these practicum hours is located on p. 2-3 of this report.
- We collaborate with campus departments to enhance the campus experience of the SCSU student who is also a parent. For example, we have collaborated with Family Weekend, a university program, for the past 2 years; we have had our children involved with the Community Garden (planting seedlings for the garden, for example) for the past 3 years; we participated in the celebration of the Husky Fried Ride; the children’s Used Book Sale, in its 4<sup>th</sup> year, has become a campus event; we provide child care to support Non-traditional Student Orientation.

- In October 2010 we began to provide periodic Parent Education sessions for all SCSU student parents, in conjunction with Counseling and Psychological Services, on the broad topic of Balancing the Multiple Roles of the Student Parent.
- Provision of child care at Career Changers Workshop at Maple Grove Graduate Center October 27, 2010, in collaboration with St. Cloud State University's Office of Career Services.

Off-campus collaborations:

- THRIVE. The Greater St. Cloud Area is addressing shortages in early childhood mental health services. Higher education faculty joined forces with community professionals in a Professional Learning Community. Their first goal was to integrate mental health curriculum into college coursework and internships. Other goals included creation of a certificate program; a resource center; and a family support center. Three of LCCC staff have been integral members of these efforts.
- Invitations to make Professional Presentations to Early Childhood professionals at conferences
- Sponsorship of the January 2011 Early Childhood Practitioners conference. We will generate new revenues from hosting our Professional Practitioner Conference in January 2011, beyond what the expenses will be for the conference. We estimate this new revenue to amount to \$3,000 – 5,000. We also have a commitment to produce this conference every year, as a vital effort to promote collaboration between campus stakeholders and community constituents.
- Host site for international Early Childhood student from Denmark
- Provided a break-out session in the first annual Warrior to Citizen conference

**QUESTION 8:** What do you wish you could do differently to improve the effectiveness of your program or service but have not had the opportunity, time or resources to do?

We approached the department of Child and Family Studies to create an even stronger *internal partnership and collaboration* with them. We asked for an increased number of practicum student placements, and even teacher candidate placements with us at our center. We did this primarily to enhance the quality of the student experience. Our lead teachers all have at least Bachelor's degrees in child development with Minnesota Teachers licenses. Being more professionally qualified than most teachers in other early care and education facilities in the community, our highly qualified teachers would provide a higher quality learning experience to those practicum students. A secondary goal in this effort would be to then reduce the amount of student workers we would have to hire to make our classroom ratios. This is supported by the Teacher Preparation Initiative research, which shows teaching candidates need placements with high quality teachers to mentor and improve their own preparation. The faculty of CFS unanimously supported not changing to our proposed collaboration, citing the need to place

student in diverse settings; and the notion of staggering the field experiences throughout the semester would be problematic in the areas of class content discussions.

We believe that, as SCSU colleges and departments ramp-up to provide more evening and especially weekend programs that enable the working adult to pursue additional higher education, LCCC can effectively assist those adult, traditionally underserved students by providing child care on campus during those non-traditional hours and days. We very much desire to be a part of these efforts.

On September 28, 2010 the Minnesota Department of Health received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \$27 million to support pregnant and parenting teens and women to enable them to participate in higher education. One day later on September 29, 2010 the MnSCU Office of the Chancellor received \$800,000 to assist returning adults to progress in degree completion. We look forward to assisting in both of these efforts as competitors for the grants and providers of the core service elements on which the grants are focused.

St. Cloud State University has an enormous array of services and resources that could benefit student families. These include Educational Leadership and Community Psychology, especially Marriage and Family Counseling and Community Counseling; Special Education, particularly Early Childhood Special Education; Social Work; Communication Sciences and Disorders; Nursing Sciences. As a member of the THRIVE Professional Learning Community on campus, the possible convergence of all of the resources these various departments could bring to bear to assist student families is exciting, and provides fertile soil for developing a model of family support, which once piloted could be extended to the community of St. Cloud.

Finally, we obtained a variance from our current Minnesota Department of Human Services license in Fall 2008 to provide evening drop-in care to student parents who wanted to participate in Campus Recreation opportunities including group fitness. Parents would be able to drop –off their children at Lindgren, proceed to the Campus Rec facilities for recreation, and then come back to pick up their child. However, no parents used the opportunity, and in discussions with some parents, we found out that the inconvenience of having to drop children off in a building other than the Campus Rec buildings created the barrier. Thus, the possibility of a satellite area in Campus Recreation might make this initiative successful.

**QUESTION 9:** What possibilities do you think the committee should consider regarding how your program or service could be organized within the University?

The data from the **Aspirant Peer Survey** indicates that, of the respondents, on-campus child care centers are assigned organizationally either to Student Life and Development (two) or to an Academic Educational Department (four). This is also consistent with our **4-year MnSCU**

**schools**, three of which have on-campus child care centers assigned to an Educational department, and two of which are assigned to Student Life and Development.

Because of the wide variety of academic departments that utilize the Lindgren Child Care Center as a practicum site, we are currently situated correctly on the University's organizational chart. It is also evident that our program is completely focused on the whole student experience, fostered by our many interdependencies and collaborations with other student services. If we were to be assigned to an organizational cluster in Student Life and Development but not a direct report of the Vice President, that cluster would include Student Health Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, and the office of non-traditional students.

**QUESTION 10:** What strategies do you suggest for reducing costs in your area? What are the opportunities for new revenue from services and programs?

#### Reducing costs

Eighty percent (80%) of the current operational costs of the Lindgren Child Care Center are invested in professional personnel. Outsourcing the service to students would be inconsistent not only with our **Aspirant Peers** but also the other **MnSCU schools**, none of which have outsourced their child care centers.

The question has been asked whether the center's costs would be more efficient were it not nationally accredited, and our assessment is it would not. We could save between \$300 – 1,000 per year in Accreditation Fees depending on the year if we were not accredited. However the burden of not being accredited would fall to the student parent who is using county assistance to pay for care. Being accredited is a positive factor for students because if the center is accredited there is a higher rate of reimbursement by the county to the client. If we were not accredited the student parent would have a greater out-of-pocket expense to pay for child care than when we are accredited. We believe we better support student-parent participation and learning by being accredited.

#### New revenues

We are pursuing new revenues in four different ways:

1. We have increased the number of registration options for family use of the center. Whereas before families only used the center full-time or part-time, our trend analysis indicated families want options with even fewer hours. So we have created a 12-hour per week use schedule, and we can already see this 'teaser' option leads to families increasing their hours of use. We have also created a drop-in use option based on availability of the hours requested. Again, this option allows parents to experience using

the center, develop a comfort level with the center, and we hope will also lead to families increasing their hours of use.

2. We piloted a Summer Camp option last summer, and intend to expand the camp option in collaboration with Campus Recreation in 2011 and beyond. While we will be sharing these increased revenues with Campus Rec, on balance the revenues will nevertheless increase revenues overall, whether it be increasing revenues to the Student Fee balance carry-forward (LCCC model) or increasing revenues to off-set expenses in a Student Fee funded area (Campus Rec model).
3. We will generate new revenues from hosting our Professional Practitioner Conference in January 2011, beyond what the expenses will be for the conference. We estimate this new revenue to amount to be between \$3,000 – 5,000 in the first year. We also have a commitment to produce this conference every year, as a vital effort to promote collaboration between campus stakeholders and community constituents, and to increase the revenue potential.
4. Each year we generate more revenue than the previous year, by increasing the parent user fees. For example in FY10 we generated \$221,820 in revenue; in FY11 we are projected to generate \$245,950, slightly over \$24,000 increased revenue.

**QUESTION 11:** If you have additional, relevant information or suggestions about your program or service or another program or service on campus that was not included in the self-study questionnaire above, please include that information here.

For the past several years St. Cloud State University has sponsored a Student Employee of the Year competition. Student workers from Lindgren Child Care Center have been nominated on two different years; one was selected First Runner-Up Student Employee of the Year, and the other selected Student Employee of the Year. Listen to what that meant to that student employee's parent.

*“Thank you for what must have been a glowing recommendation for my daughter’s award as Student Employee of the year. Thank you even more for all the support and encouragement you have given her over all four years of her college life. As a parent, it is always so comforting to know your daughter has other adults in her life to influence her choices and take the time to listen and care about her trials and tribulations. You have no idea what an impact you had in her life. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.”*

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<sup>i</sup> “Impact of Campus-Based Child Care on the Academic Success of Student-Parents at SUNY Community Colleges”, Winter, 1988.

<sup>ii</sup> “Serving Adult Learners in Higher Education: Principles of Effectiveness” Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, [www.cael.org](http://www.cael.org) Executive Summary 2000, p.12.

<sup>iii</sup> 2010 Profile of an SCSU Undergraduate, prepared by Office of New Student Orientation

<sup>iv</sup> Internal calculation by D. Mergen, using ISRS data..

<sup>v</sup> Postsecondary Success Fact Sheet, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, [www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org) November 2009

<sup>vi</sup> Speech titled “Serving the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Student” given by Jamie Merisotsis, President, Lumina Foundation for Education at the National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good, Washington, DC, April 27, 2010.

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<sup>vii</sup> Keynote Speech, “Access to Promote Postsecondary Success Among Low-Income Single Parents: Findings of a paper by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation”, given by Abby Thorman, PhD, Orlando, Florida, April 9, 2010.

<sup>viii</sup> With Their Whole Lives Ahead of Them: Myths and Realities About Why So Many Students Fail to Finish College. A Public Agenda Report for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, [www.publicagenda.org/TheirWholeLivesAheadofThem](http://www.publicagenda.org/TheirWholeLivesAheadofThem) 2009.

<sup>ix</sup> SCSU Quick Reference from Fact Book, Fall 2007.

<sup>x</sup> Personal interview with Debra Carlson by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, 2009.