

Appendix C: Comments Received on the Fall 2004 Students with Children Survey

Child Care Expense – 122 comments

Subsidies not enough and cannot be applied to unlicensed care, even for children with special needs; UM centers need to be more affordable; one parent cannot afford to work outside of home due to childcare costs; financial aid budgets are unreasonably low for students with dependent care costs.

Little support for school/family balance – 77 comments (60 specific to school climate, 9 regarding academic requirements, plus 8 regarding night/weekend classes not available)

Teachers/departments do not understand parents' responsibilities, including those supporting children over 18; not a family friendly atmosphere; inflexible academic requirements slow time-to-degree and lower completion rates.

Has or would prefer to have one or both parents care for child – 35 comments

Believe stay-at-home parent is important to child; wish one parent could afford to stay at home.

Has or would prefer to have unlicensed care in the child's home – 34 comments

Either by family member (not the parents), nanny or babysitter; convenience of care in the child's home; familiarity of home setting and provider who is well known is better for child.

Need child care closer to school/work (not necessarily UM-sponsored care) – 31 comments

Commuting time to child care wastes valuable time; would like child care to be close so parent could visit mid-day.

Housing – 29 comments

Would like more affordable housing options, particularly in North Campus Family Housing; very concerned about cuts in the number of Family Housing units for families.

Appreciated Survey – 29 comments

Concerned about the quality of care and safety – 27 comments

Wants social interaction with other children; prefers learning/school-like environment; concerned for older children watching younger siblings or child being home alone.

Need for more flexible scheduling of child care services (UM and non-UM)– 26 comments

Need earlier and/or later hours of operation; need part-time care; university and public schools have different vacation days; need evening and/or weekend care; need back-up care.

Need for more UM child care facilities and/or better access to them – 22 comments

Long waiting lists; need more centers; need more child care spots at centers.

Student Recommendations – 19 Comments

- Publicize the following information to a greater degree: aid to students with children, secondary or backup child care sources, support groups for single parents or for parents raising children with special needs; make information easier to locate on the web.
- Programs such as Kindermusik should be advertised to student parents.
- Create more part-time masters programs.
- One section of North Campus Family Housing should allow pets.
- Survey North Campus Family Housing residents, past and present, to compare their quality of life.
- Make biannual presentations to deans and department chairs about issues facing student parents.
- Study professors' experience in utilizing their graduate students, particularly in labs, as a check to abusive practices. For example, how many students under them graduate? How many leave the program prior to graduating? What is the average time to degree for students under them?
- UM should consider the emotional and financial strain experienced by students who have elder care issues to manage.
- Offer one-term fellowships to parents preparing for their preliminary exams (if they are not already funded).
- Child care subsidies should be available for stay-at-home parents because they forego earned income in order to care for their child(ren).
- Child care subsidies should cover babysitters (because they are more flexible) and summer camps.
- Every academic program should have a program for latchkey care or daycare so students can spend time with children between classes.
- Students need a place on central campus where parents could leave children occasionally or late at night for 3 to 4 hours, without pre-registration.
- Parents should be able to place ads on UM job search for sitters.
- Help parents in the same school/program to meet and form a network.
- Link student parents with community members, the YMCA, sororities/fraternities, and early childhood education students willing to baby-sit or run errands for students with children or offer "parents' night out" programs.

Problems with Survey – 18 comments

Survey did not ask about students who also work in addition to attending school, students who care for elderly parents or children over 18, transportation, parking, or if spouse/partner attends another school; slow survey website; one question survey was really much longer.

Health care and other university benefits – 12 Comments

Family health care costs are very high; University Health Service should have pediatricians on staff; dependents should have access to sports events and university recreational facilities as part of student's privileges; need later evening bus routes for AATA buses,

Difficulty in locating care for newborns and children under two – 11 comments

This is a problem with both UM and non-UM-sponsored providers.

Summer camp issues – 6 comments

Disappointed at closure of North Campus camp; inadequate time ranges for summer camps.

"CommentCodes-Final.doc"