

FAMILY CARE OFFICE
Annual Report
July 1, 2003 - June 30, 2004

Executive Summary

The Family Care Office (FCO) was created in December 1993. It is funded jointly by the University's operating budget (through the Office of the Vice President Human Resources and Equity and the Office of the Vice President and Provost) and by St. George campus students (through the Student Services fee). The Office reports directly to the Director of Student Services and to the Quality of Work Life Advisor & Special Assistant to the Vice-President, Human Resources and Equity. It has been a member of the Equity Issues Advisory Group since 1993.

The Family Care Office is a service that provides guidance, information, referrals, educational programming and advocacy for the University of Toronto community. Through all its functions, the FCO aims to raise awareness of family care issues and of quality of life issues central to the achievement of educational equity and employment equity at the University of Toronto.

Overview of Services

Since its inception in December 1993, the Family Care Office has experienced a steady increase in demand for its services. This year the office again handled a case load of almost 1700 which is comparable to last year and a 13% increase compared to 2001-2. This number represents a four-fold increase in case load since 1994/95.

The primary areas of concern involved child care options, funding for child care, children's programming, schools, maternity and parental leaves, parenting, elder care, relocation issues and housing, requests for counselling and legal referrals frequently involving separation/divorce, financial aid, balancing work/study/family and flexible work arrangements. We also provide educational programming and offer a variety of workshops, discussion groups and events to address these family care issues. This year there was again an increase in our attendance to over 1775 participants. We offered 15 more workshops/events and 1 more support group. In addition, we have a library of practical resource materials. The Director of the Family Care Office reviews university policy, procedures and publications for their impact on those with family responsibilities and makes recommendations for revisions or for further development.

The Family Care Office also coordinates the Faculty Relocation Service (FRS) and assists with the University's recruitment of faculty by providing relocation assistance to prospective and recently appointed faculty. Last year, the office staff assisted 178 prospective and newly appointed faculty.

Staffing

The office is staffed by a Director, Education and Resource Coordinator and Information and Outreach Coordinator. The Office Manager left his position in January 2004, and so a new job description was developed for this role and the new Information and Outreach Coordinator was hired in mid-March 2004. This completed the re-structuring of the current three positions in the office and helped address the need of increasing our outreach particularly to students. This staff transition came during a very busy in the office but as our case numbers and programming numbers show for 2003/4, we were able to operate at the same or better levels respectively. For 2004/5, our office made a request and was granted increased funding for a 9 month sessional appointment. This new Information Officer staffs the front desk and is responsible for many of the day to day administrative duties of the office. The individual will work from August 1 – April 30.

Objectives for 2003-04

The major priorities and initiatives set out for 2003-04 were accomplished. Some of these initiatives included expanding our Open House, increasing the number of workshops and family events offered, developing a newsletter, creating a student parent discussion group, creating a networking resource for new faculty mothers, and improving our Babysitting Bulletin Board by creating an on-line version. The office continued to provide support for those students applying for child care subsidies and facilitated an information workshop on the topic. In addition, we assisted in administering the SAC Dollars for Day Care funds. We organized family events with Hart House and the Athletic Centre. Popular workshops this year included *Elder Care: Anger and Guilt, Dealing with Misbehaviour, Parenting Teens, Family Cooking on a Budget, and Helping Your Child Through a Separation or Divorce*. We also worked collaboratively with other U of T services and the community to sponsor workshops such as *Positioning Yourself for a Career in Academia for Women Grad Students, Financial Survival for Student Families* and *ABC's of Adoption for LGBTQ People*. The Father's Group, Caregiver Discussion Group and Student Parent Discussion Group were also well attended.

Key Issues from 2003-04 and Future Implications

The key concerns for student families, staff and faculty continue to revolve around issues of child care availability, financial costs of raising a family, parenting assistance and advice, balancing work/study with family commitments, and for student parents having an ability to meet other student parents on campus. Our office continues to provide workshops such as Family Cooking on a Budget, Child Care Subsidy Information Session, Financial Survival for Student Families and Choosing Child Care to help provide child care and financial information. Individually we provide students, staff and faculty with the information they require to make appropriate child care decisions and will assist students who are finding it difficult to navigate the child care subsidy system as well the financial aid options through the university. The office maintains a good relationship with the on campus day cares so that we can make effective referrals. In the case of the new Family Resource Centre in the Early Learning Centre, we have developed a good working relationship so that we can share resources and will provide some programming at their site. The office will continue to highlight the need for on campus child care spots and the high costs associated with child care. Our programming addresses the parenting issues that are raised by our clients and our elder care series of workshops and discussion group tries to assist those individuals faced with caring for an aging relative while juggling work or school.

Outreach

This year we hope to focus on increasing our outreach to students who could benefit from our office's programming and services. To this end we have created a Student Parents Advisory Committee, we are surveying the students in Student Family Housing and we have continued to facilitate a Student Parent Discussion Group. Through these avenues we also hope to have more direct input from students and will hopefully generate new outreach suggestions from student parents. We are also contacting departments and staff who work directly with students to ensure they are familiar with our service and are fully aware of the range of issues a student may face with family commitments.

For staff and faculty this year, our office has been a key contributor to the Work Life Month and through this avenue the office should be able to increase its profile. The office is also actively involved with promoting the Emergency Backup Child Care Programme for staff and faculty. The office will also consult with the Human Resource offices at UTM and UTSC to see how we can more closely address their staff needs.

As our brochure and web site are also key tools for outreach, we have created a new brochure and will be updating both our web sites for content and design features.

Faculty Relocation Service

Faculty recruitment and retention is a priority for the university and so the Faculty Relocation Service (FRS) and the assistance the office provides to departments as they hire new faculty continues to be very important. This year we have coordinated the Orientation Program for Partners/Spouses of New Faculty Members and will be providing a training session for administrative staff responsible for arranging the visits for new faculty candidates. We have also continued to offer a Faculty Spouse/Partner Discussion Group.

Introduction

The Family Care Office (FCO) was created in December 1993. It is funded jointly by the University's operating budget (through the Office of the Vice President Human Resources and Equity and the Office of the Vice President and Provost) and by students (through the Student Services fee). The Family Care Office is a service that provides guidance, information, referrals, educational programming and advocacy for the University of Toronto community. Through all its functions, the FCO aims to raise awareness of family care issues and of quality of life issues central to the achievement of educational equity and employment equity at the University of Toronto.

The FCO adopts a highly collaborative approach to educational programming and works with partners across the University on joint initiatives. It maintains a resource centre comprised of practical material on topics ranging from pregnancy and infant care to lesbian and gay parenting issues, bereavement and caring for elderly family members. The Office acts as an advocate and liaison on behalf of University families with government and community agencies, University departments and employee and student organizations. The Office consults regularly with these organizations to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the University population and that a high quality of service is being maintained. The Director of the Family Care Office reviews University policy, procedures and publications for their impact on those with family responsibilities and makes recommendations for revisions or for further development. In addition, the Office coordinates the Faculty Relocation Service (FRS) and assists with the University's recruitment of faculty by providing relocation assistance to prospective and recently appointed faculty.

Throughout its history, the Family Care Office has emphasized an inclusive definition of family. Thus, any member of the University community is entitled, for the purposes of the office, to define family, as it is most appropriate for his/her own circumstances. The Office is committed to providing culturally sensitive service to clients. Referrals are offered to a wide array of resources including those that have a specific faith or cultural perspective. This has always been an important factor for students and staff and has enhanced our ability to assist in the recruitment of faculty.

Staffing

The office is staffed by a Director, Education and Resource Coordinator and Information and Outreach Coordinator. The Office Manager left his position in January 2004, and so a new job description was developed for this role and the new Information and Outreach Coordinator was hired in mid-March 2004. This completed the re-structuring of the current three positions in the office and helped address the third need of increasing our outreach particularly to students. Casual staff members were used as temporary replacements for the Office Manager until our new hire came on board. This staff transition came during a very busy time in the office but as our case numbers and programming numbers show for 2003/4, we were able to operate at the same or better levels respectively. The Office continues to provide several unique work/study opportunities for students interested in undertaking research or career-related projects in family care or community services.

For 2004/5, our office made a request and was granted increased funding for a 9 month sessional appointment. This new Information Officer would staff the front desk and be responsible for many of the day to day administrative duties of the office. The individual will work from August 1 – April 30.

Case and Programming Overview

Since its inception in December 1993, the Family Care Office has experienced a steady increase in demand for its services. This year the office again handled a case load of almost 1700 which is comparable to last year and a 13% increased compared to 2001-2. This number represents a four-fold increase in case load since 1994/95.

The types of services requested by individuals and departments are broadly defined under child care and elder care but certainly extend beyond these categories. Clients request comprehensive family care, including: assistance with budgeting and time management; referrals to family lawyers, counsellors and physicians; access to a complex web of community services (including food and clothing banks, parenting classes and housing); and support groups. Departments also benefit from consultations about policy and about unique family-related situations involving individual employees and students.

Over 1775 people attended the 60 workshops/events and 5 support groups sponsored or co-sponsored by the office this year. The Office was able to provide 15 more workshops/events this year and 1 more support group, which is a tremendous increase, based on our staffing size and budget. In 2001/2 we only offered 36 workshops/events and had an attendance of approximately 1200, so in two years we have increased our programming by 66% and our attendance by 48%. The workshops focus broadly on child care options, maternity leave planning, balancing family/work and studies, budgeting concerns, separation and divorce issues, parenting and elder care.

We did monitor to see if due to the double cohort this year, there would be an increase in requests to use the FCO services by UTSC and UTM students, however, this did not materialize.

Case Work, Education and Training and other Direct Service

Case Work

From May 1, 2003 to April 30, 2004, the Family Care Office handled 1683 cases: 582 students (23 part-time undergraduates, 304 full-time undergraduates and 255 graduate students), 862 employees (328 staff and 534 faculty members), 53 post-doctoral fellows and 186 other which includes University departments, visiting faculty, journalists, other institutions, alumni and members of the community [see Table 1]. The office also took part in various student orientations and set up our display booth and addressed student needs directly on site. It should be noted that case load is not the only indicator of the impact of the Family Care Office's activities. In terms of service to students and staff, the impact of the education and training programs and of the website is as significant as that of individual casework.

As in previous years, student concerns centered primarily around issues such as child care availability (including access and quality), children's programs, family financial planning, parenting, legal assistance, housing, pre-natal health and maternity and parental leave. Employees requested assistance with child care and children's activities, summer and emergency programs for children, as well as family care leaves (i.e. maternity leave, parental leave and part-time leave for family care), relocation (including moving, housing assistance and referrals to health care professionals and other community resources), health issues, elder care, personal counselling, parenting, legal issues and concerns around work problems and work/family balance [see Table 2- Types of Inquiries]. Sample case descriptions can be found in Appendix 1. Inquiries concerning child care options and subsidies while very frequent tend to be the least time consuming cases. In terms of staff resources, emergencies involving student families, elder care cases and faculty relocation cases are the most challenging, complex and time consuming.

Departments consulted with the Office on a range of family care issues, including maternity and parental leave arrangements, elder care arrangements, information on pregnancy resources for students, part-time leave for family care purposes, and referrals to internal and external counselling for students and staff.

The Family Care Office tries to address in its programming many of the concerns that arise more frequently as cases such as requests for resources to support aging family members, student parents seeking support groups, assistance with finding child care for infants and toddlers as waiting lists continue to be long for this age group and legal information on separation and divorce.

Education and Training

This year we were able to sponsor or co-sponsor 60 workshops/events and 5 support groups for students, staff and faculty. New workshops were offered, including: *ABC's of Adoption for LGBTQ People*, *Budgeting for Student Parents*, *Childcare Subsidy Information Workshop*, *Helping your Child Through a Separation or Divorce*, and *Children's Nutrition*. For our parenting workshops we did offer a certificate of achievement to student parents who attended at least three of these workshops, however, this did not prove to be widely sought and so will not be continued next year.

We continued our Elder Care Lunchtime Series and offered workshops such as *Understanding the Role of Your Community Care Access Centre*, *Navigating the System* and *Elder Care: Anger and Guilt*. Another well attended elder care session dealt with financial and estate planning. The elder care workshops are well received.

The office offered a "Family Cooking on a Budget" workshop a few times this year for various groups including part time students during the Student Services/APUS conference, 'Part-Time Students/Full-Time People', the U of T Food Bank and graduate students. The Family Care Office co-sponsored the annual symposium for women graduate students interested in pursuing an academic career. This year the Family Care Office also co-organized with the Career Centre, Student Services' contribution to the Status of Women Office's series of events for "Challenge & Change: 120 Years of Great Women at the University of Toronto". Our session was entitled "Outstanding Canadian Women" and a panel of successful Canadian women shared life

experiences, what they did to succeed and overcome barriers, and also discussed their struggle to balance work and home life.

We were again able to offer a 'Coping with a Recent Separation or Divorce' support group in the fall and continued our Father's Group. The Father's group has established a good presence on campus with student, staff and faculty fathers who appreciate the chance to meet and discuss parenting concerns. While our Office Manager who facilitated this group no longer works for the Family Care Office, he will continue to facilitate this group while working with Student Affairs and this will be a joint effort.

This year we were able to offer a Caregiver Discussion Group for individuals caring for an elderly parent, relative or friend to exchange ideas, offer support and share experiences. It was well received and those attending the group hoped it would continue in the following year. This group was facilitated by a staff member from Family Services Association and was funded through the EFAP.

In addition to this new group, in the fall the Education and Resource Coordinator facilitated a Newcomer Spousal/Partner Network for new faculty. This was a discussion group and dealt with newcomer adjustment issues such as housing, neighbourhoods, entertainment options, children's programming, community assistance for job searching, and allowed for general sharing of adjustment tips.

A new Student Parent Discussion Group was initiated this winter. This group developed out of our unsuccessful attempts to start a more informal 'drop-in' time on Tuesday evenings for student parents. It has had a popular reception from students and will be continued next year. This group is facilitated by the Information and Outreach Coordinator and meets every two weeks at OISE/UT. It is a mixture of undergraduate and graduate students and these students use this opportunity to share ideas with other parents, offer support and to find out about resources for families on-campus. The Office continues to refer students to the two student parent groups on campus (largely attended by mothers) and to provide support to these groups as requested.

The Office participated in orientation/ training/ information sessions for CALSS interns, students from TYP, students at the Rotman School of Management, and for partners and spouses of new faculty members. The office also made presentations to two different Human Resources meetings on maternity leave policies for faculty and the services of the Family Care Office. The Director participated in the facilitation and design of the course 'The Healthy Workplace' as a part of the Supervising in a Unionized Environment Program offered by the Staff Development Centre. She also participated in Human Resources training on faculty recruitment.

Other Direct Service

The Family Care Office makes every effort to provide inexpensive on-campus activities for students, staff and faculty and their families and this year increased the number of activities sponsored by our office.

The Office held a Family Care Open House to introduce the FCO services and offered free pizza to student parents, face painting for children and also had a few free draws. This year it was expanded to include organizations on-campus and in the community who offered family-related services. This was a very successful event that not only gave student parents access to groups such as Toronto Public Health, Toronto Parks and Recreation, Baby and Me Fitness, the Athletic Centre and the on-campus daycares, it also was a very visible event that raised the awareness amongst the U of T community that there does exist a student parent population on-campus. By also broadening the exhibitors to community organizations, it was of more interest to existing staff and faculty and helped new students become aware of family-related services in the community.

The Family Care Office co-sponsored four Family Nights with the Athletic Centre, which was two more than the previous year, so that families could watch Varsity basketball and hockey while socializing with other U of T families. In addition, the Office helped to organize two Children's Reading with Hart House. The Hart House readings were new this year and a terrific success. First Nations House was also involved as their staff assisted with finding the speaker for the first children's reading. We are very pleased to observe that Hart House has continued to organize children's readings and activities independently of our office, though, we assist with promotion and outreach. These events were attended by faculty, staff and students, many of whom had never been able to take their family to a University event.

Staff worked with Student Family Housing to ensure student families are aware of our programs and services. The Office held events at Student Family Housing, such as Family Cooking on a Budget and attended a Tenants' Town Hall meeting. Staff also set up a display booth in the Drop-in Centre to help advertise our services. The Family Care Office assisted at their Summer BBQ and provided its brochure for inclusion in welcome baskets for new families. The Office also contributes to the Family Housing newsletter on a regular basis.

This year our office was more directly involved with 'Take Your Daughters and Sons to Work Day' with the Office of the Vice President Human Resources and Equity and with the Status of Women Office. This was a very successful day of activity for staff and faculty and the Family Care Office assisted with all aspects of the planning and coordination of the day. Over 280 children registered with their parents.

An additional open house was held in November for the administrative personnel and department chairs to provide information on the Faculty Relocation Service.

A complete list of workshops/events and support groups can be found in Appendix 2.

Resource Centre

The Resource Centre contains many books on topics ranging from infant care and gay and lesbian parenting to elder care and balancing work and family. Approximately 60 new titles were acquired this year to further increase the depth and breadth of our resources and the Office was able to continue to have a short term borrowing policy. Only one resource went missing and

overall it would seem more students and staff members are taking advantage of these resources. This year 145 resources were borrowed throughout the year. The Office continues to order and obtain information guides and brochures from local community services and has developed new in-house tip sheets on the following topics: information on family resource centres, clothing stores for infants and children, second-hand shopping guide, and a community resource list for food and clothing for families.

The Office distributed a newsletter in September and January discussing family issues and advertising the Family Care Office activities. This provided another avenue to promote family care concerns within the U of T. It also assists with the office outreach.

Web site and Listserv

The Family Care Office web site is well used as our web statistics reflect. The estimate of the average number of people who are viewing the web site per week increased by 23% this year. For the web statistics for this year, see Table 3A.

A very popular service on our web site is the on-line summer day camp directory and the winter and March break camp directories. This year we also placed the 'Babysitting Listing Service' on the web site and so those students, staff, and faculty with the appropriate I.D. were given access to our listings of babysitters.

We continue to rely on our listserv as a direct and effective way of communicating and promoting our activities to students, staff and faculty. The number of people in the U of T community who have joined our listserv has increased by 31%.

Outreach

The Family Care Office makes use of the broadest possible range of promotional tools, from our web site and email listserv, campus mail, posters, advertisements and announcements in University publications to public displays, presentations, and class announcements. As mentioned above, we have developed a newsletter which we have used as an outreach tool. This year we also set up a display booth at the Charles St. Drop-In Centre in order to reach more student family housing parents. We also held a few of our workshops on the north end of campus to try and reach a wider audience who cannot make it to the Koffler Student Service Centre where we are located. We hope to try and continue to hold our workshops at a various locations on campus.

We meet directly with various student groups and student governments to promote our services and to arrange for collaboration on events when possible. This year we also met with members of the UTFA Executive and placed an ad in their newsletter, met with Human Resources staff, and members of the administrative staff at the Faculty of Medicine to let these individuals know more about our services for themselves, their colleagues and students. The Director also met with residence staff and counsellors at UTM to informally discuss student parent issues on their campus as they do not have access to the Family Care Office services. Information on materials and resources were shared and a good working relationship was started.

Even with our continued efforts to improve our publicity and promotions protocol, the Office finds that communicating effectively in such a large and diverse institution is a constant challenge.

Faculty Relocation Service

The Faculty Relocation Service (FRS) is a separate program, operating from within the Family Care Office, with funding from the Office of the Vice President and Provost. This highly successful initiative has provided deans, chairs and search committees with assistance in meeting their goals in an intensely competitive recruiting environment. The program has helped newly-appointed faculty and their families to relocate and transition smoothly to life within the University and Toronto communities.

The program's goals are to:

- a. Ensure that those involved in academic searches are aware of and can easily access tools that enhance their ability to attract and hire the best candidates.
- b. Ensure that the process of relocating newly-appointed faculty and their families to the University and the city is comprehensive, efficient and welcoming.
- c. Provide support to the Office of the Provost in its efforts to retain faculty in a highly competitive environment.

The Faculty Relocation Service provides assistance to prospective and recently appointed faculty by meeting with these individuals to discuss their relocation concerns such as housing, moving arrangements, care for children and elderly family members, banking and referrals to ethno-cultural and religious communities and lesbian and gay communities. The Office is the contact point for the distribution of faculty recruitment kits and maintains the FRS website.

In its fifth year, the office was in contact with 178 prospective and newly appointed faculty (in person, via email, by telephone or a combination of methods) compared to 180 last year but there were 25 fewer searches occurring in 2003/4. While a few of these cases may have only involved the exchange of a few emails, most consisted of a 30 minute to 1 hour appointment with a staff member, often with follow up. At least a dozen cases were sufficiently complex that they involved a few days of staff time primarily spent on researching resources. The FRS raised awareness of the importance of equity issues (ethno-cultural and faith issues, disability issues, LGBTQ issues, maternity/parental/adoption leaves and other 'family-friendly' policies) and their relevance to recruitment efforts. Furthermore, "quality of life" factors have proven to be particularly significant in attracting sought after candidates.

From July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004, the Office of the Provost informed us that 145 searches had occurred. A review of the departments and faculties who were recruiting compared to those who contacted us for appointments or kits reveals that almost all had utilized our services. We met with candidates from all three campuses, though, for UTSC it is agreed that only if time permitted and if the candidate had a complex family-care situation would they meet with both FRS and UTSC Human Resources. It is gratifying to note that a recurring frequent comment in

our appointments was that the candidate had not received this type of appointment in any of their other interviews at other institutions and that they very much appreciated this opportunity and assistance.

Faculty recruitment kits continued to serve as a valuable tool produced and distributed by our office with close to 600 faculty recruitment kits requested by departments.

The FRS maintains a strong working relationship with Jan Nolan, Director of Faculty Renewal to ensure that service is maintained at a consistently high level. During the year, individual faculty recruitment consultation would occur between the two offices. The FRS also maintains close contact with other individuals who provide faculty recruitment programs such as Donna Deak (tax consultations), Ellen Brikaras (UHIP), Rachel Kasimer (immigration), Grace Angellotti (Faculty Housing) and Beverly Kahn (non-academic spouse/partner employment assistance).

It is of no surprise that the FRS web site has been heavily used this year. Two years ago on a weekly basis the web site had an average of 257 unique hosts accessing the site and last year the number jumped to 436. This year it has increased again to 529 unique host visits. This year the office will be looking at updating the site for content as well as design.

FRS Outreach

This year all deans and chairs were sent a letter and information on the FRS service. As a result of this letter, the Director was invited to come to a UTM and a UTSC Chairs' meeting. As well, a presentation was made to the Business Officers at the Faculty of Medicine. The Director made a presentation at a Human Resources training session and attended the Faculty Recruitment Integration and Retention session within the Orientation and Training for Newly Appointed Academic Administrators in the fall. In November, we hosted an Open House and the chairs and administrative staff involved in recruiting within divisions and departments attended. This was an opportunity for these individuals to meet the FRS staff and learn about the FRS resources. It was a success with over 40 people attending.

Additional Service

In October, FRS participated in the Orientation for Spouses/Partners of New Faculty. The office also initiated and facilitated the Newcomer Spousal/Partner Network. This was a discussion group and dealt with newcomer adjustment issues such as housing, neighbourhoods, entertainment options, children's programming, community assistance for job searching, and allowed for general sharing of adjustment tips. The group had 7 members and met for 5 weeks in October and November. This group will be offered again next fall.

The office met with individuals with the CIBC to discuss their role as a preferred bank for prospective faculty in the hopes of improving the relationship and discussing which banking services new faculty most desire.

Student Issues

Aid for Student Families

The annual “Financial Survival for Student Families” workshop, co-sponsored by the Family Care Office, Admissions and Awards, Woodsworth College, School of Graduate Studies, Student Affairs, SAC, GSU and APUS, attracted over 120 attendees. The Office assisted the Food and Clothing Bank by attending the committee meetings, by writing the work/study job applications and assisting with training the work study students and volunteers. The Office also held a Cooking on a Budget workshop for the Food and Clothing Bank. The Office in total facilitated four ‘Family Cooking on a Budget’ workshops that were well attended by both undergraduate and graduate students.

The Family Care Office worked collaboratively with Admissions and Awards, Students’ Administrative Council (SAC) and Student Affairs in designing and implementing a mechanism for distributing the SAC Dollars for Day Care funds. The Office increased the advertising for this program and met with success as the number of applications received increased by 47. The Office also played an important role in surveying the needs of student parents to ensure that the funds benefited the greatest number of families. Through this program, 92 applications were received, out of which 78 were approved for grants totalling \$42,500.

The Family Care Office also participated in the coordination of the Interim Room (a refuge room for those students leaving violent or threatening situations) and the discussion of how to deal with student families who require a similar service. The Education and Resource Coordinator has volunteered and received training to be on the roster of volunteers to do intake for the Interim Room and will be assisting to develop the protocol for assisting a student parent who may need assistance to remove themselves and their children from a violent situation.

The Office participated in a Michigan State University doctoral student’s research on student parents. This student was hoping to survey student parents in the U.S. and Canada and the study examined the challenges that student parents face, how they feel about their multiple roles, the resources that they use, and the social support that they have. We helped her obtain U of T ethical review approval to do the study and distributed her survey to student parents at U of T. We hope when the results of her survey are available it will help provide insight into the life of a student parent and that this may help to direct our service.

Pregnant Students

Students frequently feel judged, misinformed and cast adrift when they become pregnant in the middle of their academic programs. The Family Care Office continues to offer information and referrals to students who wish to balance pregnancy, parenthood and studies, and to provide guidance for staff in supporting the students’ decisions. Relevant information was again included in the student handbook, “Getting There”. A tip sheet for pregnant students is available and the staff will meet with students in appointments to discuss their pregnancy.

Student Parent Discussion Group

A new Student Parent Discussion Group was started this January and was a popular addition to our support groups. We held the discussion group at OISE/UT as we hoped to target the many

student parents who attend OISE, the Faculty of Social Work and Woodsworth College but do not have the time to come to the south end of campus to attend FCO events. This has provided students with a venue to share and discuss their common issues, find out about resources available through our office, elsewhere on-campus and in the community, and has allowed these individuals an opportunity to feedback to the office what are some of their concerns as student parents. Registration has been strong and so we will continue the group next year.

Child Care, Employment and Equity Issues

Child Care

Child care continues to be an issue of critical importance to faculty, staff and students alike. Its provision is essential to the achievement of educational and employment equity. There is a chronic shortage of government funded child care subsidized spaces, infant and toddler day care spaces, part-time spaces and evening spaces. International students encounter severe hardships particularly due to their ineligibility for child care subsidies.

The University of Toronto Early Learning Centre opened last August 2003. As it was an amalgamation of two existing day cares and the administrative addition of a third, it has taken some time to smooth out all of the administrative details and the amalgamated waiting list has caused some problems. Most of these issues now seem to be resolved, however, the Centre continues to have a very long waiting list. It is offering part time spots and will be opening its Family Resource Centre this summer. The Family Care Office assisted with the hiring of the Family Resource Centre Coordinator and we have had several discussions with her to ensure some joint programming and resource sharing will occur between us. This Centre should be able to provide parents with another casual caregiving option when it is fully operational in Fall 2004 as it hopes to be able to provide a limited babysitting service. We hope to continue to foster a strong relationship with the Family Resource Centre as it will benefit both our services and clients.

The Director continued to be involved with the planning of the day care at Student Family Housing as she sat on a Project Planning Meeting. This committee was responsible for submitting an application to renovate the day care to allow for infant spots. Some zoning problems arose later in the year and so the renovation was put on hold. The renovations should re-start in Winter 2005. Municipal childcare subsidies are available at the Charles St. day care but as international students are not eligible for this subsidy the costs for the Charles St. day care are too high for most of these individuals. However, this year Student Affairs will be making available some funds to assist international students living at Student Family Housing with child care needs.

The Family Care Office increased the listings on our Babysitter Listing Service and also placed this service on-line to make it easier for students, staff and faculty to find casual child care assistance.

The lack of a licensed daycare on the UTM campus has been raised as an issue to our office by administrative staff, faculty and by administrative staff who work in the family residences on

behalf of students on the UTM campus. The Director raised this concern with the Quality of Work-Life Advisor and Special Assistant to the VP Human Resources and Equity and a meeting to discuss this issue has been scheduled for September 2004 with Ian Orchard, Vice President and Principal at UTM, Mark Overton, Dean of Student Affairs and Paul Donoghue, Chief Administrative Officer.

The Office produces and distributes a child care brochure to market the University centres to our population. We have created a tip sheet on the choosing child care, child care subsidies and community family resource centres.

Balancing Work and Family: Maternity, Parental, Adoption, Primary Caregiver and Family Care Leaves

The Office provided advice to staff and departments on maternity, parental, adoption and primary caregiver leaves, particularly on the discretionary aspects of the leaves for faculty members, and promoted best practices. There was a new Faculty/Librarian policy on maternity and parental leaves introduced in November 2003 and this generated a large number of inquiries to our office from both employees and departments. A significant portion of those taking maternity leave attended the planning workshops offered by the Office, and due to the change in policies between staff and faculty/librarians two separate workshops were offered. The Office also provides information kits to staff on the various leaves provided by the university and this year 61 more kits were distributed for a total of 199. This increase was largely due to an increased interest in parental leave as almost 30 more parental leave kits were requested this year.

The Director worked with the Quality of Work Life Advisor and assisted with staff focus groups from January to April. These focus groups were held as a second stage to the Caring for Family and Friends Survey in order to obtain more qualitative results around issues of work-life balance particularly when caring for dependents. Focus groups were held on all three campuses and seven were conducted. These focus groups helped to inform the office on both staff concerns as well as what staff appreciated about the U of T's work environment. The Family Care Office will continue to serve as a resource in the implementation of flexible work arrangements for individual employees, particularly when the use of the "Part-time Leave for Family Care" policy is being considered. Upon the completion of the report by the Quality of Work Life Advisor, this will direct the office on future work on flexible work arrangements.

The Director has also participated in some initial meetings with the Quality Work-Life Advisor to investigate the possibility of using a third party provider for back up child care. This system would allow for reasonably priced licensed child care spots to be used by staff and faculty who required short term and short notice child care.

This year the Family Care Office created a Networking File for pregnant faculty and new mothers to connect with other women faculty who are currently raising a family while balancing their academic career. Advertising has been done through posters and inserts in the Faculty Maternity Leave Kits and we have begun to receive some requests for these networking contacts.

Those who have asked for the networking contacts are very appreciative that the office has started this service and those who volunteered to be contacts were very happy to be able to help out other faculty women.

This year the Director attended the annual conference for College and University Work/Family Association (CUWFA), a US-based organization. She also became a member of CUWFA's Members Liaison Committee and Election Committee.

Equity Issues and Family

Since its inception, the Family Care Office has strived to ensure that services and programs reflected the experiences and needs of the different ethno-cultural, religious and lesbian and gay members of the University community. The content and language of workshops is designed to be inclusive.

This spring a short questionnaire was sent through the office listserv and a listserv in the LGBTQ Resources and Programs office to determine what programming individuals from the LGBTQ community would find interesting. As a result, in late spring a workshop was co-sponsored by the Office entitled, "ABC's of Adoption for LGBTQ People."

In addition, in December a workshop for parents of autistic children was offered. Staff during prospective faculty appointments made connections to ethno-cultural community services and the lesbian and gay communities when requested. The Office continues to provide advice on policies and practices related to families and children. We assisted international students with children with the procedures and policies around fees and admission to Toronto District School Board schools.

As a member of the EIAG, the Director met with Dr. Kwong-loi Shun, Vice President and Principal of UTSC, in a group meeting to present on equity issues facing the UTSC community and she focused on the lack of family care services on the UTSC campus for students. The Director participated in the Equity Infrastructure Review at U of T and provided written feedback to the draft report.

The Director was also asked to explore the possibility of a joint training session between USWA and Human Resources to raise equity issues with administrative staff. Discussions were started and several meeting occurred through the year with members of USWA and Labour Relations. This fall, the Director will likely be involved in some pilot training programs to address these issues.

Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

The Family Care Office and the Family Services Employee Assistance Program have developed an effective working relationship. The feedback on referrals to and from the EFAP staff has been on the whole positive. As anticipated, the introduction of the EFAP has not resulted in a decline in demand for the services offered by the Family Care Office, more accurately, the two services complement one another. This year the Family Care Office used EFAP funding to

sponsor three of our elder care workshops and a Caregiver Discussion Group. The office also provided feedback on the design of a new brochure and marketing campaign.

Postdoctoral Fellows

Since the mandate of the Family Care Office is broadly defined to include almost all members of the University community, we have always provided services to postdoctoral fellows. In the past, due to their unique status, postdoctoral fellows failed to qualify for many of the benefits or for the protection accorded to either students or employees. However, because of new university policy, postdoctoral fellows will now receive recognition as significant contributing members to U of T's academic mission. A new Postdoctoral Office was set up within the School of Graduate Studies to assist postdoctoral fellows with their concerns and the FCO continues to meet with the new Coordinator of this office to facilitate better referrals between our services and to assist with the development of family and relocation resources for postdoctoral fellows. The Family Care Office still expects to provide some assistance and service to these individuals as they settle in Toronto and have concerns with child care and other family issues but will also be able to direct many of these individuals directly to this new office.

Priorities and Initiatives 2004/2005

Through all of its functions, the Family Care Office aims to raise awareness of family care issues and of quality of life issues central to the achievement of educational equity and employment equity at the University of Toronto. The following initiatives will be undertaken in 2004/2005.

- Create a Family Care Office Advisory Group of student parents.
- Survey the students in Family Housing to ensure the Family Care Office is effectively meeting their demands.
- Work with the appropriate university administrators to ensure faculty and departments understand student parents concerns and potential need for accommodations due to child care issues.
- Increase our outreach to student parents to ensure that all undergraduate and graduate students are aware of our services and programs
- Continue to work with UTM and UTSC to coordinate how family care issues will be dealt with on all three campuses.
- Examine the FCO brochure and website for content and accessibility design
- Try and develop a joint workshop with the Career Centre to discuss student parent career development and job searching concerns

- Participate in a committee chaired by the Work Life Advisor to organize a university wide Work-Life Month
- In conjunction with the Work Life Advisor, approach the UTM administration about the need for a licensed child care facility on this campus

- Assist with the coordination of the emergency back up child care service to be available for staff and faculty. This will include assistance with advertising, information dissemination and monitoring feedback from staff and faculty.
- Upon completion by the Quality of Work Life Advisor of a report on the administrative staff focus groups held in the Spring of 2004, the Family Care Office Director will assist with developing guidelines with respect to flexible work arrangements
- Provide research assistance to determine maternity, parental and family leave policies for staff in peer institutions.
- For the Faculty Relocation Service:
 - Review the web site for content and design
 - Organize the New Faculty Spouse/Partner Orientation
 - Provide a training session for the administrative assistants involved with new faculty recruitment.

Acknowledgements

The Family Care Office would like to thank the staff for their dedication and commitment to the goals of the FCO office: Magdalena Rydzy, Education and Resource Coordinator, Maria Jardim, Information and Outreach Coordinator, and Nouman Ashraf, Office Manager. The Office would also like to thank Daniela Larocca, Carmen Morris, Yoko Maliszewski and Satchie Raudzus who all had temporary contracts and Roozbeh Taheri-Nia, Heather Philip, Laura Henderson and Liz Runge the work/study students for the Office, for their many contributions.

Kaye Francis, Director
 Family Care Office and Faculty
 Relocation Service
 June 30, 2004

APPENDIX 1: Sample Case Summaries

A student requested help in locating a service that would conduct an educational assessment of her learning disabled child.

The Office was consulted by an employee and by Human Resources to determine how the Parental Leave policy would apply for a faculty member

A pregnant graduate student contacted the Office to outline various options on how to successfully complete her degree, apply for E.I. and defer her scholarship funding.

A prospective faculty member required further information on how the TDSB would handle her child's special learning needs.

A graduate student needed a counselling referral and advice around community support services as she was helping her parents and siblings deal with financial instability while her father was unable to work due to a disability.

An undergraduate student needed a referral to a local ethno-cultural service to help his brother who was not adjusting to Canada and was failing high school.

A faculty member experiencing health complications during her pregnancy consulted our office jointly with Human Resources to explore her options around sick leave. Advice was also provided on the employment insurance (E.I.) implications in this situation.

A staff member needed information and advice on the services and support that might be available for her elderly and frail father as he was visiting her temporarily and she would need access to local community supports while he was here.

A newly hired faculty member was looking for advice on bringing his wine cellar through customs when he returned to Canada.

A newly hired faculty member was looking for a referral to a medical specialist upon her arrival.

An undergraduate student needed assistance with her financial situation and new child care arrangements as a result of leaving her partner.

A prospective student parent required assistance in locating child care, a parent support group and family resource programs.

A staff member wanted to understand her options in using flexible work arrangements and part time leave for family care as she was returning from her maternity and parental leave.

A first year undergraduate student required assistance with balancing her studies while caring for her one year old and husband. As she was new to Toronto and her husband new to the country, she had no family or friends to provide support.

APPENDIX 2: Family Care Workshops, Events and Support Groups 2003/04

Workshops

Maternity Leave Planning for Staff
Maternity Leave Planning for Faculty/Librarians
Choosing Child Care That Works for Your Family

ABC's of Adoption for LGBTQ People
Balancing Parenting with Work/Studies
Budgeting for Student Parents
Bullying: What Parents Can Do
Building Your Child's Self-Esteem
Childcare Subsidy Information Workshop
Children with Special Needs
Children's Nutrition
Dealing with Misbehaviour
Helping Your Child Succeed in School
Helping Your Child Through a Separation or Divorce
Legal Aspects of Separation and Divorce
Parenting Teens
Post-Partum Depression

Taking the Mystery out of Retirement Living
Understanding the Role of the CCAC (Peel Region and Toronto)
Navigating the System
Elder Care: Anger and Guilt
Elder Care: Financial and Estate Planning
Elder Care: Siblings and Caregiving

Family Cooking on a Budget
Financial Survival for Student Families
Positioning Yourself for a Career in Academia for Women Grad Students
Outstanding Canadian Women (co-sponsored with Student Services)
Welcome and Orientation Program for Partners and Spouses of New Faculty Members

Support Groups

Father's Group
Student Parent Discussion Group
Caregiver Discussion Group (Elder Care)
Coping with a Recent Separation or Divorce
Faculty Spouse/Partner Network

Events

Family Care Office Open House
Family Day at the Athletic Centre
Family Day at Varsity Arena
Family Day at Hart House
Faculty Relocation Service Open House
Take Your Daughters and Sons to Work Day

TABLE 1: Direct Service — May 1, 2003 - April 30, 2004

Undergraduates (part-time)	23
Undergraduates (full-time)	304
Graduate students	255
Post doctoral fellows	53
Staff	328
Faculty ¹	534
Departments ²	103
Other ³	83
TOTAL	1683

1. All inquiries on behalf of an individual prospective or new faculty member are counted as one case per year, regardless of the number of contact hours.
2. Most cases involving departments are listed under the relevant employee or student category.
3. 'Other' includes alumni, researchers, visiting faculty, journalists, general public and queries from the University community not directly related to family care.

TABLE 2: Types Of Inquiries — May 1, 2003 - April 30, 2004

Child care facilities/subsidies/children's programs/schools	41.8%
Maternity/parental leave	16.0%
New faculty/relocation	17.4%
Medical	4.3%
Relationships/support groups/counselling	5.9%
Housing	4.0%
Financial Aid	2.6%
Legal Assistance	3.1%
Parenting	1.8%
Elder care	1.7%
Balancing work/study/family; flexible work arrangements	2.1%
Emergency Assistance; abuse	0.4%
Other (incl. student pregnancy, general information, etc.)	9.3%

Note: An individual case is counted in each category that applies, with the exception of an inquiry from a prospective or newly appointed faculty member. This inquiry, regardless of content, would be listed in the 'new faculty/relocation' category only. All inquiries on behalf of an individual prospective or newly appointed faculty member are counted as one inquiry per year.

Table 3A & Table 3B: Website Statistics

The following statistics for both the Family Care Office and the Faculty Relocation and Support Program websites are based upon reports produced by Access Watch, a website traffic analysis tool.

Definition of Terms Used in Table 3A and Table 3B

- **Unique Hosts** – This measure assumes that every computer is unique to one person, so it is not exact (due to multi-user systems, public computer labs, etc.). However, most people do use a desktop system of their own, so ‘unique hosts’ gives a fairly accurate approximation of how many people are viewing the website.
- **Unique Visits** – A ‘unique visit’ is a unique host active during the period of an hour. This measure gives you an indication of user interest in the website.
- **Accesses** – An ‘access’ is a request for an HTML page on the server.
- **Hits** – A ‘hit’ is any request on the server, including text and graphics.

Table 3A - Family Care Office Website Statistics (May 12, 2003– May 2, 2004)

	Unique Hosts	Unique Visits	Accesses	Hits
Average (per week)	1063	1756	3142	30 034
Total	54 230	89 564	160 227	1 531 739

**Table 3B – Faculty Relocation and Support Program Website Statistics
(May 12, 2003 – May 2, 2004)**

	Unique Hosts	Unique Visits	Accesses	Hits
Average (per week)	529	775	1675	3660
Total	26 986	39 532	85 414	186 655