The Practicum in Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS 450) is a supervised internship experience that places students with community agencies or institutions during the fall semester. The course is designed to:

- Work experience in a professional setting that matches a student’s career interest;
- An opportunity for students to apply knowledge and skills from their coursework;
- A supportive setting for the students to further develop additional professional skills.

A degree in HDFS prepares students for careers in human services, education, health care, family law, human resources, or advanced study in individual and family development. Students select one of two concentrations: child and adolescent development or family studies. Courses in child and adolescent development focus on children’s physical, mental, and social development from birth through the teen years, with special attention to how students can use what they learn about the development process in practical settings. Similarly, courses in family studies focus on family structure and change, marital and parent-child interactions, work-family issues, and family conflict-management with an eye to helping professionals use research-based knowledge in practical settings. HDFS puts special effort to address racial and ethnic diversity, gender roles and identity, poverty, and immigration. We examine the role of history and social and environmental context to focus on the application of science to policy and practice.

About a third of our students are from underrepresented minority backgrounds, about a third are first-generation college students, and many are bilingual. Some have a clear idea of what they want to do for a career, while others are still exploring possibilities. The thing they have in common is that they want to work with people to make a difference. Our students have big hearts, and we try to train them to be tough-minded as well.

We place student interns in schools, human and social service agencies, businesses, and health care settings. Our goal is that our students make real and important contributions to their placement sites while getting hands-on experience and feedback from seasoned professionals. The internship program is highly structured and tied to coursework – student work 10-15 hours/week at their placement sites and meet as a class once a week (with readings, discussions, and assignments related to professional development).

We are currently seeking internship placement opportunities in human resources and health care services.

For more information, please contact:

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