Procedure for learning goals project, Institute of Child Development.

The director, Megan Gunner, appointed a three-person committee, consisting of Michael Maratsos (DGS), Philip Zelazo, and Glenn Roisman, to draft a document. The draft was presented to the full faculty at a regular staff meeting, for response. Reactions were on the whole positive; suggestions were made about various points, and the current draft resulted from the incorporation of these suggestions by the committee.

Goals for Graduate Learning in the Department of Child Psychology

1. **Research-related skills.** A core mission of the Institute's training program is to provide its graduate students with cutting edge research-related-skills, with the ultimate goal being to prepare our students to be future leaders in the field of developmental science. Faculty provide opportunities for relevant skill acquisition in our required graduate courses, elective seminars, and many other contexts (e.g., weekly Brown Bag series, the biennial Minnesota Symposium on Child Psychology). These skills are in turn fine-tuned in the context of faculty-mentored research conducted by students within and across laboratories. More specifically, faculty help graduate students to develop high levels of aptitude in each of four key areas: (1) study design, knowledge of methods and techniques, data analysis and interpretation), (2) requisite professional skills (e.g., grant acquisition); (3) dissemination through writing and presentation (e.g., peer-reviewed journal articles and conference presentations); and (4) mentorship of future researchers.

2. **Scholarly knowledge and critical skills.** The Institute’s graduate program is also designed to provide students with numerous opportunities to develop their skills as scholars and to acquire a deep knowledge and understanding of the history of the field as well as current issues and future directions. Fundamental skills include an appreciation of the philosophical foundations of developmental science, a critical analysis of theoretical approaches and research findings, and an appreciation of the relevance of research to broader social issues. Students learn in the context of required courses, elective seminars, a wide variety of lecture series (e.g., ICD bag lunch, CNBD colloquia, Cognitive Science colloquia), and the long-standing biennial 2-day Minnesota Symposium, which features presentations by scholars from around the world. The Minnesota Symposium alternates annually with our Visiting Scholars program, during which we typically host two eminent scholars who visit the Institute for a period of one week.

3. **Training for teaching.** Graduate students at the Institute are also educated to teach developmental science at the university and college level. Several aspects of our program are designed to provide students with opportunities acquire and refine their teaching skills. Students serve as Graduate Teaching Assistants, take a seminar in teaching that involves designing a curriculum and delivering a lecture, and have opportunities to teach undergraduate class lectures, course sections, and courses. In the context of research labs, they are often provided with opportunities to help mentor undergraduates conducting research projects.

4. **Education for service.** The faculty of the Institute routinely serve in key roles in professional organizations, regularly provide testimony and advice to deliberative bodies and community organizations, and serve on grant and scholarly publication review panels and editorial boards. In short, we value service to the university, our discipline, and to our broader community, providing outreach by leveraging our collective knowledge of child development. In so doing, we offer a model for graduate students as well as provide direct opportunities for community engagement. For example, students are
encouraged to attend meetings of partnerships between ICD and other community organizations dedicated to child welfare and development (e.g., the Minnesota Children's Museum). Faculty are also expected to routinely provide graduate students with the opportunity to review manuscripts submitted for publication. In short, we expect our students to be the future leaders in our field and educate them accordingly.

5. **Practical application.** The Institute has a very strong commitment to research and training concerned with improving the quality of life over the span of human development. The Institute has prominent research programs in the study of maltreatment, homelessness, stress, and many other conditions that may harm or disrupt development, and many students are engaged in training and research in these projects. Researchers at the Institute also seek to use the results of basic scientific research on typical and atypical development to inform the development and refinement of therapeutic interventions designed to promote positive development and prevent problems. In recent years, nearly half of our students have been admitted into the Developmental Psychopathology and Clinical Sequence, a collaborative training program carried out by both the Institute and by the clinical division of the Department of Psychology. Students in this program complete degree requirements both in child psychology and clinical psychology, and receive both clinical and research training.

6. **Interdisciplinary character.** The field of child development is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, as it embodies the goal of “multi-level analysis,” in which analysis of a developmental phenomenon may be carried out in a single study simultaneously at, for example, the behavioral, neurological, and genetic levels. The Institute has long been at the forefront of this trend, which is reflected in our mentoring model. Students are encouraged to collaborate across research laboratories, learn a variety of approaches to research, and acquire a wide range of technical skills. They are also encouraged to join in the work of interdisciplinary centers, including the Cognitive Science Center, the Center for Neurobehavioral Development, the Center for Personalized Prevention Research in Children’s Mental Health, and the emerging Institute for Children’s Mental Health.

**III. Means of Assessing Learning**

1. **Research skills.** The Institute faculty holds an annual Student Progress meeting, during which the progress of each student in the program is reviewed. In preparation for this review, each graduate student fills out a form summarizing their research accomplishments of the year, centering on written papers, conference presentations, and work in progress. The student’s adviser and other faculty who have worked with the student submit comments on the student’s work. The information from these combined sources enters a file kept in the graduate office. These records comprise the information for shared discussion of the student’s progress at the annual evaluation meeting. The graduate office also tracks the student’s completion of major research-related requirements: the first year project, the thesis prospectus, and the thesis orals. After the meeting, a letter is issued to each student summarizing faculty consensus on his or her progress in the program. This letter is supplemented by a meeting between each student and her or his adviser to discuss the year’s progress.

2. **Scholarly skills.** The student’s progress through course work is tracked through transcripts kept in the graduate office. A written research project is completed in the first year, which is then presented in our Brown Bag series in the middle of the second year in the program. The general preliminary orals examination at the end of the second year serves to test the students’ knowledge of the field and the student’s ability to use this knowledge in an integrative examination. The orals paper and preliminary
oral examination gauge the student’s ability to review and analyze a specific research topic in the field. Outcomes of these meetings are recorded in the student’s file and are all available for discussion at the annual student progress meeting.

3. **Teaching skills.** After passing their general preliminary examination, students are eligible (and required) to fulfill the teaching apprenticeship requirement. Typically they do this by teaching an independent section of introductory child psychology. Their teaching is evaluated by a supervisor who visits the class during the semester, and by student evaluations at the end of the semester. This information passes into their permanent files, and comprises part of the information for their annual progress evaluation.

4. **Service.** Information about students’ service activities is entered into their permanent files, and comprises part of the information available for their annual progress evaluation. Students are required to serve on at least one departmental committee annually, as assigned by the Director of the Institute.

5. **Practical application.** Students in the clinical program are evaluated both by regular means of tracking progress in the Institute, and are also tracked and evaluated in annual meetings by the clinical faculty who conduct their courses and training. These students are also evaluated in recommendations by those who supervise their practicum experiences and internship experiences as part of their clinical training. For non-clinical students’, information about significant applied experiences enters into their annual self-report, and thus into the information available for the Annual Progress Review.

6. **Interdisciplinary studies.** No formal means of assessment are devoted to students’ interdisciplinary studies (except for the clinical students discussed above). Rather their experiences comprise part of their graduate files and are noted and reported as relevant by the concerned faculty.

**All matters: Graduate Instruction committee.** One of the central committees of the Institute is the Graduate Instruction committee, comprised of both faculty and graduate student members. This committee discusses issues and problems that can be referred to it either by faculty action or graduate student suggestion. It can take surveys of students and faculty on questions of interest such as advising, and make proposals for revisions in the graduate program for discussion by the faculty. It meets on an ongoing basis through the academic year.