

Educational Studies Faculty Complete First Year at USC

Christine DiStefano, David Feldon, and Donna Gibson recently completed their first year on the faculty of Educational Studies. They all began their work at USC very quickly teaching both undergraduate and graduate students, publishing in refereed journals, presenting at national conferences, and working on grant proposals. In addition, they provided service at the University, in the community, as well as in professional organizations. Gibson taught a variety of courses during her first year including the **counseling internship** and **practicum classes, Career Development**, and the **Individual Appraisal Lab** course. She taught her first doctoral level class after coming to USC from the Citadel. DiStefano taught students at all levels of their studies, undergraduates, masters' students, and doctoral students. Courses included **Classroom Assessment, Research in Education**, and **Design and Analysis of Educational Surveys**. Finally, Feldon taught at both the undergraduate and graduate level. He taught **Human Growth and Development** and crafted the course as an online offering. He also taught **Motivation Theory** and the undergraduate **Learners and Diversity** class.



David Feldon

Feldon, DiStefano, and Gibson were also successful in their scholarly pursuits. Two of Feldon's articles, "**The Implications of Research on Expertise for Curriculum and Pedagogy**" and "**Increasing Validity in the Evaluation of New Distance Learning Technologies**," were accepted for publication in refereed journals. The former will appear in *Educational Psychology Review*, one of the top educational psychology journals. In the article Feldon argues that "experts' explanations of their problem-solving processes tend to be inaccurate when they are not attained through a formal knowledge elicitation process." *Computers in Human Behavior* is publishing the latter article that "proposes a new quasi-experimental design for the evaluation of distance learning technologies that allows researchers to identify interaction effects between particular features of learning activities and the content that is taught." Feldon also presented a paper at the **American Educational Research Association** conference and a paper he

gave at the meeting of the **South Carolina Educators for the Practical Use of Research** won the organizations distinguished paper award.



Christine DiStefano

Christine DiStefano has published both an article and book chapter during her short time at the University. “**Is Social Desirability Associated with Self-Reported Physical Activity?**” was published in *Preventive Medicine*, reaching both academic and popular audiences. DiStefano’s expertise in structural equation modeling is exemplified in her chapter, “**Dealing with Nonnormality and Categorical Data in Structural Equation Modeling,**” that appears in *A Second Course in Structural Equation Modeling*. The book is a didactic reader, where structural modeling researchers illustrate advanced topics in structural equation modeling. Like Feldon, DiStefano presented papers at AERA and SCEPUR 2006 annual conferences. At AERA, DiStefano, along with the other chapter authors, was involved as an instructor for a professional development short course on structural equation modeling.



Donna Gibson

Pittsburgh and Montreal were the sites for national and international conferences where Donna Gibson presented during her first year at USC. She also completed two articles, one, "**The effect of perceived parental involvement and the use of growth-fostering relationships on self-concept in adolescents participating in GEAR UP,**" was published in the prestigious journal, *Adolescence*. The article added to the small amount of research on the Gear Up program and Gibson was able to extend her research on growth-fostering relationships. She explained that "the findings indicate that both perceived parental involvement and growth-fostering relationships contribute significantly to the variance in self-concept, with self-concept increasing as perceived parental involvement and the use of growth-fostering relationships increase. This is consistent with research that indicates that adolescents' development of self is influenced by peers, family, and significant others." The second article which is in press is titled "**Perceived Stress, Wellness, and Mattering: A Profile of First-Year Citadel Cadets.**" *Journal of College Student Development* is publishing the article and Gibson and her co-author, Jane Myers, "compare the results with a similar study at West Point Military Academy."

Each of the first year faculty was also active working on grants in 2005-2006. Donna Gibson is the Principal Investigator of a grant proposal on the **Trio Program** that was submitted to the **United States Department of Education**. New to the world of grant writing, Gibson said: "Most importantly, I wrote my first U.S. Department of Education grant with two of my counselor education colleagues this spring and look forward to collaborating with special education faculty on a second grant this summer."

David Feldon has worked feverishly on multiple grant proposals this past year. Two proposals have been submitted to the **National Science Foundation**, one is a collaborative effort with faculty at the University of California Los Angeles and the University of Southern California, and the other is also a collaborative effort with faculty in the departments of Instruction and Teacher Education, Educational Leadership, and Biology as well as the College of Engineering.

Christine DiStefano had a very successful first year in terms of external funding. She and colleagues at the University of Georgia were awarded a grant of \$800,000 from the **Institute of Education Sciences**. DiStefano is the Co-Pi of the grant, "**Development and Validation of Behavioral Screeners and Behavioral Classification System for Early Identification and Intervention for Emotional and Behavioral Problems in Elementary School Children,**" that will bring \$206,000 to the University of South Carolina. The focus of the four-year project is to develop and validate behavioral screening instruments to assess emotional and behavioral problems in children and to identify children at high risk for problems.

As the three new faculty members complete their first year each of their contributions as teachers and scholars has affected their disciplines as well as schools and communities in South Carolina. Both DiStefano and Feldon were involved in the birth of Educational Research and Psychology's new Research Scholars Program and they have both become involved with research initiatives in the College of Education. Donna Gibson has taken

her expertise to the local community through her practicum and internship teaching. In addition, Gibson, DiStefano, and Feldon have represented the College and the University at the national level. Gibson's election as President of **Association for Assessment in Counseling & Education (AACE)** and Feldon receiving the SCEPUR (South Carolina Educators for the Practical Use of Research) distinguished paper award are both huge achievements as is Christine DiStefano's recent grant success and teaching at AERA.

The three people featured in this article have brought a great deal to the Department of Educational Studies at the University of South Carolina. In writing about her first-year experience Donna Gibson commented that she "upped her game" as a member of the faculty. In reality, Gibson as well as Christine DiStefano and David Feldon arrived at the University of South Carolina with very good games, and it is evident from their first year that they, like hopefully their colleagues, will always be "upping their games."