

Home Economics : It Really Isn't Just Cooking and Sewing

It is my belief that a popular misconception exists about the field of Home Economics. A great number of people tend to believe that Home Ec students, the great majority of whom are women, are spending their time at university preparing to be successful little homemakers. As a Home Ecer, I am continually running into people who say, when they hear that I'm in Home Ec, "Oh, you're learning to cook and sew." I cringe, Count to ten, and let the steam out of my ears before I respond to those sort of remarks.

Many of those people are joking, of course. But behind those jokes, I really think there is a belief that our field is nothing but a training ground for housewives and the fact that ours is a university course allows us access to the happiest husband hunting grounds of them all -- the university campus. Many other students tend to believe that Home Economics is a combination of easy courses in learning skills that require little mental effort. The other day I was talking to a student who said, "You mean you can actually do graduate work in Home Ec?" -- as if to imply that the field is so shallow that there would be nothing more to study beyond the bachelor's level.

Sometimes I find the whole issue so discouraging that when people ask me what my major is, rather than admit it is Home Ec, I say "nutrition". I suppose that this is not a good idea since it is we Home Ec students who can and must work to change our image and convince people that ours is a serious discipline and that we do more than tell people over the radio that they should boil their jars before putting the pickles in them. But it is so tiring sometimes to try to convince people of these things. How many students in other fields have to defend their areas of study? How many people need to be persuaded that history, biology, or business are worthwhile academic pursuits?

I think that there are several reasons for the misconceptions concerning Home Economics. The very term "Home Economics" (which itself is redundant) leads people to assume

that our concerns rest wholly with the home and activities pursued therein (cooking and sewing, for example). Secondly, the nature of Home Economics courses in high school, which is the level at which people are first introduced to the field, contribute significantly to its image. In high school Home Economics, which has changed since I was there, (guys can now take it) cooking and sewing were the

with housekeeping. That is not to say that these pursuits are not valuable and worthwhile, because they are, but they are not all that is important and they are not the only concerns in the study of Home Ec.

The fact that Home Economics is a relatively new field means that fewer people are liable to be acquainted with the field than with areas of study which have existed or developed over centur-

to find out what it is all about. We Home Ecers also have a responsibility to you, the public, to inform you of the happenings in our field. Hopefully, between us, the misunderstanding of Home Ec will be decreased and we will, as a result, enjoy more recognition of our knowledge and satisfaction with our degrees.

Dalton Hall Dinners

One of the many careers which Home Ec majors enter upon graduation is dietetics. Nutrition graduates complete a one year internship, usually at a hospital, before becoming registered dieticians responsible for administration of food services and planning of diets in the treatment of disease.

One course at UPEI which helps prepare students for work in a field such as dietetics or any one involving foods is the Quantity Foods course, Home Ec 411. The purpose of this course is to provide students with experience in pricing, purchasing, storing and preparation of quantities of food. The course involves the planning and preparation of one meal each Tuesday noon in the Dalton Hall dining room. For each meal, each student carries out a different task such as manager chef, baker, storekeeper, etc.

The course is unlike many in that it fosters really strong group feelings. Everyone in the course is working to achieve common goals. The course is therefore valuable in that it allows the opportunity for experience in working with and getting along with other people. Also, because the students have chances to occupy both manager and labor positions, it is a chance to develop feelings of empathy, or being able to put oneself in someone else's shoes, which is an important asset to have in the working world.

The Dalton Hall dinners are open to all students, faculty, and staff. The dinners are not a money-making venture so the meals are very cheap, and hopefully very good. The girls in the course welcome your comments and criticisms. So please come and appreciate the meal, the meaning and purpose behind it, and Home Economics in general.

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.... AND MAY I ALSO ADD, GENTLEMEN, THAT THIS FINE SPECIMEN EVEN HAS A DEGREE IN HOME ECONOMICS!



THE MYSTIQUE OF HOME EC AT U.P.E.I.

only activities. So, of course, people assume that in university we do the same things on a grander and more advanced scale.

Thirdly, the image is perpetuated by people in the field. The fact that the great majority of Home Economic students are women encourages people to think that the course covers those activities which people have for centuries associated with women -- those activities involved

ies.

It is a shame that people do not realize the many areas encompassed by Home Economics, or the wide range of possible careers open to graduates. Nutrition, either psychological, laboratory or social, family life and living, public relations, and consumerism are but a few of the possibilities.

It is my hope that people not acquainted with our field will make an effort