

11/06/2000

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## Professors study U.S. military life

By Mary Jester  
Assistant Campus Editor



Three researchers are collecting data that will provide the U.S. military with a "report card" on the quality of life of military defense families.



Shelley MacDermid, associate professor of child development and family studies; Howard Weiss, associate professor of psychological sciences; and Steve Green, professor of management, will use the \$8.4 million granted in May to run a series of studies for four to five years.



They will investigate the relationship between the quality of life and job-related outcomes. "We think that our research can have important policy implications," said Weiss. The military has been facilitating research on these issues for many years.



Rather than following the traditional approach of designing and proposing one study, MacDermid and Weiss prepared a proposal explaining why they were qualified to conduct research in this area. MacDermid has researched families and Weiss has researched organizations.



Although the military requires that the research measures the quality of life, they will also be able to do research on related issues in which they have personal academic interest. Weiss is interested in how an individual's spirituality affects how military members deal with the life-threatening dangers and stresses of their jobs.

MacDermid, Weiss and Green, along with graduate students and two post-doctoral researchers, will be involved in each study. However, MacDermid will

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focus on quality-of-life surveys, which will provide what she calls a "report card" or an "annual snapshot" for the military. The research team will collect data on a large scale for thousands of military members and their families.

MacDermid said they will conduct more revealing data from interviews with a small number of military members and ask their evaluation of their job, their personal satisfaction at work, at home and in the community. Interviews will reveal whether they feel safe in their neighborhoods or have what they need to do their jobs effectively. "Do they feel their coworkers are supportive?" said MacDermid.

Weiss will conduct research on identifying military-friendly organizations in the community. He will assess what the private sector can do to help the military and the kinds of policies in practice that the military can adopt.

Green said they are investigating how to help spouses find meaningful and high-quality employment opportunities. When a military member moves frequently, spouses have trouble developing a career path. Green said dot-com jobs offer possibilities for military members to have transferable jobs.

Green said their research also asks the question of how military members' careers are affected when spouses are unhappy with their careers. What a base commander can do to improve the quality of military family life is also being researched.

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