

Norton School Welcomes Laura Scaramella as Director

John and Doris Norton School of Family and Consumer Sciences
April 2019

Laura Scaramella, a Tucson native and UA alumna, has been named director of the [John and Doris Norton School of Family and Consumer Sciences](#) [1]. She begins June 1.

Scaramella comes to the UA from the University of New Orleans, where she has been chair of the Department of Psychology for the past three years. Her research focuses on parenting and child development.

Scaramella said she plans to work with faculty and community partners to reimagine the school's strategic vision to better match community and research needs. She also plans to support a diverse student population with a curriculum that extends learning outside the classroom.

"I am excited to partner with the faculty, staff and students to create a bold and innovative path for the Norton School," Scaramella said. "This path will uniquely leverage our greatest assets: the culture and diversity of Arizona's heritage. Together, we will discover and disseminate new knowledge that will improve the lives of students, families and industry for decades to come."

Shane Burgess, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, which houses the Norton School, said Scaramella is prepared to lead the school forward in all aspects, including its diverse research agenda.

"Laura comes to us with a wealth of experience in adaptive leadership in some of the most challenging academic circumstances imaginable," Burgess said.

Burgess noted the vision that UA President **Robert C. Robbins** has for the University as a leader in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

"We must prepare our students not only to do, but also to create, tomorrow's jobs – jobs that we may not even be able to imagine today," Burgess said. "Dr. Scaramella is highly motivated to ensure the Norton School's graduates can and will meet the Fourth Industrial Revolution challenge."

An alumna of Tucson's Salpointe Catholic High School, Scaramella earned a master's degree and doctorate in family studies and child development from the UA in 1991 and 1994, respectively. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from The Catholic University of America in 1988. She spent two years as an associate research scientist at Iowa State University before joining the faculty at the University of New Orleans in 2000. She has over 50 publications.

As psychology graduate coordinator for 10 years during her tenure at UNO, she mentored students on their career plans and ensured they were ready for the workplace by matching them with applied experiences in teaching or administering treatment and interventions in community settings.

Since 2013, Scaramella has partnered with colleagues from the University of Maryland and the University of Florida to examine the impact of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill for families residing in rural Gulf Coast communities.

From 2013 to 2015, she served as chair of a National Institutes of Health Center for Scientific Review study section, which she said provided significant experiences in team building and leadership.

In 2015, Scaramella was given the UA Alumni Association's Professional Achievement Award.

The Norton School offers undergraduate degrees in retailing and consumer sciences, family studies and human development, and personal and family financial planning, and has nearly 1,000 undergraduates.

In addition, the school offers a graduate program in family studies and human development and houses three multidisciplinary research, outreach and corporate engagement entities: [the Frances McClelland Institute for Children, Youth, and Families](#) [2]; [the Terry J. Lundgren Center for Retailing](#) [3]; and [the Take Charge America Institute for Consumer Financial Education and Research](#) [4].

"Critically, Laura appreciates how all the Norton School's programs have a common heritage in home economics," Burgess said. "She also shares with me and college leaders our very strong motivation to continue our research strengths in family studies and human development and to develop an internationally recognized research program in consumer sciences areas of the future."

"The changing global marketplace requires innovative, interdisciplinary research and scholarship," Scaramella said. "The Norton School's long-standing tradition of research excellence and community-based partnerships means the school is well-positioned to lead and shape the next generation of retail and consumer scholars and professionals."

Scaramella succeeds Dan McDonald ^[5], who has served as interim director since July.

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[1] <https://cals.arizona.edu/fcs/> [2] <http://mcclellandinstitute.arizona.edu/> [3] <http://terrylundgrencenter.org/> [4] <http://tcainstitute.org/> [5] https://cals.arizona.edu/fcs/faculty/affiliate/daniel_mcdonald