

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

ACCREDITATION REPORT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Action Requested: Receive the accreditation report from the College of Education's School Psychology Doctoral Program at the University of Iowa.

Executive Summary: The School Psychology Doctoral Program, which has been accredited since 1992, (1) underwent a self-study that addressed the domains defined by the accrediting body; and (2) had an on-site visit by peer evaluators. The Program was accredited for a period of three years; the maximum period is seven years. The accrediting body identified concerns regarding four out of the eight domains and requested that progress toward addressing the concerns be included in the next self-study. This report addresses the Board's Strategic Plan objective to "offer high-quality programs through ongoing program improvement for undergraduate, graduate, professional, and non-degree students and special school students" (1.1.).

Background:

- ◇ **Description.** The School Psychology Doctoral program integrates psychological theory, professional development, clinical training, and research methodology using a scientist-practitioner model to train psychologists. School psychology emphasizes understanding and enhancing the behavioral, cognitive, and affective development of children and adolescents, particularly in educational and related settings.
- ◇ **Accrediting Agency.** The accrediting body is the Committee on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association (APA).
- ◇ **Review Process.** The self-study prepared by the School Psychology Doctoral Program contained the responses to the appropriate domains required by the accrediting body – eligibility; program philosophy, objectives and curriculum plan; program resources; cultural and individual differences and diversity; student-faculty relations; program self-assessment and quality enhancement; public disclosure; and relationship with accrediting body.
- ◇ **On-Site Team Report.** In November 2005, the visiting team determined that the School Psychology Doctoral Program sufficiently met the domains required by the accrediting body.
- ◇ **Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.**
 - ☑ "The program received the APA Richard Suinn Award for the Recruitment and Retention of Ethnic Minority Students."
 - ☑ "There is evidence of positive faculty-student relationships."
 - ☑ "The program has made systematic, coherent, and long-term efforts to attract and retain faculty from diverse backgrounds."
 - ☑ "The program engages in a number of mechanisms for self-enhancement, including formal evaluation of practicum sites, strategic planning, and active involvement by the faculty on local and national levels."

◇ Sample Concerns Identified by the Visiting Team.

- ☑ “The program does not articulate clear relationships between the stated program goals, the 25 objectives, the curriculum plan, and the practica experiences. The curriculum plan is highly individualized and dependent upon student-advisor agreements with little apparent oversight by the entire program faculty.” *A curriculum review will be undertaken by a faculty member and a graduate student to address the scheduling, objectives for each course, and alignment with the 25 program objectives. Beginning in January 2006, the Plan of Study for each student who has a post-master’s degree is presented to the faculty for review before the student is approved for comprehensive exams. In Spring-Fall 2006, efforts were focused on the organization of the practica placements and the alignment of the practica objectives with the 25 program objectives. All contracts for practica must contain experiences that fit within the 25 program objectives.*
- ☑ “The level of support for training materials is inadequate to maintain an assessment library of an accredited school psychology program.” *The level of support during the last five years has been \$3,000-\$5,000. The materials are the same to which the students in the Counseling Psychology Program have access.*
- ☑ “Although the program assesses outcomes, these assessments are not linked directly to the program goals and specified objectives. Practicum supervisor feedback is neither linked to the articulated objectives nor aggregated to inform program self-assessment and quality enhancement.” *In Spring-Fall 2006, efforts were focused on linking assessment data and/or program outcomes and the 25 program objectives.*
- ☑ “The lack of clearly articulated course requirements and course sequencing makes it difficult for prospective students to make an informed decision about entering the program.” *The current Plan of Study lists the program requirements but does not contain a typical sequence of courses. In the future, both will be included in the program brochure and student handbook.*

◇ Accreditation Status. In April 2006, the Committee on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association awarded accreditation to the School Psychology Doctoral Program for three years¹. The accrediting body identified concerns regarding four out of the eight domains and requested that progress toward addressing the concerns be included in the next self-study.

Details about the accreditation report are available in the Board Office.

¹ The maximum period possible is seven years.