

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**ACCREDITATION REPORT AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY DOCTORAL PROGRAM**

**Action Requested:** Receive the accreditation report from the College of Human Sciences' Marriage and Family Therapy Doctoral Program at Iowa State University.

**Executive Summary:** The Marriage and Family Therapy Doctoral Program, which has been accredited since 1993, (1) underwent a self-study that addressed the standards defined by the accrediting body; and (2) had an on-site visit by peer evaluators. The Program was accredited for the maximum period of six years with three stipulations. The accrediting body requires that all criteria be fully met within two years of the accreditation action. 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.** ISU's Marriage and Family Therapy Doctoral Program trains students to be clinical mental health practitioners who are qualified to diagnose and treat mental and emotional disorders within the context of marriage and family systems.
- ◇ **Accrediting Agency.** The accrediting body is the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.
- ◇ **Review Process.** The self-study prepared by the Marriage and Family Therapy Doctoral Program contained the responses to the appropriate standards required by the accrediting body.
- ◇ **On-Site Team Report.** In November 2005, the visiting team determined that the Marriage and Family Therapy Doctoral Program was in compliance with 126 out of the 145 of the Commission's standards.
- ◇ **Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.**
  - ☑ "The on-campus Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) clinic is clean, comfortable, and well-decorated, and is set up for both live supervision and split-screen videotaping. The space was built for the purpose of housing the MFT Clinic."
  - ☑ "Program faculty spoke with conviction about their commitment and approaches to include issues of gender and diversity in their coursework and supervision."
  - ☑ "This is a well-established program."
- ◇ **Sample Concerns Identified by the Visiting Team.**
  - ☑ "There appears to be no clear, direct, overall verification with one clearly designated individual responsible for ensuring overall compliance of program requirements." *The program director has assumed responsibility for verifying that all requirements for graduation from the MFT Program are met.*

- ☑ “There was some student expression of concern about providing honest feedback to supervisors for fear of repercussions.” *Text has been added to the clinical manual to clarify the process for providing feedback.*
- ☑ “The site team was unable to find in published program materials information directed toward applicants or current students that indicated they will receive individual supervision, group supervision, or supervision based on direct observation, videotape, or audiotape.” *The identified source in the Self-Study was incorrect. The information is provided in the Clinic Manual.*

◇ Stipulations Associated with Re-Accreditation.

- ☑ “Research content will include significant material on research in couple and family therapy.” *Students will continue to complete “Research Methods in Human Development and Family Studies” and “Statistical Methods for Research Workers” which provide information on basic research issues; students will also continue to address thesis topics that require them to apply this material to marriage and family therapy research. To further ensure that students receive significant material on research in couple and family therapy, material associated with research in marriage and family therapy will be infused into two existing courses.*
- ☑ “Research courses will provide comprehensive coverage of the critique and execution of couple, marriage, and family therapy research, statistics, research methodologies, and computer analysis and interpretation, in qualitative and quantitative research.” *The Program uses an infusion approach to research and emphasizes three key themes throughout training – reliance on primary reading sources; research implications of material; and supervision implications of material.*
- ☑ “Students will take at least one course with a specific focus on couple, marriage, and family therapy research.” *The department will re-introduce a course into the curriculum that will specifically address significant content in marriage and family therapy research. The course content represents a significant commitment to offering material associated with MFT research.*

- ◇ Accreditation Status. In June 2006, the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education awarded accreditation to the Marriage and Family Therapy Doctoral Program for the maximum period of six years with three stipulations. In October 2006, the Commission accepted the Program’s response to the stipulations and requested that the annual report, due in July 2007, contain information about progress with implementation of the infusion approach to research.

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