

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents
From: Board Office
Subject: Reaccreditation of the Doctoral Program in Counselor Psychology, College of Education, University of Iowa
Date: September 5, 2000

Recommended Action:

Receive the report on reaccreditation of the Ph.D. Program in Counselor Psychology at the University of Iowa.

Executive Summary:

On May 11, 1999, the American Psychological Association (APA) informed the University of Iowa that it had reaccredited the doctoral program in Counselor Psychology. The program, administered by the College of Education, met all standards, although an Interim Report was requested for 2000. That report, filed on June 20, 2000, addressed a concern of the visiting team. The Doctoral Program in Counselor Psychology is reaccredited until 2005.

Numerous strengths of the program were cited, including the professional activities of the faculty, the number and diversity of practicum opportunities, the commitment to diversity (37% of the students are from underrepresented minority groups), excellent facilities, and strong administrative support. Also, program officials keep in close contact with alumni, inviting graduates back to lead seminars from time to time.

The chief concern expressed in the APA report that needs to be addressed involves faculty size and teaching resources, which limit the availability of faculty to mentor students for direct research. The University successfully addressed the concern in its Interim Report in 2000. A lesser concern is the need for more space for students. That concern had also been noted in the previous Site Visit of 1993. The Interim Report did not address this concern.

One method of measuring quality of academic programs is to have them accredited periodically by appropriate professional/state agencies. This process is consistent with Key Result Area 1.0.0.0, Quality, of the Board of Regents' strategic plan. More specifically, the goal of accreditation matches Objective 1.1.0.0, "to improve the quality of existing and newly created educational programs."

Background and Analysis:

The Counselor Psychology Program has been accredited since 1980 by the APA. It was last reaccredited in 1993. In one study, the program was rated fifth-best in the nation.

The goal of the Counselor Psychology Program is to train students to achieve competency in providing a wide range of psychological services and in conducting research on a variety of psychological problems. The program, which admits five to eight students per year, usually takes five to six years to complete, including an intern year. The four objectives of the program are to educate students who will be (1) competent practitioners, (2) competent researchers, (3) practitioners with knowledge and appreciation of diversity, and (4) persons who are growing through a mentoring process. A scientist-practitioner model provides strong and continuing education in practice and research, and the integration of the two.

At the time of the Site Visit, 37 students were in the program. Of the 29 students graduated since the 1993 Site Visit, a majority are in private practice. Four are in academic work, and five are receiving more training.

The APA uses six standards or domains to assess the strength and weaknesses of the program. They are:

- Domain A Eligibility
- Domain B Program Philosophy, Objectives, and Curriculum Planning
- Domain C Faculty Size and Resources
- Domain D Cultural and Individual Differences and Diversity
- Domain E Student-Faculty Relationships
- Domain F Program Self-Assessment and Quality Enhancement

All of the above were met, as described in the May 11, 1999, letter from the APA.

Concerns Addressed:

Faculty Size and Resources (Domain C). At the time the Self Study was prepared (1998), the number of faculty in the program was at only 2.75 FTE, whereas it had been as high as 5.25. Contributing factors included a faculty member on sabbatical leave and other faculty with heavy administrative loads. The Site Team noted that the faculty FTE had only increased by .5 to 4.75 from the 1993 Site Visit. *Response: In its Interim Report of 2000, SUI noted that as of Fall 2000, there would be four full-time faculty, 1 part-time faculty, and five adjuncts. The report noted that a new faculty hire was a person of color. The University also addressed the issue of Program Support, which included a graduate assistantship and scholarship support for students.*

Student Space. The Self Study as well as the Site Visit Report emphasized that the classroom space and faculty offices in the Lindquist Building were excellent. Other University resources, such as the Library and University Counseling Service, are in close proximity. The office space for students was judged to be limited, as was meeting spaces for students appropriate for holding discussions on client concerns. *Response: The University's Interim Report did not address this concern.*


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Approved: 
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