



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

November 20, 2015

Waded Cruzado, Ph.D.
President
Montana State University
Montana Hall – Montana State University, Bozeman
Counseling and Psychological Services
Bozeman, MT 59717

Dear President Cruzado,

At its meeting on October 22-25, 2015 the Commission on Accreditation conducted a review of the psychology internship program at Montana State University Counseling and Psychological Services. This review included consideration of the program's most recent self-study report, the preliminary review of February 26, 2015 and the program's response to the preliminary review on March 12, 2015, the report of the team that visited the program on May 14-15, 2015 and the program's response to the site visit report on July 10, 2015.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of this review, the Commission on Accreditation (CoA) voted to award accreditation to this program. In so doing, the Commission scheduled the next accreditation site visit to be held in **2022**. During the interim, the program will be listed annually among accredited programs of professional psychology in the *American Psychologist* and on the accreditation web pages. The Commission also encourages you to share information about your program's accredited status with agencies and others of the public as appropriate.

Dr. Louise Douce, Board of Directors liaison to the CoA, recused and therefore did not participate in the discussion on your program.

The Commission would like to provide the program with a summary of its review. This is provided below according to each of the accreditation domains. At the end of the letter, the program will be provided with an itemized list of any actions that the program needs to take prior to the next accreditation review.

Domain A: Eligibility

As a prerequisite for accreditation, the program's purpose must be within the scope of the accrediting body and must be pursued in an institutional setting appropriate for the education and training of professional psychologists.

The doctoral internship at Montana State University's Counseling and Psychological Services

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(CPS) operates within the Division of Student Success at the Montana State University-Bozeman, a university accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. CPS is accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services and is the primary mental health agency for the over 15,000 students on campus as well as the staff and faculty. Interns can elect to complete an optional summer rotation at Montana State Hospital to obtain inpatient experience. Assignment of cases is done with attention to providing each intern with experience in working with clients from diverse backgrounds. The program is funded by the state and student health fee funds and is represented in the institution's budget. All interns are required to complete 12 months of full-time training. The program engages in actions that indicate respect for and understanding of cultural and individual diversity, and has appropriate nondiscrimination policies, and avoids actions that would restrict program access on grounds that are irrelevant to success in the internship.

The program has clear, formal, written policies and procedures that govern intern selection, financial assistance, evaluation and feedback, and due process and grievance procedures for interns. The program did not provide a grievance policy for staff, and is asked to submit such a policy by **June 1, 2016**.

Domain B: Program Philosophy, Objectives, and Training Plan

The program has a clearly specified philosophy of training, compatible with the mission of its sponsor institution and appropriate to the practice of professional psychology. The internship is an organized professional training program with the goal of providing high quality training in professional psychology. The training model and goals are consistent with its philosophy and objectives. The program has a logical training sequence that builds upon the skills and competencies acquired during doctoral training.

The program adheres to a practitioner-scholar model and training integrates science and practice accordingly. The program articulates three goals, each with multiple objectives and a large number of related competencies. Training is carefully designed to be sequential, cumulative and graded in complexity, with a great deal of attention paid to assignment of cases that are appropriate to each intern's developmental level. The training methods are primarily experiential and include excellent coverage of socialization into the profession. Supervision is regularly scheduled, and interns are evaluated on the provision of professional services as well as their conduct and ethical behavior. The program is led by a psychologist licensed in Montana with extensive program leadership experience.

The work that students complete during the fall and spring semesters is assessed using evaluation tools with clear minimum levels of achievement (MLAs) that correspond to all required competencies. In the summer months, students may work full-time at an external site, work full-time within the counseling center, or complete a combination of these activities. Supervisors over the summer months utilize a separate evaluation form (the Comprehensive Evaluation of Doctoral Intern's Professional Competence – Summer, self-study [SS] p. 318), which provides overall ratings of each objective rather than ratings at the competency level. Ratings at the

objective level do not clearly demonstrate that students are meeting the required MLAs (which are stated at the competency level in Table B.2). Furthermore, given that a different evaluation mechanism is used in the summer, it is not clear by when interns must meet MLAs should they not be met by the end of the spring semester. Since summer training could take place away from the home site and is evaluated on a form that does not clearly tie to competencies and MLAs in Table B.2, in a narrative response due by **June 1, 2016**, the program should clarify how it ensures that all interns meet the MLAs for all competencies if those MLAs are not met by the end of spring.

Table B.4 describes three required training experiences for the content area of theories and/or methods of evaluation: Training Seminar, Research Seminar, and summer rotation at Montana State Hospital (SS, p. 101). Given that not all interns complete the external summer rotation, the portion of coverage taking place during that rotation alone does not fulfill the requirement. Regarding the seminars associated with evaluation, no evaluation-related readings were listed in the descriptions of either didactic. The objectives for the Research Seminar include participation in a research/program evaluation task. The list of required activities in the handbook does not include program evaluation (SS, pp. 193-194), and the self-study suggests that interns who have not yet completed their dissertation use time in the Research Seminar to receive guidance about their dissertation work (p. 17). The internship brochure suggests that the time specified for research and scholarship “may be used to work on the dissertation or to pursue other scholarly work...such as working on a program evaluation project” (SS., p. 165). By **June 1, 2016**, the program is asked to clarify how all interns demonstrate intermediate to advanced knowledge in evaluation, including how they participate in the group program evaluation project if their research time is allocated to assessment or dissertation work.

Domain C: Program Resources

The program demonstrates that it has resources of appropriate quality and sufficiency to achieve its training goals and objectives.

The program has staff who are appropriately qualified and have primary responsibility for service delivery. Supervisors have credentials that are appropriate for the program’s training model and goals; participate actively in program planning, implementation and evaluation; and are available as professional role models for the interns. In the next self-study, the program is asked to ensure that supervisors’ roles are appropriately described and reflected in all self-study materials, as some of the program’s supervisors were listed in the incorrect tables in its most recent self-study submission.

The program admits 3 interns per year, which is sufficient to ensure meaningful peer interaction and support. Interns have abundant opportunities to provide feedback to the program staff and to participate in enhancing the training program. Interns each receive a stipend and a housing supplement if they choose to live off campus, and full benefits. Resources are adequate for the program to achieve its goals and objectives. Clerical and technical support are available, and there are sufficient training materials and equipment.

Domain D: Cultural and Individual Differences and Diversity

The program recognizes the importance of cultural and individual differences and diversity in the training of psychologists.

The internship program has an extensive plan to recruit diverse interns, including advertisement of their extensive diversity offerings, prospective recruitment of APA minority fellows, and explicit consideration of multicultural competence in the admissions process. The program has taken several steps to attract applicants for staff positions from diverse backgrounds, including posting to listservs that reach underrepresented groups and ensuring that search committees include diverse staff. Efforts for the *retention* of diverse staff, however, were, in the professional judgment of the CoA, insufficiently described. By **June 1, 2016** and in a manner consistent with IR C-22 (attached), the program is asked to provide additional long-term, systematic, and coherent efforts for the retention of diverse staff.

The internship has taken creative approaches to incorporating experience with diverse populations into the training program, including collaborating with the local Native American population and with a state inpatient facility. The program avoids actions that restrict access on grounds irrelevant to internship success, including for example conducting interviews in a manner that does not disadvantage applicants with lower financial means.

Domain E: Intern-Staff Relations

The program demonstrates that its education, training, and socialization experiences are characterized by mutual respect and courtesy between interns and training staff and that it operates in a manner that facilitates interns' training and educational experiences.

The program demonstrates its recognition of the rights of interns and staff to be treated with courtesy and respect. Interns are informed at entry into the program of these principles and of the formal and informal grievance procedures available to them. Respect for individual diversity is a strength of this program. The handbook includes a comprehensive description of program requirements and expectations as well as remediation and termination procedures. The interns receive written feedback three times a year that indicates their progress, as well as more frequent qualitative feedback on specific aspects of their performances such as presentation skills. The program has appropriate record-keeping in terms of feedback and remedial planning.

The program is consistent with the provisions of this domain.

Domain F: Program Self-Assessment and Quality Enhancement

The program demonstrates a commitment to excellence through self-study, which assures that its goals and objectives are met, enhances the quality of professional education and training obtained by its interns, and contributes to the fulfillment of its host institution's mission.

The program maintains a regular process to evaluate intern preparation and the effectiveness of meeting program goals. The program staff attend conferences, and the program provides

ongoing opportunities to ensure their continued professional development.

In the previous accreditation review, the program was asked to report on how it has used aggregate outcome data to make programmatic changes. In response, the program reported that it has enhanced the outreach and research portions of the program. In the current self-study, however, there is again no mention of how the current outcome data might lead to programmatic change. In a narrative response due by **June 1, 2016**, the program is asked to clarify how it uses its outcome data to make changes to the program as needed.

Domain F.1(b): Outcome Data

The program, with appropriate involvement from its interns, engages in regular, ongoing self-studies that address its effectiveness in achieving program goals/objectives in terms of outcome data (i.e., while interns are in the program and after completion, and including the interns' views regarding the quality of the training experiences and the program).

Proximal data are presented based on mean supervisor ratings as well as mean intern self-reported competency levels for each objective. Distal data have been collected from those who have been out of the program for at least a year with an excellent response rate.

Proximal data are aggregated in terms of cohort means for each objective on a Likert scale, and are collapsed across competencies. The means that are presented suggest that the interns are on average performing above the required competency thresholds. The program requires interns to achieve an MLA of at least 3 on each competency (4 on ethics) by the end of the program; it is not possible to determine from the presentation of the data whether 100% of the interns meet all MLAs prior to program completion. By **June 1, 2016**, the program is asked to provide revised proximal outcome data that demonstrate the extent to which all interns meet required MLAs by the end of the program. The data should be presented in a manner consistent with IR C-30 (attached), and should include a copy of Table B.2 to facilitate data review.

Domain G: Public Disclosure

The program demonstrates its commitment to public disclosure by providing written materials and other communications that appropriately represent it to the relevant publics.

The program accurately describes itself in public documents. IR C-6(b) (attached) requires the program to provide the CoA's contact information wherever the accredited status of the program is listed. While the contact information is available, the Commission's email address is not listed as the website. By **June 1, 2016**, the program is asked to provide documentation that the Commission's contact information is listed appropriately and completely in all places where the program's accredited status is listed.

Domain H: Relationship with Accrediting Body

The program demonstrates its commitment to the accreditation process by fulfilling its responsibilities to the accrediting body from which its accredited status is granted.

The program abides by CoA policies and procedures, has kept the Commission closely informed of substantive changes to the program. Furthermore, the program has paid all applicable fees related to accreditation in a timely manner.

The program is consistent with the provisions of this domain.

In order to keep the Commission informed of the program's commitment to the ongoing self-study process, the program is asked to address the following issues in a narrative response by **June 1, 2016**:

- Provide the program's grievance procedures for staff.
- Provide documentation that the Commission's contact information is listed appropriately and completely in all places where the program's accredited status is listed.

The program is asked to address the following issues in narrative by **June 1, 2016** for formal review by the Commission:

- Clarify how all interns meet the MLAs for all competencies if those MLAs are not met by the end of spring.
- Clarify how all interns demonstrate intermediate to advanced knowledge in evaluation, including how they participate in the group program evaluation project if their research time is allocated to assessment or dissertation work.
- Provide additional long-term, systematic, and coherent efforts for the retention of diverse staff.
- Clarify how the program uses its outcome data to make changes to the program as needed
- Provide revised proximal outcome that demonstrate the extent to which all interns meet required MLAs by the end of the program.

Please note that while these items are considered an addendum to the data provided in the Annual Report Online (ARO), they are not to be submitted online. The program's response to the items listed above should be identified as 'Narrative Response – Program Review' and mailed or faxed to the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation by the designated due date.

The accreditation website (www.apa.org/ed/accreditation) provides important updates and policy changes related to the accreditation process. As an accredited program, we encourage you to periodically visit the website to remain current on all new accreditation policies. The

Commission on Accreditation would also like to remind you that all accredited programs must inform the accrediting body in a timely manner of changes that could alter the program's quality. A copy of Implementing Regulation C-19 (Notification of Changes to Accredited Programs) is attached for your information.

Please note that at the time of your next self-study submission, your program will be reviewed under the new Standards for Accreditation (SoA). Additional information on the 2017 implementation of the SoA will be provided in the coming months. Please visit the accreditation website for updates and information.

In closing, on behalf of the Commission on Accreditation, I extend congratulations to the training staff and interns of the professional psychology program for their achievements. The Commission also expresses its appreciation for your personal commitment, and the corresponding support of your administration, to develop and maintain the best possible quality of graduate education and training in psychology. If the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation may be of service at any time on administrative matters of accreditation, please call upon us.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Remondet Wall, Ph.D.

Director, Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation

Cc: Allen Yarnell, Vice President for Student Affairs
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