

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY (Ph.D.) PROGRAM**  
**ACCREDITATION REPORT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

**Action Requested:** Receive the accreditation report for the School Psychology (Ph.D.) Program in the College of Education at the University of Iowa.

**Executive Summary:** The program (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 the maximum seven-year period through 2015. This accreditation report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan objective (1.1) to “offer high-quality programs through ongoing program improvement for undergraduate, graduate, professional, and non-degree students and special school students.”

**Background:**

- ◇ Description of Program. The School Psychology (Ph.D.) Program trains professional psychologists who are knowledgeable about and have experiences in school settings and who possess special expertise in addressing the affective and cognitive needs of children and adolescents. The program trains students to be competent in providing a wide range of developmentally and culturally appropriate psychological services, and in conducting research on a variety of psychological issues within theory, research, and practice.
- ◇ Purpose of Accreditation. An accredited educational program is recognized by its peers as having met national standards for its development and evaluation.
- ◇ Accrediting Agency. The accrediting body is the American Psychological Association.
- ◇ Review Process. The self-study prepared by the School Psychology (Ph.D.) 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 May 2008, the visiting team determined that the School Psychology (Ph.D.) Program met the requirements for accredited status, although the program must respond to the Commission on Accreditation on specific domains by September 1, 2009.
- ◇ Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.
  - ☑ “Both faculty and student professional involvement is a strength of the program.”
  - ☑ “The program has involved students effectively in self-study efforts to update the program and ensure accountability.”
  - ☑ “The program demonstrates a commitment to excellence through systematic review of its goals, objectives, training model, and curriculum in relation to the evolving body of scientific and professional knowledge.”
  - ☑ “The program requires respect for and understanding of cultural and individual diversity through policies and the program’s curriculum.”

- ◇ Issues to be Addressed by September 1, 2009 and Institutional Responses (italics).
- ☑ “Provide an update about the program’s efforts to accommodate individuals in the program who have disabilities.”  
*It is unclear what is expected from the program. The earlier report had indicated that the hallways in the Lindquist Center were too narrow to accommodate wheel chairs and that the doors were hard to open. However, the program has no control over physical facilities. The Director of Training and a staff member were in wheel chairs followed by crutches in the Lindquist Center for an extended period. They were able to navigate the hallways and open the doors, not easily, but both were able to continue their daily work.*
  - ☑ “Document that the program’s website has been updated to include the missing attrition table and licensure data, in compliance with Implementing Regulation C-20 – Disclosure of Education/Training Outcomes and Information Allowing for Informed Decision-Making to Prospective Doctoral Students.”  
*The mistakes and/or missing data on the website have been corrected.*
  - ☑ “Document that the program’s website has been updated to include the correct telephone number for the Commission on Accreditation.”  
*The mistakes and/or missing data on the website have been corrected.*
- ◇ Issues to be Addressed by September 1, 2009 for Formal Review by the Commission and Institutional Responses (italics).
- ☑ “Delineate how the program ensures broad and general coverage of the following areas, consistent with Implementing Regulation C-16 – Evaluating Program Adherence to the Principle of ‘Broad and General Preparation’. Provide all relevant syllabi that demonstrate this coverage – biological aspects of behavior; cognitive and affective aspects of behavior; and social aspects of behavior.”  
*Faculty who teach these courses have been asked to clarify the content. The course title of ‘Biological Aspects of Behavior’ was changed to ‘Psychobiology of Health and Sickness’ between 2005 and 2007 but the content of the course was not changed. Since it was not clear from the syllabus that was given to the Commission, the program will provide a statement to the Commission about the content.*  
*The content of courses in two other required areas were questioned. The course title of ‘Organizations of Social Systems’ was changed to ‘Social Psychology and Social Systems’ to represent the social aspects of behavior; the content was also changed. The faculty plan to study the two courses questioned under the cognitive and affective aspects of behavior, ‘Cognitive Development’ and ‘Cognitive Theories of Learning’ to determine the affective content or indicate where it is covered in the Plan of Study.*
  - ☑ “Provide an update on obtaining greater financial support for students, given the program’s statements regarding the need for improvement in this area.”  
*This concern cannot be addressed at the present time because the University of Iowa is discussing the need to decrease the number of graduate assistantships available to graduate students. The program faculty can attempt to write more grants to fund students, but that is an area that is also being cut across the nation. A plan is expected to be in place by September 1, 2009.*

- ☑ “Given the concerns regarding sufficiency of training materials and equipment available to the program, document that there are appropriate funds available to the program for training and materials.”

*The program will continue to sponsor workshops and other activities to obtain free training resources. The program works with other programs to order materials and lend materials to persons outside the College of Education to maintain good relationships and mutual sharing.*

- ☑ “Articulate systematic, coherent, and long-term efforts for the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and students.”

*The Commission has asked the program to develop and implement systematic, coherent, and long-term recruitment and retention efforts for both students and faculty. In 2002, the program won the American Psychological Association Suinn Minority Achievement Award in recognition of the recruitment and retention of minority students. At that time, more than 40% of the students were racial or ethnic minority students. That number has decreased due to lack of funds to provide scholarships and assistantships to minority students. The program will attempt to create the type of plan desired by the Commission.*

- ☑ “Discuss how faculty are available to students and provide guidance and supervision that facilitates timely program completion.”

*The program has not been fully staffed since 1995; however, a new faculty member will begin in Fall 2009 and will be able to provide additional guidance and supervision to students. This should result in a decrease in the number of students in the program beyond their 7<sup>th</sup> year. Currently, some faculty have 13 Ph.D. advisees which is more than the 10 advisees recommended by the American Psychological Association.*

- ☑ “Explain how the outcome data collected is related to the program’s goals, objectives, and competencies.”

*The program will demonstrate how the data gathered from current and former students are related to the stated goals and objectives. The faculty have worked for two years on new portfolio requirements; Spring 2009 was the first time that some students were under those requirements which are directly linked to the stated goals and objectives.*

- ◆ Accreditation Status. In October 2008, the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association awarded accreditation to the School Psychology (Ph.D.) Program at the University of Iowa for a seven-year period through 2015.