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CAPIC Comment on Phase I Implementation of Guidelines and Principles (G&P) for Accreditation

(Submitted online on 10/10/2012)

The Board of the California Psychology Internship Council (CAPIC) is appreciative of the opportunity to comment on the G & P. Like NCSPP, we are concerned about the timeline of the revision process. Nevertheless, we are submitting the following feedback about portions of the current G & P.

There are many current strengths of the G & P regarding professional training which are consistent with CAPIC goals. Most notably, CAPIC is highly supportive of the idea of instilling lifelong learning in future psychologists, in training in evidence based intervention and assessment procedures, in maintaining a strong focus on diversity matters in doctoral internship training, and in the need to continually self-assess and demonstrate successful outcomes of clinical training.

We are also strongly supportive of the provision for differences in training philosophies /models. However, we believe that the G & P have not been clear as to the breadth of models that are acceptable, and thus the CoA has not allowed for such differences, particularly regarding doctoral internship models. For example, many accredited doctoral academic programs were developed with a local scientist-practitioner philosophy, training students to work in local communities after being trained to work with local populations. The training model also included two, ½-time internships in the local area, which allowed students to be more closely monitored by their doctoral academic programs while on internship and learn from multiple supervisors in a variety of clinical settings.

The old model of full-time internship with likely/expected relocation does not work for many students in the current economy and shift in student demographics. Over the past twenty years, it has become evident that the concept of “one size fits all” does not work, whether it be in theory or treatment. Why has this not been extended to internships as well? Certainly we are all supportive of practical training being sequential, cumulative, and graded in complexity; but is the one-year full time model the only way to accomplish this? Are all doctoral students – particularly with their changed demographics of age, sex, ethnicity, family structure, and personal needs – best trained in the full-time model?

Doctoral Internship quality is a complex ideal and includes a combination of many variables that can no longer be defined only by accreditation status; there are additional ways to monitor and maintain quality of training in addition to accreditation status. The G & P do not adequately address how to consistently or accurately measure quality or outcomes. We do not know, for example, what types of doctoral internships are best for what types of students in what types of contexts. The current model of doctoral internship training assumes that students trained at traditional internships will somehow make better psychologists than those trained at alternate-type internships. Is there any research to support such claims? In a geographically complex country, regional and local solutions are just as essential as national ones, and can add and contribute to solutions and maintenance of standards and training.

Although the G & P make it seem that alternative models are acceptable, this does not seem to be the truth in application. In an attempt to support academic institutions in California, and most importantly, doctoral students in California, CAPIC has created alternate models for students who are interested in staying in their local area and for whom relocating across the country might be unaffordable or in other ways untenable. Any stipend forfeited by the student in taking an alternate internship would more than be made up by their not having to leave the local area. In all of these local internships, whether they be ½-time at different sites, two year ½-time at one site, or one year full-time at one site, CAPIC has

incorporated the values and standards described in the G & P as optimal for doctoral students, such as the ones specified in the first paragraph above.

CAPIC is particularly concerned about separate accreditations for doctoral academic programs and doctoral internships. While the G & P indicate that doctoral academic programs obtain proximal outcome measures specific to their goals, objectives, and competencies from students' doctoral internship supervisors, the programs have little authority, little ongoing communications, and often little in common with the goals of the doctoral internship program. This is an inherent conflict in having two accreditation processes. Wouldn't this be coordinated more appropriately if students completed local internships that they and the program felt were best suited to their needs?

The G & P's focus on recognizing multiple models has evolved into an accreditation process that homogenizes the models, particularly for internships. If APA supports multiple models of training, then the G & P should clearly state the standards, with attention and support for the current student and local demographic.

Respectfully,

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