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Dear colleagues,

The California Psychology Internship Council (CAPIC) shares the deep concerns of our fellow psychologists, as well as the public, regarding the American Psychological Association's (APA's) appalling actions as revealed most recently in the Hoffman report. It is extremely troubling to learn that the APA leadership colluded with the Department of Defense to permit abusive interrogations and essentially facilitate torture. As the profession as a whole has been discussing since the release of the Hoffman Report, these acts are absolutely in direct violation of our core principles, violate the public's trust in our profession, and undermine our ability to serve our patients. It is also unnerving how fully the APA leadership intentionally, repeatedly and dismissively misled its own members and the public regarding its position, even after direct inquiries. We cannot emphasize enough how this second violation deeply undermines our trust in the APA and its ability to lead our profession.

However, CAPIC also reaffirms statements by the California Psychology Association and others that these abhorrent actions and positions do not represent our ethics and values, and those of the overwhelming majority of psychologists.

CAPIC also greatly appreciates the actions of the current leadership at the APA, particularly Drs. Susan McDaniel & Nadine Kaslow, for calling for the internal investigation that led to the Hoffman report, for acknowledging the two core findings of the report, and for seeking guidance from its members as APA charts a new course forward. We are also encouraged by the recent statement

by Dr. Debora Bell regarding the Commission on Accreditation (CoA) and the development of a specialized workgroup examining potential conflicts of interest in the CoA. CAPIC firmly believes that we must work together to regain the public's trust both in our ability to help our patients and in our profession generally, caused by these significant lapses in judgment by the APA leadership. The profession at large and the public are important, valuable, and essential stakeholders in APA's way forward. We are a part of the solution and must be included as such.

Towards that end, CAPIC has a few observations and suggestions for APA for charting a course forward.

### **Changing the Culture:**

As important as the individual decisions which led the APA leadership to facilitate torture and to deceive its own members, is the culture which allowed these decisions to occur, and that culture must change. For too long, a culture of exclusivity has existed within APA, coupled with a lack of transparency and an unwillingness to hear dissent. Such a culture allowed the APA leadership to take the path which led to the serious violations laid out in the Hoffman report. While such cultural "maladaptions" are not uncommon and no organization is immune, structures must be implemented to counter such tendencies. Indeed, CAPIC has used this situation to seriously re-examine its own culture and organizational structures to improve its own decision-making.

An organization's culture is set by the example of its leadership. The recent steps by Drs. McDaniel & Kaslow to communicate more frequently with APA members and to seek their feedback are key first steps to improving that culture, and we applaud them for that. But the cultural transformation that is imperative here goes beyond soliciting feedback. An essential step in leadership to demonstrate real transparency and accountability will be to also communicate the considerations, decisions, and actions resulting from that feedback. Steps and structures will be needed to ensure that changes are not simply based on an individual leader's position but are supported and sustained by institutional procedures and safeguards.

Regarding the need for inclusivity, we firmly believe it is in the best interest of our profession to cultivate more diversity within the psychology doctoral program student body, and therefore the profession, by supporting diverse educational and training models. Research supports the inherent value of having professionals who reflect the underserved and high-need communities we serve. This not only encourages public trust but it also demonstrates a culturally competent and ethical profession that truly serves the public interest. Are these not the core principles at the heart of the APA's values? We believe that better communications and feedback with the APA membership will reflect a common desire for more diversity and inclusivity, which will then lead to policies that support these qualities in our profession.

One particular concern regarding the lack of inclusivity and diversity is APA's push to require APA-accredited doctoral academic programs to permit only APA-accredited internships for its students, thereby promoting a limited and exclusive path to licensure. This position is particularly troubling, since non-traditional students oftentimes (and particularly during hard economic

times) do not have the ability to uproot themselves from their community to pursue APA-accredited internship programs across the country. Furthermore, many of these students have entered the field to directly give back to their local community. Now, to obtain their capstone training experience, many are strongly encouraged and even required to uproot themselves from these same communities. Our profession has great value to all levels of society, from the grass roots to the ivory towers; training opportunities should reflect this variety.

Closely related to this lack of inclusivity is the inherent conflict of interest that appears to exist between APA and its accrediting arm, the Commission on Accreditation (CoA). The relationship between APA and CoA has recently become significantly more complicated and troubling. While the APA has been promoting a single path to licensure, the CoA has been debating the addition of a standard of accreditation for doctoral academic programs that would mandate that APA-accredited academic programs send their students only to APA-accredited internship programs. Thus the CoA would require doctoral programs to send their students to internships separately accredited by CoA, which are both paying accreditation fees to CoA and by extension to APA. Having a requirement (APA-accreditation) that can only be met by a single body (i.e. CoA) that financially benefits from this requirement, would appear to be a clear conflict of interest.

At a minimum, these appearances of conflicts of interest must be closely examined. It is again also critical to have transparency. The secondary consequences (intended or not) of these arrangements must be openly examined, as they do a disservice to our profession by negatively impacting the diversity of our profession and our ability to serve communities in need.

What is even more objectionable about these arrangements is the fact there are currently not nearly enough APA-accredited internships for the clinical psychology students who would be required to obtain one. Despite some helpful funding grants to assist existing internships to become APA-accredited, these funds remain insufficient for the number of such internships needed and this form of funding itself is not sustainable. As a result, many excellent internships may not be able to attain (or maintain) accreditation because of a lack of funds, and would therefore become unavailable to meet the needs of students who would be required to obtain an APA-accredited internship. Equally important, the diverse and underserved communities where many of these valuable internships are located would lose the valuable services provided by psychology interns.

While there is some independence between CoA and APA, it is essential to examine the relationship more closely regarding organizational autonomy, transparency, and the avoidance of conflicts of interest between them. We are pleased that CoA has formed a workgroup on these issues, and look forward to its findings and the discussions that arise from them. We continue to be committed as a collaborative partner to develop solutions together.

### **Charting a Course Forward:**

In addition to addressing the direct and egregious violations laid out in the Hoffman report, we believe this is an ideal time for APA to change its culture and make it truly inclusive to the whole

of the psychology profession. It is also time to re-examine APA's relationship to CoA and for CoA to scrupulously avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest in the positions it takes and the policies it makes.

For such a cultural change at APA to endure, APA must have safeguards to ensure it becomes a forum where real debate can occur among people with different points of view, and where dissenting voices can be heard with true respect. Valuing inclusivity is essential for this to occur. Transparency is also crucial to ensure that debates are properly communicated back to the membership and then translated into policies which truly represent the APA membership. We believe these debates will recognize that there is more than one model or path to quality doctoral psychology training and licensure. They will also show the vital importance of increasing diversity in our profession and providing more psychological services to communities in need.

We advocate for a model within the APA and our profession that is open and transparent, and which implements policies encouraging the diversity and inclusivity that CAPIC itself promotes. CAPIC has been creating and implementing quality training standards for internship sites, some of which are not able to pursue APA accreditation due to resource constraints. Since CAPIC's founding in 1991, over ten thousand (10,000) interns have been trained at CAPIC internships who are serving the profession and mental health clients in communities across the country. CAPIC's mission is to promote excellence in professional psychology training and mental health services. Our internships are recognized by the California Board of Psychology, alongside APPIC-member and APA-accredited internships, and we support quality training without the imprimatur of accreditation.

There is currently no known data indicating that psychology students achieve better professional outcomes by attending an APPIC-member or APA-accredited internship, rather than a CAPIC internship. We recognize that an APA-accredited internship may afford different *employment* outcomes, particularly when employers such as the VA require it, but the professional outcomes are essentially the same. Indeed, CAPIC has recently compiled preliminary evidence demonstrating equivalency in training and outcomes with the CAPIC model. These findings are outlined in the following two posters:

Bucky, S., Stolberg, R., Turner, S., & Kimmel, C. (April 2015). [Comparison of supervisory characteristics across accrediting bodies and levels of training.](#) Poster presented at the California Psychological Association convention, San Diego, CA.

Morrison, A., Schaefer, M., Ribner, N., & Puliatti, R. (January 2015). [Training healthcare psychologists: Outcomes from multiple models.](#) Poster presented at the National Council of Schools and Programs in Professional Psychology Mid-winter Conference, San Diego, CA.

CAPIC internships contribute to the welfare of the profession of psychology by broadening access to professional training while maintaining quality education. Equally important, CAPIC interns help to meet the mental health needs of the most seriously underserved people who live in our

neighborhoods. CAPIC has also worked collaboratively with APA, CoA and APPIC over the years. We consider our collaboration in the best interest of the profession. Some select examples of our mutual engagement over the years are as follows:

- CAPIC has adapted its internship and postdoctoral membership criteria from those of APPIC. Our criteria have continued to evolve as training needs have changed.
- In 2005, CAPIC held the first national conference focused specifically on the half-time internship model, which eventually became adopted nationwide.
- In 2012, CAPIC held two training events led by CoA representatives, to show CAPIC training programs how they could become APA-accredited, and we continue to provide APA-accreditation information and resource linkages for our internship programs.
- Throughout the years, CAPIC has regularly attended APA conventions, and has worked collaboratively with its members, promoting and linking internships to resources such as consortia development.

We are encouraged by the initial steps of APA, particularly by Drs. McDaniel & Kaslow, and look forward to working with APA to put this dark chapter behind us. Together, we can create a better, more inclusive and more transparent culture at APA and CoA, which will lead to policies and programs that will more truly represent our members, our profession and the public good. Again, we stress that our goal is to work with the APA. Please accept our open invitation for a conversation about our concerns and recommendations. We welcome the challenge and opportunity to chart our future steps forward together in mutual collaboration.

On behalf of the California Psychology Internship Council (CAPIC),

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