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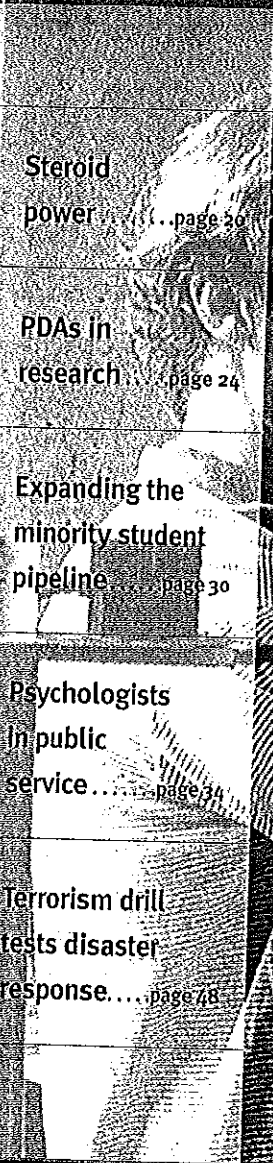
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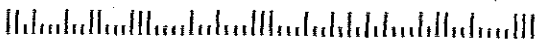
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Considering the half-time internship

A recent conference focused on funding and quality-assurance for half-time internships.

BY BRIDGET MURRAY LAW
Monitor staff

Students tied to their hometown for internship because of family, financial and other such considerations, but unable to land a full-time spot locally, may find a solution in the half-time internship—the same amount of clinical training as a full-time internship, but spread over two years.

In California, for example, half-time internships have grown markedly over the past decade. Of the 801 internship positions listed with the California Psychology Internship Council (CAPIC) for 2004–2005, 75 percent were available half time. What's more, completion of a CAPIC, Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC)-member or APA-accredited internship ensures students licensure eligibility in California.

But half-time internships aren't without their drawbacks. Few of them exist outside of California, not many pay and most are not APA-accredited or APPIC-member sites—credentials required for licensure in many states.

To address those funding and quality issues, CAPIC gathered psychology education and training leaders at the April conference, "The half-time internship: Coming into the mainstream." Conference attendees included representatives of APPIC, the National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology (NCSPP), the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students, and APA's Committee on Accreditation, Board of Educational Affairs and Education and Public Interest Directorates.

CAPIC Executive Director Luli Emmons, PhD, says the meeting helped

step up national attention to the half-time issue.

"The conference primed the pump for more work on half-time internships," says Emmons. "The goal was to step outside current thinking about training and to be more proactive about the different possibilities."

The half-time situation

The half-time internship model has a long history of acceptance in psychology, dating back to 1950 when the APA Council of Representatives adopted standards for professional education and training. Indeed, some programs such as the University of Michigan have included the half-time internship for years.

However, the model has not been as widely embraced in the field as the full-time model, despite several APA Council resolutions in the 1980s and 1990s supporting its further development.

"The conference primed the pump for more work on half-time internships."

Luli Emmons

California Psychology Internship Council

Overall, full-time internship slots greatly outnumber half-time ones—APPIC lists fewer than 50 of them, though almost all are funded. And while half-time internships are eligible for accreditation by APA, only seven U.S. positions and three Canadian ones are APA-accredited. This poses a problem for students with caregiving responsibilities and financial limitations, says Roger Peterson, PhD, a former NCSPP president, who, along with APA Executive Director for Education Cynthia Belar, PhD, delivered opening remarks at the conference. "Interns are no longer a bunch of 26-year-old white male graduates going off for adventure cross-country," says Peterson.

Several feasible part-time models exist. One that is likely to receive increased attention, says Belar, is the affiliated internship consortium, in which the doctoral program plays an administrative role in creating the internship by contracting with on- and off-campus sites. At the conference, Belar also raised concerns about the lack of funding for half-time interns compared with full-time trainees; she noted the disproportionate burden lack of funding places on this student population, as well as the message it conveys about the value of the services provided.

Suggestions

To address the lack of half-time internship development, conference participants divided into work groups to brainstorm solutions. Among the topics addressed and recommendations made were:

- **Sequence and regulations.**

Develop a resource guide on how to develop affiliated consortia in which the doctoral programs run or contract with internship sites; address issues related to the timing of the internship (should it be postdoctoral?), and convene a national conference to re-examine the interface between doctoral programs and internship program training.

- **Funding and advocacy.** Step up involvement in state and national grassroots advocacy to garner support for internship training and reimbursement for services that interns provide.

- **Quality assurance.** Define the competencies expected of interns in all internship types, differentiate internships from practica, and ensure communication between doctoral programs and internships.

Conference organizer Emmons now plans to publicize the conference work by preparing and publishing a set of articles on it.

That's good news to Roger Peterson. "The papers from this conference will preserve the work done by these important players and help others starting half-time internships," he says. ♣

For more information, go to www.capic.net.