

April 9, 2002

Master's in Psychology Accreditation Council
Final Report of the Accreditation Review Committee
On the Masters of Arts in Counseling Psychology and
the Masters of Arts in Industrial/Organizational Psychology
Of the University of West Florida
April 2002

BACKGROUND

After receiving the pre-application for accreditation submitted by Dr. Rosemary Hays-Thomas for the Masters of Arts in Counseling Psychology and the Masters of Arts in Industrial/Organizational Psychology Programs at the University of West Florida, the program was notified that it had been granted the opportunity to present its full application. The Master's in Psychology Accreditation Council (MPAC) received the application for accreditation of the Master of Arts in Industrial/Organizational Psychology Programs at the University of West Florida in May of 2001. The members of the MPAC Accreditation Review Committee, Dr. Kevin Peterson, (Chair), Gayle Henderson and Dr. William Siegfried reviewed the application. Questions that emerged served as the framework for the site visit. Dr. Siegfried and Carolyn Long conducted a two-day site visit on February 7-8, 2002 and submitted a site visit report in March, 2002.

Standards Of Training, Mission, Objectives and Curriculum

The Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology and the Master of Arts in Industrial/Organizational Psychology Programs at The University of West Florida are clearly identified as psychology programs in terms of the disciplinary affiliations of those who teach and administer the programs. The programs are housed in the psychology department and most faculty are graduates of psychology programs, and licensed where appropriate. The courses are listed according to a statewide system of numbering. For example, the behavior modification sequence is listed under EAB, which is the experimental analysis of behavior. Some courses as CLP – clinical psychology, others as PCO – psychology for counseling. Psychology is in the title where appropriate. INP – industrial and applied psychology is the listing for most of the I/O courses.

The mission statement is appropriate for their circumstances and they appropriately adhere to it. The President was very informative about the mission of the university as a whole, and the department is certainly in line with the overall mission.

The Counseling Track has 2 options, a non-licensure option of 42 semester hours and a licensure option of 60 hours. The I/O track is 42 semester hours and has one option in organizational development. All students are assigned a faculty advisor upon admission and advisors are available at all times for advice. There is also a peer counseling system for students and some informal exchange between first and second year students. There is a system of admission and courses, with the most flexibility in the non-licensure counseling track and the I/O

track. The licensure track of 60 semester hours allows for only one elective and typically takes 2 ½ years to complete. Most attrition occurs in the admission process, and students typically make appropriate progress towards the degree and graduate within a reasonable time.

All students who apply to graduate schools at UWF must take the GRE. Scores on the GRE and undergraduate grades, along with written statements of goals are all parts of the application. The department retains the option of conducting individual interviews but is not currently exercising that option. In general, students with a GRE combined score of 1000, or a GPA of 3.0 or better are considered. Students who do not have an undergraduate major in psychology must have completed a minimum number of undergraduate courses. After admission, these students must complete graduate course prerequisites as appropriate. Undergraduate majors are allowed to exercise a senior privilege and take 10 hours of graduate work before graduation with departmental permission.

CAMPP standards have been met for the general psychology core for both programs. All students take a research design and a statistics course. The statistics course is currently taught in the Mathematics department, which is of some concern to the I/O students, but the coordinator assured us that the Mathematics department was cooperating in making it relevant to psychology students, including teaching SPSS as opposed to SAS. There is both a one-semester practicum and a longer internship in both programs. This affords a significant supervised experience and was commented on by site supervisors. They really support the longer internship experiences. Ethical standards are covered by APA, ACA, and AMCHA in a Legal Issues course, as well as in other courses as it is appropriate. There is a course in multicultural diversity required for the licensure-option counseling students. For others, it is covered in social and organizational courses. Both site visitors were somewhat concerned that there was not an independent assessment course. After conversations with site supervisors, it was clear that there was not a problem with the preparation in assessment. The students get their assessment in the real work settings. Students and alumni also reported feeling very confident with the level of preparation they received in assessment.

Interviews with site supervisors, former students, and current employers indicated that the program objectives are being met. The programs produce well-prepared students able to contribute to the community, to obtain licensure when appropriate, and to perform acceptably when employed, which is consistent with the mission statement. Course syllabi seem to reflect fairly accurately the content of courses. There is financial support available to help students attend conferences, and conventions, and to present papers. Collaborative research with students is common and students are generally rewarded with first authorship. The general faculty has responsibility for the core courses and review content periodically with all other graduate faculty.

Institutional Setting, Resources and Faculty

The catalog is comprehensive and coupled with the Graduate Handbook contains all the information a student could possibly want to know about the program. The website also offers the student a wealth of information and is currently being updated. Budgetary support for the program appears adequate. Florida is in a cost-cutting mode and the department was asked to

return money after it had been allocated. The Dean and other administrators are currently looking for ways to handle budget shortfalls. The Dean made two relevant comments. One was that the psychology department programs were increasing in enrollments and therefore she wanted to maintain them. The second comment was that the 60-hour licensure program was expensive due to its almost 3-year timetable compared to typical 2-year masters programs.

There are in-house grants, seed money, for faculty research and some money available for summer research programs. The Associate Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies commented that they typically had enough money to fund all the worthwhile projects. Faculty seemed to be satisfied with the level of funding available for these endeavors. Recent awards of tenure and promotion to faculty also support this perception.

There is a fantastic array of on-line research facilities available in the library in addition to a good collection of journals and books. The library recently gave the psychology department \$20,000 as a development grant to upgrade their holdings, after budgetary losses of the 1990's. The psychology building has rooms for observation with sound for training counselors, and rooms available for running subjects for research. They also have computer facilities available for research, both for subjects to use and for students.

The administration emphasizes interdisciplinary efforts and cooperative arrangements within the university. The psychology department has several programs operating cooperatively with the management department, the education guidance counselor program, the criminal justice program, and programs in gerontology and health psychology. They have off-campus resources available for a variety of student experiences, including a federal prison, a safe-house, the university student counseling center, the area zoo, the Naval Air Station for I/O, and several other major companies in the area. Also, Dr. Rosemary Hays-Thomas recently was asked to be the administrator of SEPA and has tentatively accepted. This office would remain housed in the psychology department.

There are designated program directors for the Counseling and I/O tracks. The faculty is adequate at this time, but hiring is critical to avoid pending problems in both programs. They are currently in the process of a search for an I/O psychologist and this is the most critical need. The Counseling track is down at least one faculty member and there is currently a hiring freeze due to budgetary shortfalls. Since the accreditation application was completed there have been several losses among faculty. There have been two deaths, although only one directly affected the programs under review. There have also been two retirements, and one person took another position. A new internal department head and a new program director both get administrative leave that further decreased their teaching loads. With Dr. Hays-Thomas' recent move to more administrative duties, this will further tax resources of the I/O program. If their search is not successful this year, there might be a problem in this area. All faculty, including adjuncts, are doctoral level, licensed in Florida where appropriate, and actively engaged in research. The university prides itself on having senior level faculty in the classroom, and therefore, they do not use many adjuncts. The few they do use are eminently qualified.

Teaching loads are currently 3-3 for graduate faculty, although many have reductions for administrative roles, research endeavors, etc. There was one faculty member who is currently teaching 4-4 due to the recent deaths.

The faculty is keenly aware of the necessity of recruiting and hiring faculty from diverse cultures. However, they have had only minimal success with ethnic diversity. There is a fair balance of male and female, but retirements and administrative roles have also affected this ratio. The faculty is trying to “grow its own” and tries to hire back minority students who have completed doctoral training. However, they have not been too successful because these students are in demand all over the country.

The staff seems quite adequate for the programs’ mission. They do have a 30 hour/week support person who handles all of their information system needs. Faculty commented on how helpful this has been to all of them.

Students, Graduates and Evaluation Strategies

Students are evaluated every year for progress and there is an evaluation form that is given to each student. There is a procedure in place for advising students who are not making adequate progress, or who are not suitable for the career field. They are given specific feedback and followed closely by faculty. If improvements are not made, they are advised that their continuance in the program is in danger and if improvement still does not occur, they are discontinued. The students seemed to feel that the feedback was comprehensive, fair and constructive.

Graduate assistantships are given to most students, but they involve working for faculty, not teaching. The major need, according to the faculty in both programs, is to have more “tuition waivers” available to attract students who otherwise have to pay full out-of-state tuition.

Student surveys indicate that most students are employed in the field, and those seeking doctoral degrees are able to access very good programs nationwide. Surveys of employers indicate the programs are preparing students for future and service delivery. Students are evaluated routinely by site supervisors and they are invited to evaluate their internship sites. While this information might be available to administrators, it is not clear whether or not it is disseminated beyond the department and those immediately concerned. In a recent survey, former students were asked to evaluate their experiences. The results are included in the accreditation materials.

Recommendations

1. It is strongly recommended that the university continue to support the department’s efforts to replace the faculty members who have been lost to death, resignation and reassignment. In spite of the difficult budget situation faced by this university and the hard choices that must be made when allocating resources, restoration of these faculty

positions is essential to the continued viability of both the Industrial/Organizational program and the Counseling program.

2. Consideration should be given to increased support of out-of-state “tuition waivers” in order to attract qualified students.
3. Consideration should be given to publicizing the department’s remarkable efforts in interdisciplinary cooperation with other entities.

This document has been typed verbatim from the original documents that are located in the psychology department.