

## **The Accreditation Process from the Site Visitor Perspective**

*\*These notes were taken by staff of the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation. They are not intended as official documentation of the presentation; rather they represent a broad summary of the presentation and discussion.\**

**Kathy Borden** – Doctoral Site Visitor

*Overall the accreditations system is fair and useful – Concerns noted in this presentation are meant as a means to self-assess.*

The Site Visitor Role:

- The site visitor (SV) role has changed and evolved. At one time SV's made recommendations, now they are simply asked to address each Domain letter by letter. Is this a form of 'policing'? Is this a desirable method of review?
- Some SV's would call it impossible and unrealistic to only be the eyes and ears for the CoA. SV's are the 'heart and soul' of the review process.
- SV's must relate and be empathetic. They should provide feedback and consult *through the questions that they ask*. Good SV's *must* consult so that the program is able to convey the information necessary.
- SV's can be advocates - especially when dealing with administrators.
- Currently, SV's are basically 'truth checkers.' Is the expense of a site visit worth just being the eyes and ears of the CoA? If the role is restricted to investigation, do we need 3 professionals on site to determine if standards are being met?

How do we maximize the SV role?

- SV's need feedback from the CoA to determine what kind of information is useful. Providing such feedback would ultimately decrease the burden on the CoA and improve the overall process.
- The SV role will become more problematic if we don't better define the function of the site visitor.

**Bob Robinson** – Internship Site Visitor

*The site visit is the cornerstone of the accreditation process.*

Site visit methodologies:

- Ask the head of the psychology department and the DOT 'What are your goals?' – both programmatic and pertaining to quality enhancement.

- Use English versus ‘Domain-ese’ as you gather information.
- The site visit report is a living document. Following the site visit, translate what was seen as well as the information from the self-study into a cohesive report.

Positive reasons to be a site visitor:

- Learning/seeing how other programs function
- Reciprocal relationships

Cautions:

- CoA can be a ‘black hole’ (no feedback provided to SV’s)
- Participating on a site visit is a lot of work.

Intrinsic motivation has limits – As such the following recommendations were stated as a means to recruit and maintain talented site visitors:

- Provide honorariums
- Give written feedback
- Institute service awards

**Kenneth Adams – Postdoctoral Site Visitor**

*The role of the site visitor needs to grow.*

PostDoctoral programs are the ‘new kid on the block’. Problems arise such as:

- Terminology being inconsistent;
- No program parallels in other health professions at this level;
- No consensus on business models to dedicate resources

We need to use patience in configuring philosophy and methods to fit postdocs into the accreditation framework

The site visitor role:

- Old wisdom: Eyes and ears - New wisdom: Trust, but verify
- SV’s need to focus more attention on program functioning and less attention on verifying the information in the self-study report.

Generalists/Specialists:

- Whether it’s called general or specialty training, all postdoc students come with expectancy to learn a certain set of skills.
- Tension between master-apprentice model vs. multi-supervisor model.

Site visitors and the CoA need to change the way we look at Postdoctoral programs – they are not ‘big people internships’.

**Ed Sheridan - Discussant**

*As a site visitor you are a representative of the profession – a colleague assessing the match between the program and the G&P.*