

Opening Plenary Session

Presented at the 2nd Accreditation Assembly
May 30, 2008

Jeffrey Baker, Ph.D.
Kelly Ducheny, Psy.D.
Edward Gaughan, Ph.D.

The 2008 Commission on Accreditation Chair, Dr. Jeffrey Baker, opened the Accreditation Assembly by welcoming the group and noting the number of participants registered (200). He discussed the 'goals and objectives' of the 2008 Assembly and the designated theme of *evidence-based outcomes*. This theme grew out of feedback from the 2007 Assembly. In addition, the 2008 Assembly added site visitor training workshops and much more information on outcome assessment.

Dr. Baker provided an overview of the Commission on Accreditation (CoA) and Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation (OPCA), noting the following:

- Composition of CoA by constituent groups
- The structure of the 4 yearly meetings and the amount of time spent reviewing programs and working on policy items
- Structure of the OPCA, reminding participants of the 'consultation' aspect of the Office and acknowledging the workload of staff members
- The idea for the Assembly came from a recommendation out of the Snowbird Summit, with the goal being to increase communication between CoA and the public
- Expressing the need for more site visitors and noting upcoming training workshops
- The online CoA newsletter provides the latest news in APA accreditation
- Reminder of the many resources available to training directors and the public on the OPCA website

Dr. Kelly Ducheny, current CoA member and Chair of the Assembly subcommittee thanked all participants for attending and the invited speakers for agreeing to participate. She recognized the hard work of the OPCA staff and CoA Assembly subcommittee in crafting the schedule and attending to the details involved in Assembly preparations. A reminder was provided regarding signing in and out of those sessions designated as offering CE credits. Dr. Ducheny then provided an outline for the next two days and welcomed former CoA member (2001-2007) Dr. Edward Gaughan to the podium.

Dr. Gaughan welcomed the participants to the Assembly and congratulated the CoA Assembly subcommittee and OPCA staff for their hard work and organization. He provided an introduction to the purpose and structure of CoA and the "many hats" it wears as both an

evaluation organization and “guiding light.” Dr. Gaughan proceeded to discuss the many elements of guidance that the CoA and APA accreditation fosters:

- Implementing Regulations – guidance is what they were designed to do;
- Self-study instructions – “owners’ manual”
- QRG’s – summarize points of G&P
- Training workshops – site visitor and writing a self-study
- OPCA – consultation to programs
- Accreditation Assembly
- Program reviews – “guiding programs through successive approximations toward substantial compliance with the G&P”

Dr. Gaughan discussed the theme of the Assembly, specifically evidence-based outcomes in professional psychology programs, referred to as “EBOPP.” EBOPP represents the **congruence** of Domains B and F:

- Domain B → *Model-Goals-Objectives-Competencies (and Thresholds)*
 - MODEL must be defined so that GOALS (broad statements) fit.
 - OBJECTIVES are what will get you to the goals.
 - Many programs struggle with stating objectives in terms of measurable COMPETENCIES.
 - COMPETENCIES must be written in terms of measures, and must include expectations (THRESHOLDS) for achievement.
- Domain F → *Outcome Assessment-Evaluation Measures-Data*
 - Providing the DATA (aggregated) of achievement of competencies/expectations based on defined EVALUATION MEASURES.
 - When OUTCOMES are achieved, it indicates **congruence**.

Dr. Gaughan provided an example of the goals-objectives-competencies and corresponding outcome data for a sample program that states a *practitioner-scientist* model. He demonstrated the flow of goals, objectives, and competencies, and how outcome data could be presented that is clearly linked to those items and corresponds with the minimal thresholds. In conclusion, he noted that this **congruence** is the measure to bring all of the above elements into compliance with the G&P.