

Innovative Practices in
Graduate Education in Psychology
2005

**West Virginia University
Department of Psychology**

***American Psychological Association Board of Educational Affairs
Award for Innovation in Graduate Education - 2005***

A Junior Colleague Model for Professional Training of Graduate Students

Description

The Department of Psychology at West Virginia University has elaborated an innovative system for incorporating the professional training of graduate students into the many research, teaching, and service activities of the department. By fully integrating graduate students into all aspects of departmental functioning, the program produces well-trained, successful, and satisfied professionals. The cornerstone of the program is the junior colleague model. The goal of this training model is to promote students' maturation from a "junior" colleague to an independent scholar, teacher, and/or practitioner. A complete description of this model is explicated in the department Graduate Handbook (see department web address below).

Perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of the junior colleague model is the active participation of graduate students in all aspects of departmental governance and decision making. For example, elected graduate student representatives serve as *full voting and participating members* of **all** departmental committees, including the faculty evaluation committee. Students also are integrally involved in the selection of new graduate students during our annual Interview Weekend, through which students gain experience with professional interviewing and evaluation.

A critical component of the training program is explicit instruction in professional knowledge and skills. All 1st-year students participate in a 1-week orientation and a weekly professional development seminar. In addition to basic information about departmental procedures, students are given strategies for *how* to succeed in graduate school. Faculty discuss with students how to communicate effectively, meet milestones, conform to ethical principles, set goals, and manage priorities, as well as professional issues such as how professionals balance their careers and personal lives and the multiple pathways whereby faculty attain academic careers. An advanced professional development seminar addresses the decisions and activities required to obtain and succeed in an academic position upon graduation. Throughout their graduate training, in addition to regular lab meetings, additional structured activities, such as departmental colloquia (which include presentations on methodological and professional issues as well as research), case conferences, research discussion groups, and day-long symposia by students and alumni expose students to the myriad roles of a professional psychologist.

Students are trained to become effective teachers through a pioneering method of delivering undergraduate instruction that provides graduate student instructors with highly structured, hands-on teaching experience supported by intense supervision. A faculty supervisor designs the course and develops multimedia lectures. Lectures are then delivered to multiple sections of the same course by graduate students. This inventive method of instruction allows graduate students, most of whom are teaching for the first time, to focus on *how* to teach rather than on *what* to teach. Faculty supervisors visit classes regularly, meet with instructors weekly, and provide instructors with individualized feedback. Students who are teaching for the first time also enroll in a required 1-credit teaching seminar. Students learn teaching strategies, videotape and evaluate their own and other students' teaching, create a teaching portfolio, and write a teaching philosophy. The multiple channels whereby instructors receive feedback promote the

rapid development of high-quality teaching skills within a single semester. Advanced graduate students may design and deliver a course in their specialty area. Graduate students and faculty also collaborate in developing and modifying courses and assessing the effectiveness of changes made to courses, often resulting in student-faculty co-authored published articles and conference presentations. Students' participation in such projects encourage graduate students to learn the professional skill of integrating research and teaching, a skill that is a necessary component of an academic position. Students often complete the program with direct teaching experience in as many as three or four courses, as well as with highly developed teaching skills and knowledge.

Research training is characterized by collaboration. Because students are junior colleagues, they are not "apprenticed" to individual faculty. Rather, students are encouraged to conduct research not only with their major advisor, but also with faculty and graduate students both within and across program areas. Students begin their graduate training as novices; therefore, faculty initially provide a high degree of structure and guidance tailored to the students' entry-level skills. Faculty members then encourage the development of students' independence, gradually decreasing the amount of structured support.

Clinical training similarly follows a developmental junior colleague model. Starting in the first year, clinical students participate in clinical teams, through which a faculty member and graduate students at different levels of training collaborate to provide clinical services to community members. Advanced students also enroll in a course on clinical supervision, in which they learn about and practice supervisory skills.

Faculty members also strive to develop students' professional skills while conveying knowledge of a content area via graduate course work. For example, many of our graduate courses require that students write a grant proposal (including budget forms). In some cases, students also serve as peer reviewers of each other's grant proposals. In another inventive course assignment, students assume the role of principal investigators and work together in teams to develop multi-site grant proposals. Another course facilitates the development of students' research skills by showing them how to use large-scale existing data bases. Another novel approach requires students to present their course papers in a formal symposium format to which the entire department is invited.

Other graduate courses help prepare students for university teaching. A graduate course on adulthood and aging includes an exercise through which each student develops a PowerPoint lecture and exam items on one topic for a course in adulthood and aging. By pooling and sharing the efforts of the entire class, each student receives materials that can be used in the future to develop a complete undergraduate course in this topic area. Other courses require students to prepare and share an annotated syllabus; these products are a useful resource to students when they prepare their own courses.

Regular planned social activities as well as frequent and casual contact among faculty and graduate students reinforce the collegial relationships that are the foundation of the junior colleague model. The department sponsors an annual fall picnic, holiday party, and winter chili party. Starting 2 years ago, the chili party has been preceded by a research symposium by alumni from one of the graduate training programs. The alumni then attend the chili party in the evening. Contact between current students and alumni contributes to students professional development by providing them with models of successful performance and with contacts for further professional activities.

Outcomes

Each year, a Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey is completed by all current graduate students. An Alumni Survey is completed by former students who graduated 1 and 5 years previously. These surveys indicate overall high satisfaction with our training program. The junior colleague model is often mentioned as a source of satisfaction. The junior colleague model also is often mentioned by applicants and students recently admitted to our graduate programs as a unique and attractive feature of our program.

Other measures also indicate that our training programs are successful in facilitating students' professional development. *All* students in the clinical programs have obtained APA accredited internship placements, and *all* students in *all* programs have obtained appropriate positions following graduation in recent years. On average, 38% of all students in the programs publish each year; 61% present research at a conference each year. Nearly all have published and presented by time they graduate. Students also complete the program in a timely manner: the average time to degree completion is 4.85 years for students in the Behavior Analysis and Life-Span Developmental programs (no internship required) and 5.65 years for students in the clinical programs (including the required 1-year internship); note that national figures indicate an average time to completion for clinical students of 6.62 years. Evidence of the effectiveness of our training model also is illustrated by a variety of awards and honors bestowed on members and units of the department.

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University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Doctoral Training in Human Services Psychology

American Psychological Association Board of Educational Affairs
Honorable Mention Award for Innovation in Graduate Education – 2005

Innovation in Program Conceptualization

Description

Human Services Psychology (HSP) is defined as the sector of professional psychology concerned with the promotion of human well-being through the acquisition and application of psychological knowledge and principles concerned with the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of psychological and physical disorders. Thus, the HSP program is designed to prepare students to contribute to the growth of knowledge in this area, as well as to apply this knowledge to a broad range of human problems. The program is based upon a scientist-practitioner model of training, which aims to provide students with skills as both researchers and practitioners. We believe it is the integrative, boundary-crossing training students receive as scientists and as practitioners, which most fundamentally distinguishes them from other mental health professionals and human services providers.

The Human Services Psychology Program uses a **biopsychosocial** approach as the integrative perspective for its training of human service providers and researchers. There is a commitment in course design and practicum experience to understand not only the unique contributions of biological, psychological, and social aspects of human functioning but also the substantial interactions of these three components in almost every problem area addressed by human services psychology. We believe that HSP students should espouse this broader, interactive perspective in designating program interests and developing their graduate program of studies. Thus, the HSP program encourages a focus on the boundaries of biopsychosocial interactions as well as a solid understanding of each individual aspect in order to promote a more holistic and integrated approach to psychology research, service and practice. We believe that this approach, which is more fully elaborated elsewhere (Levy, 1984), fosters a more comprehensive and integrative perspective on both research and professional practice. It also represents a more cost-effective and flexible approach to professional training than most traditional single-specialty professional training programs since it allows us to provide training for a number of specialties within the framework of a single program.

Innovation in Program Structure

The Human Services Psychology Program has an integrative conceptual structure encompassing three component specialty programs in behavioral medicine or health psychology, clinical psychology (APA accredited), and community-social psychology. Within the HSP Program's conceptual framework, these programs are regarded as differing primarily in their particular focus within the human services matrix and in how they conceive of and approach the generic problems of diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of psychological and physical disorders. Thus, *clinical psychology* focuses on problems involving behavioral and psychological functioning of adults, children, and families, and includes assessment and treatment of those problems. *Behavioral medicine* focuses on problems involving relations between behavioral and biological levels of human functioning; problems more typically seen in

medical settings, and problems related to physical health. *Community-Social psychology* focuses on the community settings, social resources, and human services policies that influence the effective functioning of both individuals and communities. We believe that the location of these three programs within the Human Services Psychology Program offers students in each program a broader and richer educational experience (and the potential for a more integrative perspective) than they would otherwise receive.

In their development of an area of specialization, students are encouraged to combine areas of focus to reflect the integrative nature of the program. Most students elect to focus their training in subspecialty areas that span several programs, such as Clinical/Behavioral Medicine, Clinical/Community, or Community Social/Behavioral Medicine.

Innovation in Curriculum

All HSP students, regardless of area of subspecialization, take a common set of fundamental courses. Core areas of psychology are taught in an integrative fashion that reflects the conceptualization of the interrelations among the core areas of psychology—social psychology, personality and individual differences, the biological bases of behavior, learning and cognition, and developmental psychology—rather than as individual courses. Students also are required to take courses from areas of the program outside of their concentration in order to further an appreciation for the different components of HSP.

Innovation in Practicum Training

A number of innovative externship placements reflect the HSP philosophy. For example, in addition to traditional clinical training opportunities, a number of externship placements offer clinical/behavioral medicine experiences (e.g., in pediatric oncology at the University of Maryland Medical Center, pediatric rehabilitation at Mount Washington Pediatric Hospital, stroke rehabilitation at Johns Hopkins Hospital, consultation-liaison at Johns Hopkins Hospital and Kennedy Krieger Institute), community/clinical experiences (e.g., the Baltimore school mental health consultation program and the mutisystemic family therapy intervention program, both of which offer clinical services in community settings; and the Center for School Mental Health Analysis and Action, University of Maryland School of Medicine, which allows students to learn program and policy development skills related to school mental health). Community/behavioral medicine experiences include the newly developed HIV/AIDS Community Consortium, in which students work with a variety of community agencies to help them develop and implement services for HIV/AIDS patients, and a home-based obesity intervention program coordinated through the University of Maryland Medical System, Department of Pediatrics.

Innovation in Evaluation

The entire HSP faculty participates in the evaluation of HSP students. Qualifying exams consist of a set of core questions answered by all HSP students, regardless of subprogram (e.g., History and Systems, Ethics, Research Methods, and an integrative Biopsychosocial question) as well as specialty questions in the areas of clinical psychology, behavioral medicine, and community/social psychology.

Outcomes

Biopsychosocial Research. Graduate student research reflects the integrative nature of the program, with the majority of students conducting research that spans subprogram areas.

Examples of recent thesis topics include:

- Effects of emotional trait and emotion state on cold pressor pain
- Ketogenic and antiketogenic food preferences in children with seizures and healthy controls
- Memory in children undergoing conscious sedation for invasive medical procedures.
- Relations between substance use and abusive behavior in unmarried couples
- Parenting stress and overprotection in parents of children with asthma
- Correlates of antisocial personality characteristics with relationship dynamics of treatment outcomes of domestically violent men
- Emotionally disturbed high school students who drop out: Demographic, behavioral, and cognitive predictors
- Motivational enhancement therapy for cigarette smoking in methadone-maintained women
- Religious beliefs and political ideologies as predictors of psychotherapeutic orientations of clinical and counseling psychologists
- Gender role conflict and psychological well-being: An exploration in men enrolled to attend an "Initiatory" weekend
- Multiple Sclerosis: the contribution of coping style, perceived uncertainty, and social support to psychosocial adjustment
- Application of the transtheoretical model of behavior change to cessation of alcohol use in patients with schizophrenia

Internship and Postdoctoral placements. Because of their unique training, our graduate students have been very successful in obtaining competitive clinical psychology internships at medical centers and VA hospitals around the country. Graduates of the HSP program also have an impressive record of gaining postdoctoral training positions in nationally recognized clinical and research settings. Recent graduates are employed as academic medicine faculty, research scientists, university faculty, staff psychologists, NIH administrators, and clinical practice. The majority are actively involved in teaching and research.

References

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**University of Wisconsin—Madison
Department of Counseling Psychology**

*American Psychological Association Board of Educational Affairs
Honorable Mention Award for Innovation in Graduate Education – 2005*

Effective Strategies for Multicultural Teaching, Service, and Research

Description

Situated in the Midwest, the University of Wisconsin-Madison is consistently identified as a leading institution of higher education, having recently been ranked as the top public research institution in the nation. The Department of Counseling Psychology is one of eight departments housed in the School of Education and offers doctoral degrees in counseling psychology (Ph.D.) and master's degrees (M.S.) in counseling, with specializations in school or community counseling. The doctoral program was accredited by APA in 1985.

Under the leadership and direction of Chancellor Donna Shalala in 1990, the University of Wisconsin implemented a system-wide strategy known as the *Madison Plan* to increase the presence and education of underrepresented student groups. A core component of the plan was the Strategic Hiring Program, funded through the Office of the Provost, in which faculty were hired as *Targets of Opportunity*. Specifically, highly qualified faculty who were from underrepresented groups or were nationally-known and advanced scholars were recruited to the university. This plan evolved into *Plan 2008*, which is a seven point plan that focuses increasing student of color enrollment, retention, and graduation, faculty of color recruitment and retention, and fostering of institutional environments and course development that enhance learning and a respect for racial and ethnic diversity.

It was within the context of the *Madison Plan* that department chair Dr. Patricia Wolleat took intentional and focused action to meet the call and mission of the plan. With an emphasis on social justice and the goal of training psychologists to deliver effective services and conduct research in the context of minority and underserved populations, Dr. Wolleat followed a moral and ethical imperative to recruit and retain faculty of color and nationally known faculty who were committed to these ideals. It became apparent to the faculty that culture and context are critical components to the provision effective mental health services in the United States. Thus the department has worked to fully integrate a contextual and multicultural approach to our mission with regard to teaching, service, and research.

In the Spring of 1992, the faculty reviewed the status of our efforts in terms of diversity and realized that although over the years a few students were racial or ethnic minorities, none of the current admits were minorities. Rather than focusing on recruiting minority graduate students or faculty of color, we deliberately chose to design a program that would train all students to be culturally competent by (a) infusing cultural issues in all classes and activities, (b) creating an affirming climate that was accepting but allowed for honest dialogue on issues of diversity, and (c) ensuring that all students had the support and resources needed to succeed. Among the activities instituted by the department include sponsoring a local social justice conference for mental health professionals, conducting annual faculty retreats on issues related to diversity, sponsoring outreach programs and teaching undergraduate classes on multicultural issues, and assessing systematically

our efforts (e.g., with course evaluation items related to the infusion of multicultural issues in classes). We hoped that such a department would attract students and faculty, whether people of underrepresented groups or not, who were committed to being culturally competent and who desired to conduct their professional lives in ways that would promote equity in our society.

Outcomes

Almost 15 years later, the department has been recognized for its excellence in recruitment, retention, and training of racial and ethnic minority students and was awarded the prestigious Suinn Minority Achievement Award in August 2005. In particular, we currently have a 97 percent retention rate of racial and ethnic minority students, with 44 percent of the department's students being racial and ethnic minorities. Currently, 50 percent of the faculty are people of color. With a diverse student community, an affirmative climate, an infusion of cultural issues in all aspects of our training, and a range of experiences, perspectives, and worldviews, we have enhanced the learning and opportunities for expanded areas of critical inquiry and investigation for all students. Moreover, the research and scholarship produced by members of the department have furthered knowledge in many areas, including multicultural counseling, access to higher education, coping in multicultural contexts, the development and acquisition of ethnic and racial identity, career development and vocational opportunities for diverse groups, and healing practices across cultures. We have accomplished these goals while at the same time increasing the quality of our programs. Indeed, when we began this project our department was unranked by *US News and World Report*; we have achieved the distinction of now being ranked in the top three counseling programs in the United States. As well, the department was awarded a Chancellor's Award for Departmental Excellence in Teaching in 2002.

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