

July 28, 2015

To the Accreditation Community and Publics:

The Commission on Accreditation (CoA) monitors events that may be relevant to our role as accreditors in health service psychology, in order to evaluate our functioning in the context of the accreditation landscape and communicate with the public about our functioning. The CoA is aware of several recent events in psychology and the higher education community more broadly that are of considerable concern to CoA and our publics. We are writing to inform and assure our publics of the CoA's strong and longstanding commitment to quality doctoral education and training in health service psychology, as evidenced by our ongoing values, policies and procedures, and self-evaluation efforts. We would also like to share some information about the CoA's enhanced attention to our policies and procedures in light of these recent events.

Two recent events are of particular concern. First, the *Independent Review Relating to APA Ethics Guidelines, National Security Interrogations and Torture* commissioned by the American Psychological Association (i.e., the Hoffman report) highlights serious questions about transparency and decision-making in the context of APA's review of the role of psychologists in security investigations and tortures, which we understand are now being addressed by APA. Second, the ongoing struggles within nursing accreditation regarding the relationship between one of its accrediting bodies (the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing) and its professional association (the National League for Nursing) raise concerns for all accreditors and the professional organizations with whom the accrediting bodies are affiliated.

The CoA holds several values that guide our practices. As outlined in our *Implementing Regulations: Section A* (<http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/about/policies/governing-policies.pdf>), these include autonomy in decision-making for both policy and program accreditation matters; transparency in policy development and implementation, with input from the field; confidentiality in program review; adherence to policies and practices outlined by CoA and the bodies that recognize our actions (i.e., Council for Higher Education Accreditation, U.S. Department of Education), including careful attention to conflicts of interest; and self-evaluation in order to enhance the quality and credibility of the accreditation review process.

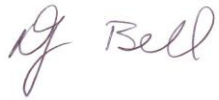
In addition to periodic review by our own regulatory bodies, CoA engages in ongoing self-evaluation of our policies and procedures. In this spirit and in light of recent events, at its summer meeting on July 16-19, 2015, the CoA voted unanimously to form a work group to review our policies and procedures with respect to the values noted above. The group will be comprised of CoA members who represent diverse aspects of psychology education and training, as well as one of our public members. The work group's charge is to examine CoA processes and structures that serve to maintain our organizational autonomy, transparency, and avoidance of conflicts of interest, and to prepare a summary report of the findings and any resulting recommendations. The CoA will make the report available to the public and provide an opportunity for public comment.

We want to assure our publics that the attention of the CoA is focused on fulfilling its commitments to its publics. As part of the ongoing implementation of our policies and

procedures, the CoA convened for our summer meeting on July 16-19, 2015 during which we reviewed over 200 accredited and applicant doctoral, internship, and post-doctoral programs. We also continued our preparation for the *Standards of Accreditation* by reviewing public comment regarding proposed *Implementing Regulations* (IRs), developing and revising additional IRs, and preparing training and public education materials.

In closing, please be assured that the CoA is fully focused on and committed to continuing to provide a strong and credible accreditation process. As always, we welcome the active and ongoing involvement of the public in this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "DJ Bell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Debora J. Bell, Ph.D., Chair  
On behalf of the Commission on Accreditation