

**PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION UNIT QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE – YEAR TWELVE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2015**

Members Present:

Laura Aboyan, Office of Assessment
Katie Barber, Richland School District 2
Mary Anne Byrnes, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Dennis Dotterer, SC Department of Education
Wendee Evering, Richland School District 2
Fred Greer, EDST representative and Chair
Allison Jacques, Assistant Dean for External Partnerships and Accreditation
Zach Kelehear, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Program Representatives:

Jane Roberts, Program Director, School Psychology

I. Call Meeting to order

Dr. Greer called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

II. Introductions, Overview of Meeting, and Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the November 19, 2014 were unanimously approved.

III. Review of the PhD School Psychology

Dr. Roberts gave an overview of the program. She has been with the program for six years, and during that time, there has been a lot of transition. Overall, there are three faculty who are solely appointed to the school psychology program, and two who have joint appointments in school psychology and another area of psychology. There is one clinical faculty member, who is primarily responsible for applied training. Four of the five tenure-track faculty have only been at USC since 2007. The program seeks to prepare students for academic positions because of USC's status as a research institution and because there is a shortage of school psychology faculty nationwide. Part of that preparation includes an applied psychology focus. The program has tried to develop a niche with an applied academic focus and emphasis on research.

Upon graduation, 60% of graduates take an academic placement, 20% work in a school settings, and the other 20% work in various other fields of practice.

The program is participating in an APA accreditation visit in spring 2015. Once the visit is finished, the program hopes to make a few changes, including the consolidation of the five assessment classes into one. This would allow for some flexibility, and would also allow the program to be more effective in its preparation of students.

The shortage of faculty is a weakness acknowledged by the program. APA expects a cohort of 6-8 students each year, but with only five faculty, two of whom have joint appointments, it is difficult to do. The program is hopeful that they will be able to address the faculty shortage within the next few years. The next three hires for the College of Arts and Sciences are intended to be for the psychology department. Two of those hires are specific to school psychology. Despite the low number of faculty, an external review in 2014 recognized the strength of the program.

Dr. Kelehear asked if the program faces pressure from APA and NASP to produce field-based practitioners rather than academic researchers. Dr. Roberts said NASP requires the program to

demonstrate outcomes that are related to practice. The program addresses this by framing their work having an academic focus that is related to field-based practice. APA has both research and applied branches, and so does not favor one area over the other. Instead, APA looks at licensure rates on the national exam. In order to be licensed, graduates must complete 2000 post-doctoral clinical hours and pass the national exam. Approximately 40% of graduates pursue licensure, and of those, 100% have passed. Licensure is not required to work in a school setting, but is required to be listed on the national health registry.

Dr. Kelehear asked how the program finds support for graduate study. Dr. Roberts said the standard support for their students is \$16,250 for the 9-month academic year and tuition remission. Most of the funding comes from the College of Arts and Sciences. The undergraduate psychology program enrollment is about 1400 students, which provides opportunities for additional areas of funding. Doctoral students are able to use teaching assistantships to teach the undergraduates. The program also has an evening school, which funds 35-40% of the slots. Another 35-40% is funded by the College of Arts and Sciences, and the remaining percentage comes from grants and externships. Students who are specializing in autism are working with Richland School District Two as an externship. Others are working in an alternative education setting. Dr. Roberts currently has two NIH grants, and is funding three students from those grants.

Dr. Kelehear asked about program capacity and expectation. Dr. Roberts said that a 2:2 teaching load is typical. Funding is a key factor in the success of students. The program is ranked consistently in the top five nationally, based on faculty productivity and graduate placement. The time to graduation is roughly five years. Students typically complete four years of classes and one year of a required internship. Dissertations are usually defended prior to the internship year. The program incorporates a practicum component from the beginning of the program. There are two years of the program that require three practicum credits per semester, either within the University or the larger community. Most students opt for additional training through the child and family psychology track. Dr. Barber asked if students were required to have a variety of practicum experiences. Dr. Roberts said students need to be in the schools for at least one full year, but other than that, there are not specific requirements. Students are given the opportunity to pursue a specialty in the program, which usually informs their choice of practica. Some Some spend both years in the schools. Dr. Kelehear asked how the program affirms the quality of field placements. Dr. Roberts said there is oversight by the school supervisor, but the instructor of the practicum class also provides individual supervision. Every student gets clinical training by an on-site supervisor, by the course instructor as a group, and individually. Dr. Hills meets with all of the site supervisors and provides support. Evaluations are completed by on-site supervisors at various points during the year. In cases where more help is needed, the USC supervisor and site supervisors meet and review each student individually. Within each specialization, there is a set of competencies that must be achieved. These competencies are set by USC and the site supervisors. Evaluations by the site supervisors are reviewed by the program. This practice helps standardize what each competency looks like. One of the program's biggest strengths is assessment. New child and family practicum takes place at a clinic that has been opened up to the school psychology students for additional training.

Dr. Barber asked about enrollment numbers, specifically whether or not the program would like to recruit and accept more students. Dr. Roberts said part of the application process is a formal interview. Decisions are made by all five faculty members. The program hosts a dinner with current students, all faculty, and all invited applicants. They also have individual and group meetings. The program uses a mentorship model as part of the application process. Students apply to work with a specific faculty member based on their area of interest. Each faculty member picks the applicants they'd like to work with. As a result, the program attracts high quality candidates, so the program is happy with their numbers. The program also has a low attrition rate, between 10 and 12%.

Every fall, each student meets with their mentor to set annual goals for professional development. Each year looks different, and includes both program and professional goals. Mentors and students work together to develop strategies for how to achieve these goals. In April, goals are reviewed and revised. Faculty formally rate students' progress on their goals across the program at the beginning and end of each academic year.

Dr. Roberts' lab specializes in early and emerging developmental disorders, specifically autism. She studies the early indicators and how they vary among high-risk groups. Dr. Roberts is the only faculty member in the program who actually was a practicing school psychologist. Her lab is not traditional, but it still relates to school psychology because autistic students go through the school system.

Mr. Dotterer asked why there were so few students in the program who have come through USC's undergraduate program. Dr. Byrnes said there is no preference given to USC undergraduates in admission to graduate level programs. The program is looking for the cohort that will be the best of the best and fits with the research approach of the program. Dr. Barber asked how many USC undergraduates typically apply to the program. Dr. Roberts said probably less than 10% apply for the doctoral program. Undergraduate psychology programs are a broad starting point. Most majors want to practice rather than research.

The program has a goal of being the top program in the country. In order to achieve this goal, they need enough faculty to provide quality training and mentoring to students. Ideally they would have 8-10 faculty. They are also pursuing and expanding on collaborations with other programs across the University, specifically in special education. The program seeks to build their autism and school mental health capacity, which will increase student training quality, which increases the profile of the program. There are 33 tenure-track faculty across all of the psychology programs, and school psychology is traditionally the smallest of that group.

IV. Committee Consensus on Program

The committee discussed the assessment materials for the School Psychology program and came to the consensus that the program is performing at the **"Exceeds Expectations"** level.

The committee notes with concern the need for additional faculty in school psychology and child and family psychology. The committee will share this information with the College of Arts and Sciences, and encourage the program to continue to participate in the College's annual strategic hiring plan.

Strengths of the program were noted and include:

- Last APA accreditation resulted in full term renewal
- Funding and support from several areas for doctoral students
- Collaboration with other departments
- Collaboration and cohesiveness as a program
- 100% pass rate on national exam
- Caliber of faculty and productivity
- Very intentional and extensive application process
- Mentoring model and use of annual student reviews
- Standardized rubrics for site supervisors
- Meeting with field placement sites
- Feedback from alumni about preparation
- Quality of current APA report
- Cohesive vision of program

- Efficient use of existing resources
- Low attrition rate

Areas for Improvement were noted and include:

- None

The Committee Further Encourages:

- Articulation of how the program affirms the validity of rubrics for site supervisors.

V. Schedule for Future Meetings

Programs to Review 2014-15

- Educational Administration (MEd/EdS/PhD)– February 2015
- Athletic Training (BS/MS) and Physical Education (BS/MAT/PhD) – March 2015
- Museum of Education & Educational Foundations of Inquiry (PhD) – April 2015
- Special Education (MAT/MEd/PhD) – May 2015

VI. Other Business

Dr. Greer adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.