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January 19, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Marika Ginsburg-Block, Program Coordinator
School Psychology

FROM: Nancy Brickhouse NB
Deputy Provost

SUBJECT: Permanent Status Program Review (PSPR)

Attached is the PSPR internal review for the Ed.S. in School Psychology. As part of the PSPR process (see <http://www.udel.edu/facsen/course/index.html#Final>, Timeline for PSPR), we request that the department write a brief response to this review and forward the documents to the appropriate college committee and/or the Dean's Office no later than February 29, 2012. The Dean's Office will then forward all the documents to the Faculty Senate (c/o Karren Helsel-Spry) so it can be considered for approval by the University Faculty Senate.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

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Attachments

cc: Jeff Jordan, Faculty Senate President
Dean's Office, College of Education and Human Development
Karren Helsel-Spry, Faculty Senate Office

January 18, 2012

To: Nancy Brickhouse, Deputy Provost

From: Aaron Kupchik, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice
Ruth Fleury-Steiner, Department of Human Development & Family Studies

Re: Permanent Status Program Review of the Ed.S. in School Psychology

We have reviewed the Permanent Status Program Review self-study document submitted by Professor Ginsburg-Block on behalf of the School Psychology program within the School of Education (SOE), and strongly endorse granting permanent status for this Ed.S. degree program. Below are our comments concerning the program's objectives, strengths, and weaknesses; impact and demand; and evaluation.

Objectives, Strengths and Weaknesses

The original program proposal listed several goals, all of which seem to have been met. The program educates and trains students to be school psychologists. This education focuses on developing a strong knowledge base and grasp of empirical research to foster a data-based problem solving approach, which can be used to help solve social, emotional, and academic problems faced by children, families and schools. To meet these goals the curriculum develops competencies across multiple skill areas by including courses on research methods, psychological theory and practice, special issues (such as intelligence testing) that are specific to schools, as well as practica and a year-long internship. The curriculum is broad and appears to be rigorous, and the self-study provides ample evidence, through survey responses of both internship directors and former students, that students are developing the necessary skills that prepare them for success as school psychologists.

This success of the program benefits its students by providing necessary graduate training in a way that enhances their careers and allows them to assist children, and boasts a very high completion rate. It benefits the local region by providing a supply of high-quality school psychologists (most of whom remain in Delaware), and it benefits the University, broadly, by raising the profile of the School of Education both regionally and nationally, and by enhancing links between the University and local schools. It is thus compatible with the University's Academic Priorities. The program recently underwent an extensive review by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and received full program approval, thus it is clearly consistent with needs and expectations within the professional field as well. Overall, the Ed.S. program appears to be a rigorous program that fills a professional need while training students in a way that prepares them to be collaborative, empirically-driven and theoretically informed.

Impact and Demand

We see no reason for concern that the Ed.S. program might negatively impact any other programs at U.D. With strong endorsements from both the Interim Director of the SOE and from

the Dean of the College of Education and Human Development, it is clearly well-received and supported within its School and College.

Demand for the program is strong as well. The program consistently receives over 60 applications for only 8 spots, and a large proportion of admitted students are racial/ethnic minorities and women.

The documents provided to us also suggest that students receive appropriate guidance from the admission process to completion of their degrees. Admissions criteria are clear in that they provide guidance to applicants about the application process and required information, spell out the minimum requirements for admission, and also let students know about norms for admission. There are multiple opportunities for guidance and mentoring, including feedback based on practica and internship experiences, assistance in developing a professional portfolio, and individualized advising.

Evaluation of Student Outcomes

The proposal clearly lays out ten expected learning outcomes for program graduates, including knowledge and skills in assessing children and in providing appropriate, theoretically and empirically-based services in the context of family and school systems. Additionally, graduates are expected to understand the role of individual and cultural diversity in assessment and service provision.

The program requirements and expected learning outcomes are consistent with the expectations of professional organizations; the program is accredited by both NASP and NCATE, and has been since its inception. The proposal provides seven different sources of outcome data demonstrating that the students enrolled in the program successfully meet the expected learning outcomes. For instance, data on students' Praxis II – National Exam in School Psychology scores are provided for 2008 through 2010; all students passed the exam on their first try. Ratings from site supervisors for all three practica experiences are also provided for the three most recent cohorts. As part of their practica, students were rated on a three point scale ranging from “Unsatisfactory” to “Competent” on multiple dimensions. Average ratings across all domains for all students were consistently between “Satisfactory” and “Competent.”

To determine whether the program is meeting the needs of graduates, surveys of graduates were conducted for the class of 2008 and the class of 2010. Overall, graduates rated the preparation they received from the program highly. However, a few ratings and comments did reveal that a handful of graduates did not feel that they were adequately prepared to meet the needs of diverse students. The comments suggested that these graduates still had some concerns about their ability to work with people with low incidence disabilities, particularly students with autism. In response, the program has already made changes. A new course on assessment (EDUC 842: Assessment of Special Populations) has already been added, and a second required course on family issues and interventions (EDUC 651: School-Based Family Issues and Interventions) has been revised, and the title changed to Diversity and Family-School Collaboration. This rapid response to feedback is impressive. Given the emphasis on diversity in the learning goals of the program, ensuring that diversity in all its forms is integrated throughout all coursework would further strengthen the program.

All of the graduates of the program have been offered employment within a few months of completing the program. All members of the class of 2010 were employed by July following graduation; the class of 2011 was fully employed by September. Moreover, the program continues to meet the needs of the State of Delaware for School Psychologists in that all but one member of the class of 2010 were hired within the state.

In sum, based on the information provided in the self-study document, we strongly endorse granting permanent program status to the Ed.S. degree in School Psychology.