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Clinical Training Update

The Clinical Psychology Training Program at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln

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The Clinical Psychology Training Program (CPTP) at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) has been continuously accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) since 1948, the first year any programs were accredited. The CPTP’s history and approach to training through the years have been described in numerous articles (DiLillo & McChargue, 2007; Hargrove, 1991; Hargrove & Howe, 1981; Hargrove & Spaulding, 1988; Hope, Hansen, & Cole, 1994; Howe, 1974; Howe & Neimeyer, 1979; Jones & Levine, 1963; Rivers & Cole, 1976). Our program was historically described as a “Community-Clinical” psychology training program, and this focus on understanding and enhancing well-being at the individual, family, and community levels continues to be valued in our program

today across a variety of clinical and research activities.

The Program

Training Model

The CPTP has followed the scientist-practitioner, Boulder-model of clinical training since its inception. Our Director of Clinical Training in 1949, Marshall Jones, was a participant in the Boulder Conference on Graduate Education in Clinical Psychology. Both clinical and research training are continuous, integrated processes in the CPTP, continuously supervised and monitored by the clinical faculty.

The CPTP subscribes to the APA evidence-based practice model (APA, 2006) across all of our clinical training. Integration of EBP into our scientist-practitioner curriculum was highlighted in a spe-

cial issue of *Journal of Clinical Psychology* that focused on EBP training (DiLillo & McChargue, 2007). Students in the CPTP are trained to be both consumers and producers of research, applying best research evidence in clinical practice and generating new knowledge to improve treatment. Within this EBP framework our emphasis is on behavioral and cognitive behavioral therapies. The department made an active decision, beginning in 1990, to hire scientist-practitioner faculty members with a behavioral or cognitive-behavioral orientation. The core clinical faculty provide clinical and research training in behavioral and cognitive-behavioral therapies, third-generation cognitive-behavioral approaches (e.g., mindfulness and acceptance-based), motivational enhancement approaches, and, to a lesser degree, family systems. The CPTP was honored to receive the 2013 ABCT Outstanding Training Program Award. The award is given for “significant contribution to training behavior therapists and/or promoting behavior therapy.”

The CPTP follows a “junior colleague” approach to training, which promotes professionalism and collegiality among faculty and students. Students participate in the ongoing development of the program and are viewed as colleagues in a common endeavor with the faculty. Students elect peers to serve as voting members in department

and clinical faculty meetings, a student serves as Assistant Director of our training clinic, and we have a number of subcommittees that involve students (e.g., Interview/Recruitment Weekend). Our junior colleague approach is also evident in the successful collaborations between faculty and students in coauthoring publications and presentations, submitting grants, and engaging in professional development opportunities.

Clinical Faculty and Students

The CPTP currently has seven tenured/tenure track clinical faculty members plus a half-time director of our in-house clinic for training, research, and service, the Psychological Consultation Center (PCC). The clinical faculty members and their primary research interests are as follows: David DiLillo (interpersonal violence victimization and perpetration); Mary Fran Flood (early childhood, child maltreatment); David Hansen (child maltreatment, social skills); Debra Hope (anxiety, gender, and sexual orientation); Dennis McChargue (comorbid addiction and mental illness, brief motivational enhancement treatments); Timothy Nelson (pediatric health); Mario Scalora (targeted violence, threat assessment); and Will Spaulding (schizophrenia spectrum disorders: psychopathology, treatment, and social policy). All clinical faculty are committed to providing training on the integration of science and practice. For example, all are licensed psychologists, provide clinical supervision, and oversee service delivery efforts that provide training opportunities for students and generate data for research programs. The faculty also model and involve students in service contributions to the profession, including ABCT.

The CPTP recruits outstanding doctoral students from all over the country and abroad. Our program admits and graduates an average of approximately 8 to 9 students per year. Among current students, 63.8% are women, 14.9% identify themselves as ethnic minority students, and 6.4% are international students. All clinical students receive assistantships with full tuition waivers, which aids in recruiting top students and helping them progress in a timely manner. The average time to graduation is approximately 5.5 years, with 90% of students finishing within 6 years.

Our alumni go on to successful careers as licensed psychologists, with varied professional contributions across research, clinical practice, supervision, teaching, and admin-

istration. Alumni work in academic departments of psychology and psychiatry, hospitals, mental health agencies, forensic settings, public sector facilities, research institutes, and private practice settings.

Training Experiences

As described in DiLillo and McChargue (2007), training in EBP is integrated throughout the program in a number of ways, including: (a) EBP-related core coursework, including Proseminar in Clinical Psychology, Evidence-based Clinical Interviewing, Psychotherapy, and Fundamentals of Behavior Therapy; (b) child clinical courses with EBP emphasis, including Child Therapy and Child Psychopathology and Assessment; (c) EBP in practicum training, including two Clinical Intervention courses in our clinic, specialty clinics for training and research, and offsite practica; and (d) a Clinical Comprehensive Exam that includes an oral exam and the student preparing a document describing EBP for a specific case and presenting video segments from therapy sessions for that case.

An important part of the CPTP is our in-house clinic, the Psychological Consultation Center (PCC; <http://psychology.unl.edu/pcc/>). The PCC is open year round and functions as a community-based clinic, providing a broad range of clients and presenting problems. Students have many opportunities to develop skills in evidence-based practice, including assessment, therapy, consultation, supervision, and clinical research. The PCC is staffed by a faculty director, an advanced graduate student who serves as assistant director, and a full-time administrative assistant. Supervision is primarily provided by core clinical faculty, with adjunct faculty periodically contributing. Practicum training begins in the second year with a full-year Clinical Intervention course in which students receive intensive faculty and peer supervision via live observation and immediate feedback on their performance. In addition to general clinical services, the PCC includes specialty clinics led by faculty that provide students with clinical training and research opportunities. Specialty services include the Anxiety Disorders Clinic, Family Interaction Skills Clinic (with services in Head Start settings and a Child Advocacy Center), Substance Abuse Clinic, Rainbow Clinic (for LGBT community), and the Telehealth Clinic.

Training in multicultural competency is integrated across the curriculum and training settings. All students complete at least

one required course on cultural diversity. Clinical courses highlight consideration of cultural issues throughout coverage of topics at hand, avoiding reliance on compartmentalized class periods for addressing multiculturalism. Clinical practicum sites provide opportunities to serve individuals from a variety of backgrounds. Faculty and students frequently collaborate on research and clinical papers that have a multicultural focus.

Clinical practica in community agencies are also an essential component of our scientist-practitioner training. Annually we have "Educational Partnership Contracts" with 13 to 15 community agencies that fund 22 to 24 graduate assistantships. Recognizing the importance of these partnerships, the university provides full tuition waivers for each agency-funded assistantship. The agencies and opportunities are diverse, including Head Start, Houses of Hope (substance abuse treatment facility), Nebraska State Penitentiary, Lincoln Regional Center (state psychiatric facility), Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, OMNI Behavioral Health, People's Health Center, State of Nebraska Office of Probation, and others. These assistantships provide real-world experience and many opportunities for integrating science and practice, often with collaboration between faculty and clinical staff at the agencies.

All students complete a master's equivalency research project and dissertation (a formal thesis is not required for our M.A.). Although students identify one faculty member as a primary research mentor, many students participate in more than one research team and have multiple research projects going at any given point in time. All students present research at professional conferences and approximately 90% of students coauthor published research. Many students are successful in receiving external awards and fellowships that facilitate their training and research, including NIH NRSA fellowships, DHHS Head Start Graduate Student Research Grants, and Doris Duke Fellowships.

Our students compete successfully for outstanding internships and postdoctoral positions. Recently, students completed predoctoral internships at the Boston Consortium in Clinical Psychology, Medical University of South Carolina/Charleston Internship Consortium, Nebraska Internship Consortium, UCLA/Semel Institute for Neuroscience & Human Behavior, University of Mississippi Medical Center/VA Jackson, and the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. We have a 98.8%

match rate over the past 10 years, with 80 of 81 students matching with an APA accredited internship.

The Department and University

The CPTP exists within the Department of Psychology and the College of Arts and Sciences at UNL. UNL is the flagship of the state university system, with approximately 25,000 undergraduate and graduate students. UNL joined the Big Ten Conference and its academic counterpart, the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, in 2011.

The department has a 125-year history of leadership and innovation in the teaching of psychology. It was one of the earliest providing formal teaching of psychology west of the Mississippi, with one of the earliest psychological laboratories in the U.S. (6th and 8th by different accounts) and the first devoted to training undergraduates. Six presidents of the APA have been undergraduate alumni of the University of Nebraska, more than any other institution. The Nebraska Symposium on Motivation began in 1953 and is the longest running symposium in psychology in the world, with a tremendous national and international reputation. The Law-Psychology program, established in the 1974, was the first dual-degree (J.D.-Ph.D.) program of its kind and continues to be a premier program.

The department has 26 tenured/tenure-track faculty members and a number of active adjunct faculty. The graduate program includes approximately 100 graduate students across five programs: Clinical, Developmental, Neuroscience and Behavior, Social and Cognitive, and Law-Psychology. Clinical students may also be a part of the Law-Psychology program and pursue a J.D. or M.L.S. (Master's in Legal Studies) while earning their Ph.D. Our faculty are key players in a variety of interdisciplinary centers and initiatives that provide

valuable training and research opportunities for our students, including the Center for Brain, Biology and Behavior; Center on Children, Families and the Law; Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools, Public Policy Center; Substance Abuse and Violence Initiative; and the Minority Health Disparities Initiative.

The Community

Lincoln, the state capitol of Nebraska, is a city of approximately 265,000 people. Students find Lincoln to be a welcoming city with an affordable cost of living and an excellent variety of recreation and leisure activities. There are many restaurants, coffee houses, museums, theaters, and music venues within walking distance of campus. The Lied Center for Performing Arts and the Pinnacle Bank Arena regularly host a variety of theatrical and musical events featuring national and international artists. Lincoln has many beautiful city parks and nearby state parks with a variety of recreational activities, including golf, fishing, hiking, and horseback riding. There are over 130 miles of bike trails in the Lincoln area, as well as trails reaching out to nearby communities. And of course, there are many opportunities to enjoy sporting events, including premier college athletics.

Omaha, home to the University of Nebraska Medical Center, is about an hour away. With a population of approximately 885,000, the greater Omaha metropolitan area provides many venues for shopping and entertainment, as well as additional air travel options. Kansas City is a 3-hour drive and a popular destination for amusement parks, museums, professional sports, and cultural events. Denver and Rocky Mountain parks and ski slopes are within an 8-hour drive. Nestled in the heartland of the United States, travel is equally convenient to both coasts.

For More Information

To learn more about our department and program, please consult our web page at <http://psychology.unl.edu/>. Questions may be addressed to David Hansen, Director of Clinical Training (dhansen1@unl.edu), or Jamie Longwell, Graduate Admissions Secretary (jlongwell1@unl.edu).

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