

• PROFESSIONAL FORUM

**Counseling Psychology in
Colleges of Education:
A Survey of Training Directors**

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A survey of counseling psychology (CP) training directors (N = 34), housed partly or completely in colleges of education, revealed that the most frequently cited benefits of being housed in education were compatibility of the CP program with the college mission, the esteem in which the CP program was held in the college, and the accessibility of related programs in educational and school psychology. The most frequently cited disadvantages involved the perception that psychologist colleagues (e.g., licensing boards) did not find education housing credible, lack of fit with the K-12 mission, and limited funding. CP respondents preferred to be housed in education and would choose it if given the chance. Thus, although some advantages and disadvantages of housing in education were reported, no widespread dissatisfaction was found.

Before 1975, counseling psychology (CP) programs in psychology departments outnumbered CP programs in education colleges by roughly 2 to 1. In 1988 CP programs in education colleges outnumbered those in psychology departments by more than 3 to 1. This change in proportion is due to the addition of approved programs in education, not to the demise of programs in psychology. This change suggests that the historical emphasis on educational/developmental interventions, train-

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ing counselors for university counseling centers, and the close connection with college student personnel administration naturally led to the more recently approved CP programs being housed in education. The program-environment fit has generally been a good one. Recent developments in the field of education, however, may have created a less congruent professional context for counseling psychologists than existed 20 years ago (Lent, Lopez, & Forrest, 1988; Westfeld, Meadows, & Talbert, 1987).

Specifically, while the epicenter of CP has been shifting toward adult populations and noneducational settings, schools of education have been recommitting to producing teachers who have a strong concentration and demonstrated proficiency in a basic subject matter (e.g., history, math, English), followed by a sequence of teacher preparation course work. Preparation of this more intensively trained teacher is the goal of the Holmes Group, a national consortium of deans and faculty from schools of education, and is indirectly the outgrowth of years of public criticism of the quality of the nation's schools. Further, dramatically increased enrollments in undergraduate teacher education programs may worry CP programs, which do not participate directly in the training of undergraduate teachers. CP faculty are concerned that their training programs may be viewed as peripheral to the central mission of a college of education and will therefore suffer as a result, or at least not prosper as before.

In April 1987, at the Georgia conference, these issues were raised in the training and education subgroup (Meara et al., 1988). This group reported the following specific concerns, among others: "(a) relevance of a CP program if the primary mission of the College is preparing teachers for elementary and secondary schools, and (b) appropriateness of remedial therapeutic models to this primary mission" (Meara et al., 1988, pp. 370-371).

To address the concerns of counseling psychologists in colleges of education, a special interest group was formed and met for the first time at the APA convention in August 1987. In an effort to identify actions Division 17 might take to support CP programs housed in colleges of education, this interest group agreed, among other activities, to conduct a survey of directors of CP training programs. The purpose of the survey was to identify the nature and extent of problems experienced by CP programs housed in education. What follows is a summary of the results of that survey.

METHOD

Respondents

The survey was mailed to training directors ($N = 57$) of programs self-described as CP that were housed either partly or completely in colleges of education. The list of programs was compiled using the membership roster of the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs (CCPTP) and the directory *Graduate Study in Psychology* (American Psychological Association, 1988).

Responses were received from 34 (60%) of the training directors. Two respondents indicated that their programs were no longer housed in colleges of education, and their responses were deleted.

Survey Instrument

Because the purpose of the survey was to identify the range and type of issues perceived by training directors, it was deemed important to allow respondents to generate the problems rather than asking them to rate or check an arbitrary list that might be incomplete or biased. Hence, many of the questions on the survey required open-ended responses, whereas some asked for ratings, as noted below.

The first section of the survey contained items tapping the advantages and drawbacks of having a training program housed in a college of education. More specifically, training directors were asked to (a) list up to five advantages and five disadvantages, (b) rate the degree of support from the dean (1 = low; 5 = high), (c) list up to five strategies used to resolve problems, (d) rate changes in levels of support over the last five years (1 = much less support, 5 = much more support), and (e) indicate where they would prefer to be housed if a choice were possible.

The second section of the survey requested descriptive information about the organization, administration, and demographics of the program (e.g., APA accreditation status, numbers of students and faculty, relationships with other units in the college).

Procedures

A packet containing a cover letter, a copy of the survey, and an addressed return envelope was mailed to each training director in February 1988. One follow-up mailing was sent in March 1988. A rough content analysis by the senior author with input from the contributing authors was used to categorize responses in Section I of the questionnaire.

RESULTS

Two thirds of the respondents' programs were APA accredited, and the remainder were all planning to seek approval. The mean number of students was 44 and the mean number of faculty 7. Mean years of approval was 9. Roughly two thirds of training directors reported some faculty affiliating with the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and half reported teaching courses in a very diverse range of topics outside the CP specialty area. Most respondents reported that some faculty belonged to the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD) and that some members collaborated in research with other college faculty. Most commonly this was collaboration with educational psychology (38%), school psychology (26%), or special education (26%), but the range of collaboration was wide.

Most programs (29, or 91%) offered only the PhD, rather than the EdD. Ten training directors reported that CP students were required to take core courses in education. Almost all training directors reported the primary focus of their training program to be preparation for a variety of settings, whereas 3 reported counseling centers to be the primary emphasis, and 3 reported academic training programs as the primary focus.

Although two training directors listed no benefits of being housed in a school or college of education, most listed at least three. The most frequently cited benefits were compatibility of the primary philosophy of CP with the educational/developmental thrust of the education college (24%), the esteem in which the CP program was held within the college (16%), or the accessibility of related specialties such as educational psychology or school psychology (13%). Additional benefits listed were more autonomy/flexibility, avoidance of conflicts/problems with the psychology department, less competition for resources, better financial opportunities for students, support of the dean, and no undergraduate teaching responsibilities.

Four training directors listed no problems resulting from being housed in a college/school of education. Of the total number of problems listed (93), the most frequent were a lack of understanding or credibility from colleagues and others (e.g., licensing boards) (24%), limited funding (12%), and lack of fit with a K-12 mission (11%). Other responses were lack of resources for research, lower prestige of program, lack of psychology colleagues, lack of support from dean, irrelevant requirements for students, and heavy teaching loads.

The most frequently reported strategies for coping with problems were collaboration and the establishment of networks inside and outside the college ($N = 37$). Other frequently reported coping strategies included educating others about CP and its relevance to education ($N = 12$), emphasizing the quality of the program ($N = 10$), providing service courses ($N = 10$), applying pressure or negotiating for changes (e.g., resisting larger class enrollments) ($N = 9$), or trying to move the CP program to another unit ($N = 4$).

Half of the respondents reported their deans to be very supportive, and more than half reported that the school/college of education had become more supportive over the past five years. Reasons for increased support included the quality and visibility of the program, a new, more supportive dean, collegial relationships, preparation for and positive site reports from APA accreditation reviews, and acceptance of a broader training mission by the college. Reasons for decreased support included a new dean who was not supportive, a dean who believed education colleges should not be in the business of psychotherapy, budget cuts, and isolation of the program. All respondents indicated that there was an MA program in counseling in their college, in most cases under the direct responsibility of the CP faculty. About half of the respondents reported an additional doctoral program in counselor education, with varying levels of involvement by CP faculty.

Twenty-one of the training directors reported that their school belonged to the Holmes Group. Of these 21 programs, 15 (71%) responded that no effects were seen. Other responses included: draws resources away from other graduate programs (9%), adds to K-12 emphasis/raises more questions about CP fit (9%), have discussed developing curricular offerings we could teach (5%). In one case an advantage was reported—emphasis on quality has improved status of education on campus.

Finally, when respondents were asked where they would prefer to see the CP program housed if they had a choice, a clear majority of the 30 responses generated favored a college/school of education (63%). Other housing arrangements preferred included psychology department (13%), joint housing in education and psychology (7%), department of educational psychology (3%), separate school of psychology (3%), not sure, currently under review (3%), independent department in school of education (3%), and rehabilitation department in school of medicine (3%).

DISCUSSION

These data suggest that CP training program directors prefer to be housed in education and would choose that arrangement again if given the chance. There are some complaints, of course (probably no more so than in psychology departments), and many feel misunderstood, as Westefeld et al. (1987) and Lent et al. (1988) indicate. Only two training program directors, however, listed no advantages of being situated in education, and only one or two programs were currently considering a switch to another unit. This finding contradicts Lent et al. (1988), who call for general consideration of other housing arrangements in professional psychology or human development. This does not mean that other programs might not choose to relocate at some later time, but no widespread discontent exists at this time.

The three most frequently cited disadvantages seem related to a lack of fit and the sense that colleagues did not understand the CP program or its relationship to the college mission. This finding suggests the kind of educational strategy suggested by Westefeld et al. (1987), as well as our respondents, in which we educate others about CP. Given the current emphasis in education on K-12 settings and the increasing movement of CP toward adult and noneducational settings, however, articulating the relevance of the CP program in a persuasive way to education colleagues may be difficult for some programs. Many of our respondents emphasized coping strategies to build support for the CP program by collaborating or networking inside and outside the college. Another support-building strategy mentioned by training directors was to emphasize program quality, which at least one dean has mentioned as a strength (Cole, 1988). Our respondents suggested cautious use of this program quality approach, which might be perceived as elitist.

Considering the level of concern raised in our initial meetings, we expected less support from deans than we found in our survey of training program directors. Many CP programs enjoy a hospitable environment. We should not, however, take a supportive dean for granted, since deans come and go. Networks of support should be broad, and linkages to other units should be of the kind that are not easily severed.

One limitation of this survey is that the results reflect only the perceptions of those CP faculty who have administrative respon-

sibilities (i.e., training directors). Thus it is possible that organizational concerns are overrepresented in both the advantages and disadvantages of housing in education. Further, we do not know how similar the training director's views are to those of other faculty members and/or students. Finally, these results should be generalized with caution in light of the 60% return rate.

We would not like to see yet another intractable identity problem raised and obsessed over; rather, we encourage continuous proactive work to maintain CP, broaden it, and make it indispensable in schools of education. Most programs were taking direct steps to improve or maintain their lot, and we believe that Division 17 can provide much assistance in this undertaking.

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