

University of St. Thomas, Minnesota

## UST Research Online

---

Professional Psychology Faculty/Staff  
Publications

Graduate School of Professional Psychology

---

2020

### **PsyD programs in counseling psychology: Current status and future directions**

S. Hage

M. J. Loughran

S. M. Renninger

J. M. Cyranowski

Follow this and additional works at: [https://ir.stthomas.edu/celc\\_gradpsych\\_pub](https://ir.stthomas.edu/celc_gradpsych_pub)



Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

---

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School of Professional Psychology at UST Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in Professional Psychology Faculty/Staff Publications by an authorized administrator of UST Research Online. For more information, please contact [asle4660@stthomas.edu](mailto:asle4660@stthomas.edu).

# PsyD Programs in Counseling Psychology: Current Status and Future Directions

The Counseling Psychologist

2020, Vol. 48(5) 716–737

© The Author(s) 2020

Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/0011000020916787

journals.sagepub.com/home/tcp



Sally M. Hage<sup>1</sup> , Mary Jo Loughran<sup>2</sup>,  
Salina M. Renninger<sup>3</sup>, and Jill M. Cyranowski<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

This article depicts the unique integration of science and practice found in Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) programs. To dispel myths and provide accurate information about the counseling psychology PsyD degree, survey and interview data from all nine American Psychological Association (APA)–accredited counseling psychology PsyD programs are presented. We argue that embracing PsyD programs within a unified counseling psychology training structure and value system has advantages for the field, including providing a mechanism to foster counseling psychology’s reach and social justice mission. Given the newly-articulated professional competencies of the APA Standards of Accreditation, we also suggest that maintaining counseling psychology training consistency across both Doctor of Philosophy and PsyD programs has the potential to better meet counseling psychologist career trajectories and workforce needs.

## Keywords

training, practice, health service psychology, science-practice integration, social justice

<sup>1</sup>Springfield College, Springfield, MA, USA

<sup>2</sup>Chatham University, Pittsburgh, PA, USA

<sup>3</sup>University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis, MN, USA

## Corresponding Author:

Sally M. Hage, Program in Counseling Psychology, Psychology Department, Springfield College, 263 Alden Street, Springfield, MA 01109, USA.

Email: shage@springfieldcollege.edu

**Significance of the Scholarship to the Public**

*This study explores the evolution of training models in counseling psychology and presents a portrait of the unique integration of science and practice found in Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) programs. We present survey and interview data from the nine American Psychological Association-accredited counseling psychology PsyD programs. We argue that affirming a range of training approaches is vital to our specialty's health and sustainability, and is needed to represent the growing breadth of counseling psychology career trajectories and workforce needs.*

According to the American Psychological Association's (APA) website (APA, n.d.-a), 76 APA-accredited doctoral programs in counseling psychology currently exist. Most programs award the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree, but nine of these programs grant the Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) degree. In addition to the nine accredited PsyD programs, two counseling psychology PsyD programs are in the process of seeking accreditation, and three other counseling psychology PsyD programs are in the process of formation (M. Moyer, personal communication, Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation, January 20, 2019). In the past decade, the establishment of new PsyD-granting counseling psychology programs has outpaced new counseling psychology PhD programs. Since the inception of accreditation in 1952, the field has seen the unfortunate closure or conversion of over 30% of counseling psychology PhD programs in top research institutions, such as Stanford University, Pennsylvania State University, The Ohio State University, University of Pittsburgh, and University of Minnesota, most of which were housed in colleges of education and many of which had been in existence for decades (Blustein et al., 2005). For a complete history of counseling psychology, see Gelso et al. (2014b). Some see this change in the composition of doctoral programs as a sign of counseling psychology's vulnerability (Blustein et al., 2005). In contrast, we argue that affirming a range of training approaches, apparent with the advent of PsyD counseling programs, is vital to the specialty's health and sustainability and is needed to represent the growing breadth of counseling psychology career trajectories and workforce needs.

The combination of these two developments, the closing or conversion of prominent counseling psychology PhD programs and the emergence of PsyD programs, suggests the advent of a new era in counseling psychology in which academic training programs in health service psychology embrace the integration of science and practice. This article explores the evolution of a broader

diversity of training models in counseling psychology, and presents a portrait of the unique integration of science and practice found in PsyD programs. We describe a context for the emergence of counseling psychology PsyD programs and provide illustrations of their training approaches. Survey and interview data from the nine APA-accredited counseling psychology PsyD programs are presented, along with a theoretical rationale for moving toward a unified profession focused on core counseling psychology values (Gelso et al., 2014a). Finally, we argue and affirm that our strong common counseling psychology values, along with the evolution of counseling psychology to include PsyD programs, are strengths of the profession to be embraced.

### **Context for Diversity of Counseling Psychology Training Programs**

In 2017, the revised APA's *Standards of Accreditation for Programs in Health Service Psychology* (SoA; APA, 2015; APA Commission on Accreditation, 2019) replaced the *Guidelines and Principles of Accreditation* (APA, 2012) as the new set of criteria used to establish and evaluate training programs for accreditation. The adoption of the SoA eliminated the Guidelines and Principles of Accreditation's requirement that accredited doctoral programs specify their training model after deeming that a uniformly defined competency-based accreditation process promulgated by the SoA presents a clearer, more consistent portrayal of the discipline (Bell et al., 2017). This shift to a uniform model follows the definitive recommendation by the members of the Health Service Psychology Education Collaborative (2013), who urged training programs to put "[d]iscourse about training models . . . aside, as it is not likely to be helpful and could distract from important work on competency-based approaches for practice as a health service psychologist" (p. 414).

This emphasis on broad professional competencies may render categorical training models irrelevant when it comes to APA accreditation. Moreover, evidence suggests that a broad dimension of counseling psychology training approaches exist beyond those represented by the categorical nomenclature of "scientist–practitioner," often associated with PhD programs, and "practitioner–scholar," often associated with PsyD programs (Neimeyer et al., 2005). In addition, a binary model of training is limited in that it tends to ignore other critical professional roles important to counseling psychology, such as "psychologist–activist" (Nadal, 2017) and "scientist–practitioner–advocate" (Mallinckrodt et al., 2014).

Some may argue that the value of categorical training models such as scientist–practitioner and practitioner–scholar remains high for other purposes, including creating a shared vision and language for a program's

faculty and students. However, we concur with the assessment in the Health Service Psychology Education Collaborative (2013) that the “development of models of clinical training has unintentionally dichotomized the field into those programs that train for research careers and those programs that train for practice, with the majority of programs falling somewhere in between” (p. 417). The typical career, they argue, includes both science and practice, and training programs need to better articulate how they train for, balance, and integrate these professional roles.

### *PhD and PsyD Training Programs in Clinical Psychology*

Although a paucity of published literature dedicated to the PsyD degree exists within the counseling psychology specialty, considerable scholarly debate on training models is found within clinical psychology. One reason may be that clinical psychology programs consistently outnumber counseling psychology programs 3 to 1, with a ratio of clinical PhD to PsyD of about 2 to 1 (APA, 2018). A review of the literature comparing PhD and PsyD doctoral training in clinical psychology confirms that clinical psychology training is heterogeneous in philosophy and outcomes (McFall, 2006). Yet, the clinical psychology PsyD degree has been criticized for sacrificing research training in favor of increased emphasis on applied practice (McFall, 2006).

Indeed, training across clinical PhD and clinical PsyD programs often occurs in very different settings. A number of practice-focused clinical PsyD programs are housed in free-standing professional schools in contrast to the traditional university-based setting. Representing the opposite end of the practice-to-research continuum, many clinical PhD programs have eschewed the scientist-practitioner model in favor of membership into the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science and the clinical scientist model of training. The clinical scientist model emphasizes a commitment to scientific training and to improving “scientific contributions of their faculty and students” (Academy of Psychological Clinical Science, n.d.-a, para. 2). Emerging, in large part, in response to concerns raised by growing practice-focused professional schools, these programs tend to be housed in research-focused university settings where faculty promotion and tenure are predominantly based on publication and grant funding, with less emphasis placed on teaching and practice-based responsibilities. Most recently, the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science partnered with the Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS), an independent accrediting body seeking to provide an alternative to APA accreditation for clinical PhD programs adhering to the clinical science training model whose students seek practice licenses. Currently, 34 programs are PCSAS accredited, with PCSAS accreditation recognized by a growing number of state licensing boards (see Academy of Psychological Clinical Science, n.d.-b).

Thus, within clinical psychology, the difference in training philosophies—particularly with respect to the emphasis and integration of training in research versus practice—has resulted in significant splits in both accrediting bodies and training councils. In terms of training councils, clinical psychology PhD programs are represented by the Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology, whereas the training council for PsyD clinical programs is the National Council for Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology. This split in clinical PhD and clinical PsyD training councils likely fosters differential evolution of how science and practice are balanced and integrated across PhD and PsyD training programs in clinical psychology.

### *Homogeneity of PhD and PsyD Training Programs in Counseling Psychology*

In comparison to clinical psychology training, counseling psychology training approaches are more homogenous in their espoused philosophy and outcomes. A 2017 survey of counseling psychology programs ( $N = 76$ ) found that the counseling psychology program participants in the survey, PhD and PsyD, equally valued science and practice, despite espousing a range of different training models (Rostosky et al., 2018). Both PsyD and PhD counseling psychology programs reported an integrative balance of research-focused and practice-focused training. The Society of Counseling Psychology (SCP), moreover, recognizes that psychologists are trained at the doctoral level in both PhD and PsyD programs, and such training follows a similar path to accreditation (SCP, n.d.).

Many counseling psychology doctoral programs are located in departments that also house thriving master's-level training programs, frequently with shared faculty and overlap in curricula. These master's programs prepare students for careers as professional counselors, and as a result, program requirements must meet the standards established by state licensure boards and accrediting bodies such as the Master's in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (Jackson & Scheel, 2013). In 2017, the Board of Educational Affairs of the APA established a task force charged with creating a pathway for APA to accredit health service psychology programs at the master's level. The task force addressed the question of whether to incorporate the new accreditation standards into the existing Commission on Accreditation structure or to establish a separate structure (APA, n.d.-b). It is clear that counseling psychology training has been, and will continue to be, influenced by the changes occurring in master's training, licensure, and practice.

According to Gelso et al. (2014a), APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs can be distinguished by their adherence to five core values or tendencies. These values include: (a) an emphasis on strengths and optimal functioning; (b) a focus on the whole person, including life span development and vocational growth; (c) a commitment to advocacy and social justice, including awareness of the importance of environmental context and culture; (d) a focus on brief, educational, and preventive counseling interventions; and (e) a dedication to the scientist-practitioner model. Gelso et al. (2014a) acknowledges that, “Counseling psychology practitioners differ considerably in the extent to which they subscribe to each particular theme” (p. 17). It is variations in adherence to the last theme, dedication to the scientist-practitioner model, that has received the most attention. Nonetheless, existing beliefs about how science and practice are balanced and integrated across PhD and PsyD training programs may be more a result of preconceptions of the PhD versus PsyD rather than actual significant differences between the two degrees.

### *Myths Regarding the Counseling Psychology PsyD Degree*

Persistent myths and misperceptions exist about the counseling psychology PsyD training experience and practice settings. These myths endure, at least in part, due to the paucity of published work clarifying the consistency of values among counseling psychology programs, as well as the work settings of program graduates, and the realities of counseling psychology PsyD programs. Even within the general public, common perceptions depict the PsyD degree as “PhD-lite”—indicating that PsyD students may receive weaker clinical training and/or face bleak internship match prospects (All Psychology Schools, n.d.).

These myths were refuted by Snapp and Peterson (1988), who found no significant differences between 67 PsyD and 228 PhD students who were evaluated by 111 internship supervisors on either clinical skills (e.g., individual psychotherapy, diagnostic interviewing, consultation, report writing) or professional characteristics (e.g., warmth, intelligence, responsibility). Slight differences were found in a review of public disclosure data reporting the average time for degree completion for counseling psychology doctoral programs. Over the past three years, completion time of accredited counseling PsyD programs were found to be shorter than for accredited counseling PhD programs (on average, 4.8 years vs. 5.89 years; APA, 2018). Similar differences were found in reviewing internship placement rates for the 81 counseling psychology PsyD students participating in the 2018 Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) internship match. Of that total, 66 (81.5%) successfully matched, 8 (9.9%) remained

unmatched, and 7 (8.6%) withdrew or submitted no rankings. These totals were slightly below the rates for counseling psychology PhD applicants ( $n = 400$ ; 95.5% matched; 1.8% unmatched; 2.8% withdrew or submitted no rankings). Although this discrepancy would seemingly support the argument that internships may be more difficult to obtain for PsyD students, it is important to note that the match rate for applicants from unaccredited programs of all specialties is substantially lower (63.9% in 2018) than those from accredited programs (91.4% in 2018; APPIC, 2018). It is likely that the lower PsyD match rate can be explained, at least in part, by a higher proportion of counseling psychology PsyD applicants hailing from newer, less well known, and not-yet-accredited programs.

Another persistent myth plaguing counseling psychology PsyD programs is a purported lack of research training and/or commitment to genuine integration of science and practice. However, the findings from our survey and interview data from nine APA-accredited counseling psychology PsyD programs refute this belief. The strong commitment to both science and practice reflects the fact that APA accredited PsyD programs, like all health service psychology doctoral programs, are required to produce graduates capable of formulating, conducting, and critically evaluating research, as well as disseminating research findings (APA Commission of Accreditation, 2018).

### ***Benchmark Competencies Related to Research Training***

The establishment of benchmark competencies for psychologists (Fouad, et al., 2009) provided an opportunity for doctoral training programs to train students in consistent and specific skill sets across domains deemed to be essential to professional practice. Included were several competencies related to the understanding and application of scientific knowledge and methods. Under this broader category of scientific knowledge and methods, three subcategories exist, each with a set of specific competencies necessary for beginning practicum, beginning internship, and entry-level practice. The three subcategories were scientific mindedness, scientific foundation of psychology, and scientific foundation of professional practice (Fouad, et al., 2009).

More recently, the *APA Standards of Accreditation in Health Service Psychology* (APA, 2015) provided further direction to programs about how they should train their students in the areas of science and research. Their standards called for nine profession-wide competencies, a key one being research. The research competency includes three essential components: (a) demonstrate the substantially independent ability to formulate research or other scholarly activities, (b) conduct research or other scholarly activities, and (c) critically evaluate and disseminate research or other scholarly activity



via professional publication at the local, regional or national level (APA, 2015). Notably, science and practice make up one of the five principles guiding accreditation decisions (APA, 2015). Programs are required to attend to the empirical basis of the practice of psychology, in which “all programs should enable their students to understand the value of science for the practice of psychology and the value of practice for the science of psychology” (APA, 2015, p. 4). The SoA indicates that PhD and PsyD programs may provide a relative degree of emphasis on either research or practice. Yet, the standards also clearly articulate that both types of programs should educate all students in conducting research/scholarship and evidence-based practice.

In order to more fully understand the mechanisms by which counseling psychology PsyD programs integrate science and practice in their curricula and degree requirements, we surveyed representatives from each of the nine APA-accredited counseling psychology programs to inquire how programs met the SoA (APA, 2015) related to research and practice.

## Methods

Institutional review board approval was obtained before proceeding with data collection aimed at providing detailed descriptions of counseling psychology PsyD programs. Nine APA-accredited PsyD programs were identified through a search of the Commission on Accreditation’s searchable website using the search terms “PsyD” and “counseling psychology.” The training directors of each program consented to participate in a telephone interview and survey. The interview contained questions pertaining to program requirements, faculty characteristics, and student characteristics. Interview data were entered into an online survey for analysis and interpretation (see Appendix for list of interview questions). Next we present a summary of our findings organized by program characteristics, faculty characteristics, and student characteristics.

*Program characteristics.* All programs were university-based, although situated in diverse university structures (e.g., Health Sciences, Arts & Sciences, Professional Studies). Interestingly, none of the programs were housed within schools or colleges of education. The length of time since initial accreditation ranged from 2.5 years to 24 years, with a mean of 8.24 years and a standard deviation of 7.9 years. All programs reported requiring comprehensive or qualifying exams involving some combination of written exams, oral exams, clinical skills demonstrations, and literature reviews that are summarized in Table 1.

Most commonly, programs reported equal emphasis on both practice and science and research in their programs, with the mean response of approximately 60% practice focus and 40% research focus. Most programs (78%)

**Table 1.** Comprehensive or Qualitative Exam Format

Format	Frequency	% <sup>a</sup>
Written exam	8	89
Case conceptualization	5	56
Oral exam	5	44
Other <sup>b</sup>	2	22
Literature review	1	11
Written portfolio	1	11

Note.  $N = 9$ .

<sup>a</sup>Percentages total more than 100% as participants could select more than one item. <sup>b</sup>Other exam formats include treatment plan/design study; demonstrate clinical skill/written research, diversity, ethics, assessment.

required both a qualitative and a quantitative methods course. Dissertations were reported to be, on average, 45% quantitative, 45% qualitative, and 10% mixed methods. However, the range in dissertation methodology was significant, with some programs reporting nearly all quantitative dissertations and one program reporting all qualitative dissertations. All programs required completion of an empirical dissertation with requirements that are summarized in Table 2.

Regarding practicum requirements, the total number of required hours ranged from 1,000 to over 1,500, with a mean of 1,311 hrs. The majority of programs ( $n = 8$ ) reported that some students completed practicum training exceeding the minimum requirements, with five programs indicating over

**Table 2.** Dissertation Requirements

Requirement	Frequency	%
Literature review	9	100
Three chapter written proposal	7	78
Data collection	9	100
Data analysis	9	100
Program evaluation permitted	6	67
Method: Qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods	8	89
Case study	6	67
Five chapter written paper	8	89
Final oral defense	8	89
Topic must be consistent with counseling psychology	7	78

Note.  $N = 9$ .

50% of students opting to complete additional practicum training. All programs reported that students accrued an average of over 400 intervention and assessment hours prior to applying for doctoral internship, with a modal response falling into the 501 to 600 hr range. This number is consistent with data presented in the 2018 APPIC match survey of applicants, which reported a median response of 601 hr for 272 counseling psychology doctoral applicants (APPIC, 2018).

*Faculty characteristics.* The size of core PsyD faculty members ranged from 3 to 12, with a mean of 6.33 faculty members per program. All programs reported that the majority of faculty had PhD degrees, and six programs reported having at least one core faculty member with a PsyD degree. Across programs, 79% of eligible faculty also possessed psychology licensure. All programs reported having some faculty who engaged in clinical practice (from 20%–100%,  $M = 62.11\%$ ). In addition to clinical practice, faculty reportedly engaging in other professional practice activities included supervision ( $M = 54.9\%$ ), providing services to community agencies ( $M = 46.7\%$ ), and providing consultation with outside organizations ( $M = 44.2\%$ ). Approximately 59.4% of all faculty reportedly engaged in social change or advocacy work. In addition to practice and advocacy activities, the majority of program faculty also engaged in research activities, with 65.1% of all faculty reportedly engaging in research, with two thirds of programs reporting a figure above 50%. Likewise, program faculty also regularly presented at national conferences ( $M = 73\%$ ) and published journal articles or book chapters ( $M = 56.2\%$ ).

*Student characteristics.* Training directors who participated in the survey reported their perceptions regarding their student body. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of students matriculated in counseling psychology PsyD programs were identified as having clinical practice as their desired career trajectory (88.3%), followed by a desired combination of clinical practice with teaching or research (8.2%). A very small percentage of students (2.2%) desired a teaching only career trajectory, and even fewer (<1%) were interested in a career in research.

Training directors reported the most frequent sites for students' doctoral internships were university counseling centers, followed by community agencies. Less frequently, students matched to Veteran's Administration Medical Centers (VAMC), followed by hospitals or other settings, as summarized in Table 3.

Following graduation, a wide range of employment settings were reported. The highest percentage of program alumni reportedly work in private practice settings (26.7%), followed closely by university counseling

**Table 3.** Rank Order by Percent for Types of Internship Sites Counseling PsyD Students Match

Setting	Rank 1 %	Rank 2 %	Rank 3 %	Rank 4 %	Rank 5 %	Rank 6 %
UCC	44.4	44.4	11.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CA	33.3	11.1	33.3	0.0	22.2	0.0
VAMC	11.1	11.1	22.2	33.3	11.1	11.1
PP	11.1	0.0	0.0	11.1	44.4	33.3
Hospital	0.0	22.2	33.3	33.3	11.1	0.0
Other	0.0	11.1	0.0	22.2	11.1	55.6

Note:  $N = 9$ . UCC = University Counseling Center; CA = Community Agency, VAMC = Veteran's Administration Medical Center; PP = Private Practice.

centers (25%), community agencies (22.2%), VAMC's (11.1%), and academic settings (4.4%). The remaining 10% were divided among hospital settings, prisons, active military service, and nonpsychology positions.

## Summary and Discussion of Findings Related to the Integration of Science and Practice

The integration of research and practice continues to represent a core aspirational value of model counseling psychology training programs (Scheel et al., 2018). Indeed, the relatively equal footing of both research and practice training elements among counseling psychology training programs has likely led to a narrower range in the science–practice balance of training approaches. Counseling psychology PsyD programs in this study, although focusing a bit more heavily on practice than research, have nevertheless fully embraced the importance of science-based practice and the value of training psychologists who can pursue independent research. Tethered as they are to university-based programs, PsyD programs are run by faculty who pursue scholarly work, and they are comprised of small cohorts (ranging from 4–20 students per program) who are expected to complete empirically driven doctoral dissertations.

The research–practice integration of counseling psychology PsyD programs tends to fall closer to that espoused by practice-focused PhD programs than the professional school training models that have come to be associated with PsyD training programs (Norcross et al., 2010). Specifically, the scholarship side of the training model for counseling PsyD programs goes far beyond training students to critically consume and apply research to practice. Instead, students are trained to conduct their own independent

empirical research, including the ability to develop testable research questions, apply relevant research designs, and interpret research findings. This level of research training, in turn, ultimately provides students with the ability to approach their practice work scientifically—with an emphasis on evaluating and tracking measurable client outcomes and using data to adjust client-focused interventions.

Yet even within the narrow range of practice–research integration, diversity exists between PsyD programs, which may serve to strengthen the “reach” of how counseling psychology values and principles are disseminated across counseling practice settings. Counseling psychology PsyD programs require students to complete an independent dissertation research project. The scope and nature of this project may, however, differ from those completed as part of student training within more research-focused PhD programs. For example, as noted during our interviews with PsyD training directors, dissertation research questions generated by PsyD students tend to have an applied focus. This may reflect not only programmatic values, but also structural and pragmatic features. Additionally, PsyD students are not typically accepted to work within (or to be financially supported by) a particular faculty lab or research project; thus, counseling psychology PsyD students are more likely to develop dissertation research questions from their own active applied work, rather than research themes stemming from an advisor’s line of research.

We note that the scope of dissertation work completed by PsyD students may also differ from dissertation expectations found within research-focused programs, with more emphasis on studies with smaller sample sizes, program outcome work, and qualitative work with a targeted, applied focus. Although some may consider such work as “lower impact” research, we would argue that these students’ experiences with identifying key outcomes, developing psychometrically strong measurement approaches, and interpreting practice-focused outcomes within smaller samples and with targeted research designs is a crucial skill for research-savvy, practice-focused psychologists. Such a workforce is sorely needed to further improve, disseminate, and integrate evidenced-based and empirically-supported treatment approaches into community-based practice (Health Service Psychology Education Collaborative, 2013).

Given that counseling psychology PsyD programs are housed in smaller university settings, expectations for faculty advancement also tend to provide broader definitions on scholarship accomplishments, as compared with academic advancement guidelines within larger, research focused universities. These smaller teaching-oriented universities are more likely to positively weigh faculty accomplishments in practice, community engagement, and teaching, alongside their breadth of scholarship accomplishments. This

teaching-focused university model has the advantage of increasing the number of faculty role models who actively pursue counseling practice, and who can thus model both integration and cross-fertilization of research and practice into their doctoral teaching, supervision, and mentorship models.

### *Can We Embrace Diversity Across Counseling Psychology Training Programs?*

Although presented to the field nearly twenty years ago, the question raised by Patton (2000) in his article on counseling psychology training still holds; "Given the times we live in, there is no question that training in counseling psychology must change. But what direction should it take?" (p. 702). Similarly, Blustein et al. (2005) noted that recent changes in the make-up of counseling psychology will "press for . . . less focus on research or at least will focus on a different kind of scholarship" (p. 620).

We argue that counseling psychology's balanced integration of research and practice training is a strength. In addition, a body of evidence supports embracing a diversity of integrative science–practice training models in counseling psychology. Goodyear et al. (2008) documented the consistent trend of counseling psychologists pursuing primary professional roles as practitioners, noting that in 2000, approximately 47.5% of SCP members and 71.3% of counseling psychology trained nonmembers self-identified primarily as providers of clinical services. Munley et al. (2004) reported the growing diversity in employment settings for SCP members and noted that 20% identified private practice as their primary work affiliation with an unspecified additional percentage of counseling psychologists who worked in private practice as a secondary work setting. Thus, the emergence of PsyD programs, which focus on the integration of empirical research and methods within applied practice settings, may fill a significant need within the counseling field.

Given the increase in practitioner-oriented programs, counseling psychology is already changing with the emergence of a solid base of PsyD programs. As noted by Blustein et al. (2005), even with the closing of more than 30% of PhD programs in counseling psychology since 1952, new PsyD programs "are being developed at a rate that at least replaces those being discontinued" (p. 620). Patton (2000) also urges leaders of counseling psychology PsyD programs to "articulate the uniqueness of counseling psychology within a scholar-practitioner model of training" (p. 707) in order to avoid the divisions that have historically characterized clinical psychology training. This article is in part, a response to his recommendation, as counseling psychology stands at an important juncture in embracing a diversity of training approaches while maintaining the integrity and coherence of core counseling psychology practice values.

Although diversity in training models in counseling psychology doctoral programs exists, to date, no such schism has occurred as has taken place in clinical psychology between programs related to training agencies and/or accrediting bodies. In clinical psychology, two different professional organizations (Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology and National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology) exist, while the single organization in counseling psychology (the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs) includes members from both PhD and PsyD training programs, which we view as a major strength.

The Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs, includes members from both PhD and PsyD training programs, which we view as a major strength. Likewise, SCP is explicit in its inclusion of the PsyD degree as an option for counseling psychology doctoral study and does not specify a particular training model to define training (see SCP, n.d.). However, in the delineation of the history of counseling psychology (in the section on clinical vs. counseling), no mention is made of the emergence of the PsyD training programs within the specialty. Given the changing tides of training and the desire to avoid such schisms as those observed in clinical psychology, we argue that it would behoove counseling psychology training councils to engage in more inclusive dialogue regarding diverse training approaches and to recognize and affirm the shared values within and across PhD and PsyD programs.

### *Summary and Implications for the Field of Counseling Psychology*

The past decade witnessed the emergence of a new era in counseling psychology in which training programs are embracing a broader definition of the integration of science and practice and a stronger focus on health service. The field of counseling psychology has begun to shift to include a broader diversity of training approaches. Further, the distinctive focus on cultural diversity and social justice within our field argues for a more inclusive approach. Indeed, the rise of practice-focused PsyD programs is likely to increase access of doctoral psychology programs to a diversity of students, thereby facilitating core multicultural and social justice missions of the counseling psychology field. Brown and Lent's (1984) seminal definition of counseling psychology, as "an applied psychological discipline devoted to scientifically generating, applying, and disseminating knowledge on the remediation and prevention of vocational, educational, and personal adjustment difficulties" (p. ix), applies equally to both PhD and PsyD training programs. The time has come to recognize the growth of the PsyD model and to fully embrace a diversity of training approaches as important to the specialty's ongoing development.

A number of potential benefits would likely emerge from counseling psychology's shift toward embracing a broader definition of training. First, explicit affirmation of both the PsyD and PhD models would serve to enhance and promote our specialty's health and sustainability. Over the past 25 years, the number of PsyD programs has grown from 1.6% to 11.1% of counseling psychology programs (with two more PsyD programs presently under review), while the number of accredited counseling psychology PhD and EdD programs has shrunk from 98.3% to 88.9% (M. Moyer, Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation, personal communication, January 30, 2018). This trend is likely to continue, given the applied practice focus of the majority of counseling psychology trainees, and embracing this trend as a strength would enhance the shift to a more applied focus in the specialty. The call to shift to a more applied focus in counseling psychology is further reflected in the Diagnostic Report of the SCP Strategic Planning Committee (Executive Service Corps of Chicago, 2018), which reported concern among members that "SCP's interest in the practice of counseling has been lost" (p. 7). Members surveyed in their report ( $N = 617$ ) further noted "strong support for greater emphasis on practitioners, both related to usefulness of research and representation at all levels of SCP" (Executive Service Corps of Chicago, 2018, p. 35).

Further, acceptance of a broader range of diverse perspectives in the counseling psychology specialty has the potential to challenge and improve the health service psychology profession. As noted by Chwalisz (2003), "the health care system in which many counseling psychologists practice demands of psychology a true integration of science and practice" (p. 497). By welcoming faculty in PsyD programs as colleagues and training partners and creating a more unified profession focused on evidence-based practice and research, the counseling specialty has the potential to make a significant impact on the discipline of psychology. The social justice mission of counseling psychology, which is a unique strength, has the potential to become even more robust, as PsyD and PhD programs are able to contribute their unique experiences and unite in a common mission. We conceive counseling psychology's social justice mission as not only including actions to promote fairness and equity of resources but also work to promote "the establishment of relations within this society such that all individuals are treated with an equal degree of respect and dignity" (Lewis, 2010, p. 146). Therefore, we urge counseling psychology to strive for a focus on social justice not just externally but also internally, resulting in a stronger sense of integrity of the profession as a whole.

### *Recommendations for Future Research*

Additional research is necessary to enhance and understand the development of the PsyD subspecialties in counseling psychology. Future research might



explore counseling psychology students' emerging identities as practitioners and scientists, as well as how training programs may better nurture the integration of these two roles. Secondly, although APA-accredited counseling psychology PsyD programs were surveyed for this paper, no study has yet explored how PsyD counseling psychology programs are viewed by others or how they impact the field as a whole (including PhD programs), which could reveal preconceptions or biases that professionals have about the PsyD model. Finally, it is not yet known how students select a PsyD program versus a PhD program, how their career trajectories unfold, and or how they have internalized the identity of a counseling psychologist. Findings from a study of counseling psychology students and new graduates may further the fields understanding of training effectiveness for both PsyD and PhD programs, and identify advocacy needs within the subspecialty.

## Conclusion

This article aimed to promote counseling psychology's growth and development as a unique and important niche within health service psychology. We also intended to refute misinformation about counseling PsyD programs, and to reduce implicit tensions that challenge the notion of professional community within the counseling psychology field. We argue that both PsyD and PhD counseling programs contribute to the profession and to the training and preparation of a diverse counseling psychology workforce. Finally, we issue an invitation to dialogue among and across counseling psychology training program faculty and students. This dialogue is important to better understand each other's unique perspectives and to overcome potential biases and privileges within our specialty. The time has come to fully embrace and affirm a diversity of training models within counseling psychology. Our values of social justice, cultural diversity, and inclusiveness call us to work toward a sense of community in the profession and toward greater understanding of the value of this diversity in training.

## Appendix

### *Interview Questions*

#### *Section I. Program Characteristics*

1. What is the name of your program?
2. How many years have you been accredited?
3. What are the most important factors that went into your decision to offer the PsyD (vs. PhD) degree?

4. Where in the university structure is your program located?
5. What other programs are co-located with your PsyD Program?
6. Does your program require a master's degree for admission?
7. What is the relative emphasis on practice vs. science/research in your program (e.g., percentages, 50-50, 40-60, . . .)? Please provide details about your program's research related coursework requirements.
8. What research methodology courses are required (indicate number of required courses)?
9. What is the number of statistics/psychometric courses required?
10. Do you require a qualitative research course?
11. Do some students take additional research courses (i.e., beyond those required)? If so, what percentage of students take additional research courses?
12. Is a comprehensive/qualifying exam required? Please provide details about your comprehensive/qualifying exam requirements.
13. What is the format? Check all that apply. Possible responses included written exam, oral exam, written portfolio, case conceptualization, literature review, and other (please specify).
14. Please provide details about your dissertation requirements. Check all that apply with respect to your dissertation requirements: Options included data collection, data analysis, literature review required, program evaluation permitted, qualitative/quantitative/mixed methodology permitted (circle all that apply), case study permitted, three chapter written proposal required, oral defense required, five chapter written paper required, final oral defense required, topic must be consistent with counseling psychology identity, and other.
15. By your estimate, what percentage of students complete: quantitative projects, qualitative projects, mixed methodology projects, or other projects?
16. By your estimate, what percentage of your students complete a dissertation that focuses on a problem connected with a practice setting with the final product applied in nature?
17. How many dissertation committee members are required?
18. How many dissertation committee members must be a counseling psychologist? Please provide details about your practicum training requirements.
19. For practicum training requirements (indicate number of hours required).

20. By your estimate, what percentage of your students complete an additional practicum (beyond what is required)?
21. What is the average number of direct clinical hours that your students have upon applying to internship?

### *Section II. PsyD Faculty Characteristics*

22. How many full-time core faculty does your program have?
23. How many associated faculty does your program have?
24. What percentage of your license eligible faculty (core and associate) are currently licensed to practice as psychologists?
25. What percentage of your faculty (core and associate) engage in clinical practice? Perform other psychological services, such as supervision? Engage in research? Provide services to community agency? Regularly present at a national level? Regularly publish journal articles/chapters? Engage in consultation with outside organization? Engage in social change or advocacy?

### *Section III. PsyD Student Characteristics*

26. What characteristics of applicants are most important for admission for your program? (Rank 1 to 5 or 6 with 1 most important) Options include clinical experience, academic record, values consistent with counseling psychology, GRE scores, research experience, and other.
27. Approximately what percentage of your students have been in the workforce prior to enrolling in your PsyD program (in contrast to those who comes straight from BA or MA type programs)?
28. What is the primary desired career trajectory of your PsyD students at the time of admission (provide percentage estimates)? Options include clinician, academician/teacher, researcher, both clinical and academic/researcher(teaching/research) work, unsure/undecided, and other (specify).
29. Do you find that this desired career trajectory changes for your students by the time of graduation? If yes, please describe.
30. What are the typical types of internship sites that your students match to? (Rank order 1 to 5 or 6 with 1 most common) Options include university counseling center, VAMC, community agency, hospital, private practice, and other (specify).
31. Where are your alumni employed? Provide approximate percentages. Options include university counseling center, VAMC, private practice, faculty, community agency, and other (specify).

#### Section IV: Final Questions

32. How is your PsyD identity manifested in your program?
33. What do you see as strengths of the PsyD program training model?
34. Is there anything else you would like to add about your program, or PsyD programs in general, that would help us understand your PsyD identity?

#### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

#### Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

#### ORCID iD

Sally M. Hage  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9800-8478>

#### References

- Academy of Psychological Clinical Science. (n.d.-a). *About APCS*. <https://www.acadpsychclinicalscience.org>
- Academy of Psychological Clinical Science. (n.d.-b). *Doctoral programs*. <https://www.acadpsychclinicalscience.org/doctoral-programs.html>
- All Psychology Schools. (n.d.). *PsyD vs. PhD programs: What's the difference?* <http://www.allpsychologyschools.com/licensing/psyd-vs-phd-programs>
- American Psychological Association. (n.d.-a). *APA-accredited programs*. <http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/programs/>
- American Psychological Association. (n.d.-b). *BEA task force to develop a blueprint for APA accreditation of master's programs in health service psychology*. <https://www.apa.org/ed/governance/bea/masters-accreditation-blueprint.aspx>
- American Psychological Association. (2012). *Guidelines and principles for accreditation of programs in professional psychology*. Washington, DC: Author.
- American Psychological Association. (2015). *Standards of accreditation in health service psychology*. <https://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/about/policies/standards-of-accreditation.pdf>
- American Psychological Association. (2018). *Commission on accreditation*. <https://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/about/coa/>
- American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation. (2019). *Standards of accreditation for health service psychology and accreditation operating procedures*. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/about/policies/standards-of-accreditation.pdf>

- Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers. (2018). *2018 APPIC match statistics combined results: Phase I and Phase II*. <https://appic.org/Internships/Match/Match-Statistics/Match-Statistics-2018-Combined>
- Bell, D. J., Bieschke, K. J., Zlotlow, S., Paternite, C. E., Illfelder-Kaye, J., McCutcheon, S., Knauss, L., Klonoff, E., & Wall, J. (2017). New standards of accreditation in health service psychology: Rationale, opportunities, and challenges. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 11*(4), 207–218. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tep0000163>
- Blustein, D. L., Goodyear, R. K., Perry, J., & Cypers, S. (2005). The shifting sands of counseling psychology programs' institutional contexts: An environmental scan and revitalizing strategies. *The Counseling Psychologist, 33*(5), 610–634. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000005277820>
- Brown, S., & Lent, R. (1984). *Handbook of counseling psychology* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Chwalisz, K. (2003). Evidence-based practice: A framework for twenty-first-century scientist-practitioner training. *The Counseling Psychologist, 31*(5), 497–528. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000003256347>
- Executive Service Corps of Chicago. (2018, June 15). *Diagnostic report for the Society of Counseling Psychology*.
- Fouad, N. A., Grus, C. L., Hatcher, R. L., Kaslow, N. J., Hutchings, P. S., Madson, M. B., Collins, F. L., Jr., & Crossman, R. E. (2009). Competency benchmarks: A model for understanding and measuring competency in professional psychology across training levels. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 3*(Suppl. 4), S5–S26. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015832>
- Gelso, C. J., Williams, E. N., & Fretz, B. R. (Eds.). (2014a). *Counseling psychology* (3rd ed.). American Psychological Association.
- Gelso, C. J., Williams, E. N., & Fretz, B. R. (2014b). *History of counseling psychology* (3rd ed.). In C. J. Gelso, E. N. Williams, & B. R. Fretz, *Counseling psychology* (pp. 24–41). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/14378-002>
- Goodyear, R. K., Murdock, N., Lichtenberg, J. W., McPherson, R., Koetting, K., & Petren, S. (2008). Stability and change in counseling psychologists' identities, roles, functions, and career satisfaction across 15 years. *The Counseling Psychologist, 36*(2), 220–249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000007309481>
- Health Service Psychology Education Collaborative. (2013). Professional psychology in health care services: A blueprint for education and training. *American Psychologist, 68*(6), 411–426. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033265>
- Jackson, M. A., & Scheel, M. J. (2013). Quality of master's education: A concern for counseling psychology? *The Counseling Psychologist, 41*(5), 669–699. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0011000011434644>
- Lewis, B. L. (2010). Social justice in practicum training: Competencies and developmental implications. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 4*(3), 145–152. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0017383>
- Mallinckrodt, B., Miles, J. R., & Levy, J. J. (2014). The scientist-practitioner-advocate model: Addressing contemporary training needs for social justice advocacy.

- Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 8(4), 303–31. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tep0000045>
- McFall, R. M. (2006). Doctoral training in clinical psychology. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 2(1), 21–49. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.2.022305.095245>
- Munley, P. H., Duncan, L. E., McDonnell, K. A., & Sauer, E. M. (2004). Counseling psychology in the United States of America. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 17(3), 247–271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070412331317602>
- Nadal, K. L. (2017). “Let’s get in formation”: On becoming a psychologist–activist in the 21st century. *American Psychologist*, 72(9), 935–946. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0000212>
- Neimeyer, G. J., Saferstein, J., & Rice, K. G. (2005). Does the model matter? The relationship between science–practice emphasis and outcomes in academic training programs in counseling psychology. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 33(5), 635–654. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0011000005277821>
- Norcross, J. C., Evans, K. L., & Ellis, J. L. (2010). The model does matter II: Admissions and training in APA-accredited counseling psychology programs. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 38(2), 257–268. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000009339342>
- Patton, M. J. (2000). Counseling psychology training: A matter of good teaching. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 28(5), 701–711. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000000285007>
- Rostovsky, S., Clements, Z., McCubbin, L., & Rochlen, A. (2018, March 3). *The big picture: Fun facts from the 2017 survey of counseling psychology programs*. [Presentation]. Council for Counseling Psychology Training Programs Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX, United States.
- Scheel, M. J., Stabb, S. D., Cohn, T. J., Duan, C., & Sauer, E. M. (2018). Counseling psychology model training program. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 46(1), 6–49. <https://doi:10.1177/0011000018755512>
- Snapp, F. P., & Peterson, D. R. (1988). Evaluative comparison of PsyD and PhD students by clinical internship supervisors. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 19(2), 180–183. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.19.2.180>
- Society for Counseling Psychology. (n.d.). *Counseling Psychology Training*. <http://www.div17.org/about-cp/counseling-psychology-training/>

## Author Biographies

**Sally M. Hage**, PhD, is an associate professor at Springfield College. She is an APA Fellow (Division 17) and recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award in Prevention (Prevention Section, SCP). Her research interests include community-based prevention, social justice, health promotion, ethics, group work, youth development, and multicultural training. She is the editor of the *Journal of Prevention and Health Promotion*.

**Mary Jo Loughran**, PhD, is an associate professor and program director of graduate psychology at Chatham University. Her research interests include training issues in counseling psychology and collegiate student-athlete mental health interventions.

**Salina M. Renninger**, PhD, is an associate professor of counseling psychology and director of training at the University of St. Thomas. She also maintains a small private practice. Her areas of interest include training & supervision, college student mental health, attending to culture and diversity variables in training and therapy, and complex trauma.

**Jill M. Cyranowski**, PhD, previously served as director of training of the PsyD program in counseling psychology at Chatham University and is currently an associate professor and clinic director in the Department of Clinical Psychology at the University of Pittsburgh. Her research interests include evaluating the impacts of stress and social support on depression, as well as enhancing treatment outcomes for clients who experience anxious depression utilizing variants of interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT).