Task force on Graduate Education

Dear Committee Members:

The faculty of the counseling psychology program appreciates the difficult work undertaken to review and evaluate diverse programs across campus. We also want to thank the committee members for recognizing our program and acknowledging our program with a High Quality ranking. It appears that, our counseling psychology program was highly regarded and that our accomplishments (both faculty and students) made us a competitive and solid program.

On the issue of our ranking, the counseling psychology faculty believes that our ranking should be higher, and our program should be considered among the exemplary programs on campus. It seems the two indices that may have affected our ranking should be considered. First, we survey all graduates on a regular basis and have current information about their employment. All graduates are employed and find employment as doctoral level faculty or psychologists in an array of different settings, including both in-state and nationally. Second, our ability to fund our students is largely predicated on funding opportunities on campus. At present (this academic year 2009-10), out of the 51 doctoral students in our program, we have seven students on Presidential Fellowships, seven students on Deans Graduate Fellowships, eighteen who are either funded via teaching or graduate assistantships, and four on Special Graduate Assistantships. Given the extremely limited funding opportunities over many years, many students are funded. And, even with the problems in funding, we still attract and retain many competitive doctoral students. In fact, some students choose our program over other opportunities where funding is available to them.

Our doctoral program in counseling psychology is unique, competitive, and very well-known nationally. In previous rankings of counseling psychology programs, our program was among the top five programs in the nation. Among the six faculty members, we are involved nationally in professional psychology as division presidents, on accreditation boards, as program chairs, and on editorial boards. Our program faculty and students are involved in local and national social justice work such as the homeless shelter, advocacy work in the Broadway area in Iowa City, and the domestic violence resource center. The faculty works closely with students to present at national conferences and publish in prestigious peer-reviewed journals. We have also been competitive in receiving campus grants (Carver grant) and national leadership grants. We educate and train students who make national and international contributions (e.g., Larry James’ psychology work at the Pentagon after 9-11 and his leadership to “clean-up” at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq). Our students also have been placed in highly competitive internship sites. And, our program produces the most licensed psychologists in the state of Iowa.

With these issues in mind, our program faculty respectfully requests a re-evaluation of our program ranking. We believe our program meets and exceeds all the criteria to be considered exemplary and so we would appreciate our program being considered among the exemplary programs on campus. Thank you very much for your consideration.