



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

March 22, 2005

David Sargent, J.D.  
President  
Suffolk University 148  
Cambridge Street Boston,  
MA 02114

Dear President Sargent:

On behalf of the Committee on Accreditation, I wish to express appreciation to you and the staff of the internship program in professional psychology at the Suffolk University for the assistance and cooperation shown to the site visit team representing the Committee when it visited the program on March 3-4, 2005.

In accordance with its operating policy, the Committee on Accreditation is forwarding the enclosed report prepared by the site visitors for your comments. Please review the contents of this report to ensure that the facts contained are correct. Further, if the program's interpretation of those facts are different from that of the site visitors, please provide clarification to the Committee. In addition, you may wish to highlight any aspects of the program which you feel did not receive adequate emphasis in the site visit report, or otherwise invite the Committee's attention to any other appropriate information which you believe documents the program's quality in meeting the "Guidelines and Principles for Accredited Programs in Professional Psychology."

As described in the Accreditation Operating Procedures (AOP), the Committee will base its accreditation decision on the program's complete record consisting of the program's self-study, the report of the site visitors, and the program's comments in response to the site visit report. Please note that all of these documents will be thoroughly reviewed by the Committee. To ensure timely processing of the program's materials, we would appreciate your comments on the site visit report by April 25, 2005.

Cordially,

Susan F. Zlotlow, Ph.D./  
Director  
Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation

Enclosure

cc: Wilma Busse, Ed.D., Director of Training  
750 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002-4242  
(202) 336-5500  
(202) 336-61 23 TDD

## Site Visit Report

**Training Program:**           **Pre-Doctoral Internship Program**  
**Suffolk University Counseling Center**  
**148 Cambridge Street Boston, MA 2114**

**Director of Psychology Internship:**       **Wilma J. Busse, Ed. D.**

Site Visit Team:

Chair:                           Joyce K. Illfelder-Kaye, Ph.D.  
Member:                       Sherry A. Benton, Ph.D.

Dates of Visit:                               March 3-4, 2005

### **Domain A: Eligibility**

**As a prerequisite for accreditation, the program's purpose must be within the scope of the accrediting body and must be pursued in an institutional setting appropriate for the education and training of professional psychologists.**

The Suffolk University Counseling Service provides generalist training to psychology interns from accredited academic programs.

The counseling center serves as the primary mental health provider for 7500 students at Suffolk and provides limited services to faculty and staff. All staff and interns are involved in direct service to students and clients including individual therapy, consultation, outreach presentations, some limited work with couples, and with group psychotherapy.

The internship expenses were considered a normal part of the counseling center budget and were well supported by the university administration. The university president indicated that Suffolk has not had the financial cutbacks other universities have suffered and he does not anticipate any in the future. He said that the internship training program was very highly valued and he could not anticipate a case where cuts would be considered in that program.

Interns are contracted for one year full time over twelve months.

Respect for human diversity was one of the founding principles of Suffolk. Several administrators told the story of Harvard University attempting to block the charter for Suffolk because of their intention to allow Irish citizens to study the law. The Harvard president was reported to have said, "You can't turn plow horses into thoroughbreds." Opposition to elitism, racism, and classism were the foundations upon which Suffolk

was built. This perspective pervaded every contact we had from the president to the classroom teacher. This is a strong value for the counseling center as well.

Formal policies were written, available and thorough. All interns and staff members had copies of these written policies and interns reported that they were familiarized with these during orientation.

## **Domain B: Program Philosophy, Objectives, and Training Plan**

**The program has a clearly specified philosophy of training, compatible with the mission of its sponsor institution and appropriate to the practice of professional psychology. The internship is an organized professional training program with the goal of providing high quality training in professional psychology. The training model and goals are consistent with its philosophy and objectives. The program has a logical sequence that builds upon the skills and competencies acquired during doctoral training.**

The program publicly states a philosophy of services and training at the center "that focuses on health instead of pathology.. .the belief that growth is assumed to be an ongoing process and that many changes will occur outside of the therapeutic relationship.. .the counseling process is viewed within the larger context of a person's total life experience..." This perspective infuses the model of training used at Suffolk's Counseling Center, along with a developmental/system's perspective.

The training model is labeled as being informed by a practitioner- scholar philosophy and enacted with a focus on the "local clinical scientist" model. It was the observation of the site visitors that the practitioner-scholar model captures well the program's philosophy. While aspects of the "local clinical scientist model" do fit the program, e.g. the emphasis on studying empirical literature, but contextualizing the suggested interventions to the local realities, there seem to be other aspects of the "local clinical scientist" model that fit less well, e.g. the emphasis in that model of evaluating outcomes in a systematic way, which are less apparent in this program.

The center does model well the scholarly approach to psychological practice. Each emphasis area has a seminar with excellent resources, and it is clear that the interns are expected to base their work on established models and to be informed by the literature. Each seminar has an impressive and well organized binder of the syllabus for the seminar along with the readings for the seminar. It is clear that there is an investment in teaching in this program.

Training for practice is sequential. The intern program begins with a well organized orientation period. Interns are given opportunities to shadow people initially, co-present initially and over time to function more independently. The Director of the center reported that with the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> the center realized that prior to that they may have assumed that interns were coming in at a less competent level than they were and they have become a little more willing to let interns begin at a higher level of professional responsibility as appropriate. It is still clear that there is a good amount of oversight and support.

The objectives and competencies expected are laid out very clearly:

- Outreach, Training, and Consultation
- Clinical Services
- Legal, Ethical, Administrative and Professional Issues
- Multicultural Competence
- Supervision Competence

These seem to be consistent with the model and consistent with the substantive areas of psychology.

The internship is well organized, properly administered, planned, structured and provides a programmed sequence of greater depth, duration and frequency than provided in a practicum experience. It is clearly a very solid program with a staff that is invested, committed and dedicated in the areas of training for which they are responsible.

The seminars clearly augment actual clinical, consultation, outreach and supervision experience. In the context of these experiences multicultural issues and ethical and professional issues can be explored. The staff here clearly serve as professional mentors and role models and are highly valued as supervisors. During the regular academic year, intern supervision is regularly scheduled and sufficient relative to the interns' responsibility, assuring at a minimum that a full-time intern will receive 4 hours of supervision per week and at least 2 hours of which will include individual supervision. The center is to be commended for the fact that when an intern's caseload goes above 10 hours per week, each intern is provided with an additional hour of individual supervision by another supervisor. On the other hand, the current model used between May and August, when the senior staff are largely off due to faculty appointments (and 9 month contracts), does not appear to meet the minimal standards set by APA. What has been done during this period is that the Director, who is a licensed psychologist, has been responsible for supervision from May until the beginning of July. He reports that he has chosen to use primarily a group supervision format with the interns since their caseloads are low during this time period. When he leaves, the remainder of the supervisory staff each come in for a two week period until August, and are responsible for supervising the interns during that time period. It was not clear whether or not each intern has received two hours of individual supervision during those two week rotations or not. Former interns did not seem to remember this clearly and current interns have not yet been there for a summer. When this feedback was provided during the feedback session, it seemed that the training director had not been aware that the director was doing supervision in this way in her absence, and he assured the site visitors that this would be corrected this summer.

The content of the internship addresses the application of psychological concepts and current scientific knowledge, principles and theories of professional delivery of psychological services. In particular the Brief Therapies Seminar with its focus on empirically supported treatments and CBT treatments is a good exemplar of this. Many former interns we met with, who were all currently employed in the Boston area, reported that this seminar in particular had really expanded their knowledge base and had provided them with background that had made them particularly marketable following the internship.

The program has a strong administrative structure and process. Dr. Gami, the Director of the center seems to keep an extremely close watch on the clinical services aspects of the center, reporting to the site visitors that he cosigns all the clinical notes of the center's providers, including the licensed senior staff as well as the interns, whose notes are also being signed by their primary supervisors. The physical structure of the center with his office in a central location that opens onto the secretarial and reception area and his reputation for having an open door gives him literal oversight to the functioning of the center. Dr. Busse as Training Director seems to work well in coordination with Dr. Gami, the Director. She seems extremely thorough in her approach to the administration of the

program, providing both interns and the site visitors with extremely detailed documentation of all aspects of the program. Again the physical arrangement of the offices seems to contribute to not only a strong administrative structure, but also to a strong informal collaborative structure as well. It seemed clear to the site visitors that the other training staff look to both Dr. Gami and Dr. Busse for administrative direction and that there is a great deal of respect for each of their contributions.

Dr. Busse as training director is a doctoral psychologist and is appropriately credentialed.

All interns are expected to demonstrate intermediate to advanced level of knowledge and abilities in the following areas:

- (a) *Theories and methods of assessment and diagnosis and effective intervention.* Interns receive excellent supervision and training in effective interventions. As mentioned above, in addition to excellent supervision, the Brief Therapies Seminar seems to offer excellent additive experience in the intervention realm. The model focusing on health seems to place less emphasis on formal diagnosis. Former interns did report that this represented a gap in their training that they needed to compensate for when moving into subsequent positions. Former interns also acknowledged that formal assessment was another gap in the training program here and that there were times when formal assessment might have been helpful, but the resources were not available here. Other interns reported feeling relieved that they had not been expected to do more formal assessment while on internship.
- (b) *Theories and/or methods of consultation, evaluation and supervision.* Consultation and Outreach training here is exceptionally strong. Interns are described by other professionals on campus as being "all over campus". The training seems to be well thought out, organized and it is clear that the center is truly invested in serving the campus community through consultation, outreach and training. The interns are each involved in numerous outreach programs, trainings and at least one consultation project. The coordinator of this area brings a background in community psychology that has really contributed to the strength of this area. Supervision also seems like a strong training component in terms of the training offered by the supervision supervisor and the well detailed supervision seminar. They are provided with an opportunity to supervise master's level students in counseling enrolled in an education and human services program. These master's students are seeing clients in other agencies, get permission to bring their tapes to the center and supervision is provided at the center. An indirect benefit of this experience that was highlighted by the supervision supervisor is that since many of the master's students are working at community agencies, rather than a college counseling center, interns have an opportunity to see the limited resources available for ethnic and the working class poor.
- (c) *Strategies for Scholarly Inquiry.* The interns are provided with both theoretical and research literature in the major areas. There seems to be clear support for research if the intern wants to do that, though it is clearly not expected or demanded of them as a part of this program. It seems more that it would be based on the intern's own motivation to make this happen, if it does happen while on internship.
- (d) *Cultural and Individual Diversity.* The emphasis on multicultural issues in this program is a real strength of the program at all levels, from staff composition, intern selection, to seminar training specifically focused on these issues, to the ways in which these

issues are infused in other training experiences, to the commitment of the staff and university as a whole to diversity issues. This will be detailed in Domain D.

The program takes seriously its responsibility to further the training of intern and to promote the integration of practice and scholarly inquiry.

It seems clear that in this program there is a very healthy balance between service delivery tasks and training activities. The fact that the center is a unit in the College of Arts and Sciences and that the staff are faculty in that college, permeates the culture of the center, and contributes to a valuing of the training activities and scholarly expertise of the professional staff.

Intern selection at the center seems to be a very careful process. A great deal of time is spent interviewing 24 applicants in person each year. Each applicant has an opportunity to meet with each senior staff member individually. The center seems invested in determining that the match is good between the applicant's training, interests and experiences and what the center has to offer, in addition the center seems invested in achieving diversity in its intern cohort in a way that is broadly defined. This year for example, two of the interns are from Europe and are fluent in foreign languages. Suffolk has a very large international student population so this is an important dimension.

The center has clearly documented the expectations placed on interns for satisfactory completion of the internship program and a thorough evaluation system for interns. This will be further addressed Domain E, item 4.

### **Domain C: Program Resources**

**The program demonstrates that it possess resources of appropriate quality and sufficiency to achieve its training goals and objectives.**

The program has formally designated intern training supervisors who:

- (a) Clearly serve as an integral part of the agency and are all here full-time for the academic year. They have a variety of responsibilities, including clinical service delivery, supervision, teaching, consultation, outreach and training. During the summer, the director works from May until the beginning of July and other staff come into the center on a rotating basis for two week periods between July and August. Dr. Busse as training director reports that even though she is not on contract to be there during much of the summer, she is often in the center. She returns at the beginning of August.
- (b) The training supervisors are of sufficient number for the number of interns. There are 5 full-time professional staff psychologists and three full-time interns.
- (c) The training supervisors are all doctoral level psychologists, who are licensed in Massachusetts.
- (d) The training supervisors are responsible both through their individual supervision with interns and through the seminars that each training supervisor teaches for reviewing the empirical bases of the professional services the interns are delivering.
- (e) The training supervisors at Suffolk's counseling center seem to be of very high quality,

committed to teaching and training as well as to service delivery. They also each seem to clearly demonstrate a commitment to multiculturalism and to serving the greater Suffolk community. This seems very consistent with their model.

- (f) The training faculty all seem to participate actively in the program, and with each intern in multiple ways. The staff has both formal and informal time to discuss the program, the interns and potential changes. Each intern has a seminar with each senior staff member and each seminar leader is involved in evaluating each intern's performance in their area of training. Even the configuration of the space seems to support a level of closeness and familiarity among the relatively small staff.
- (g) The training supervisors clearly serve as professional role models for the interns. Several former interns commented on the staff here serving as professional role models for them. In fact they reported that one of the challenges of leaving Suffolk's counseling center was that the staff was of such a high quality here and so supportive of them, and healthy in their dealing with one another, that it made adjusting to some less supportive environments a challenge. They hope to bring some of the culture of Suffolk to their new work settings. This seems like a very strong statement about role modeling. More than one former intern joked that they want to be Wilma (Dr. Busse) when they grow up.

It seems clear that the majority of the training is provided by the intern training supervisors, but a review of the intern seminar syllabi, does make it clear that some outside speakers with relevant and appropriate training and expertise are brought in from time to time. In addition it was highlighted that being located in Boston provides an opportunity for additional excellent training experiences.

The program has an identifiable body of interns who:

- (a) Are of sufficient number. Three full-time interns seem to provide a meaningful cohort for the interns. The amount of time they spend together in training seminars, and the proximity of their offices provides adequate opportunities for them to interact, provide support to one another and to socialize.
- (b) The interns are from appropriate institutions granting doctoral degrees in psychology. All current interns are from accredited programs.
- (c) All interns had completed appropriate and adequate practica as documented on their AAPI's in their application packets.
- (d) All interns had interests, aptitudes and prior academic training and practica that made them a good match for the site.
- (e) All interns, while not necessarily being able to label the model, were able to speak articulately about the training philosophy of the center, and understood the goals and objectives of the program.
- (f) All interns have meaningful involvement in activities and decision to enhance the internship. Several current interns and former interns commented on the sense of freedom they felt to go to Dr. Busse and speak freely about concerns they might have had about the program. They were also able to give examples of how things in the program were altered as a result of concerns that were raised. In addition, several

seminar leaders highlighted how their seminars were tailored to the needs expressed by a particular intern cohort.

- (g) All interns have signs on their office doors labeling them as Doctoral Interns, and all professionals from other units seemed very clear of their status as interns.

The program has the necessary additional resources required to achieve its training goals and objectives. The director of the counseling center clearly is a respected and long standing member of the Suffolk community and when additional resources have been needed, he has been able to secure them from upper level administrators, who seem to hold him in high regard.

Intern stipends are more than adequate at this point in time. Due to concerns about the Fair Labor Standards Act, the institution chose to raise intern stipends to \$23, 660 to meet the minimum, rather than to resort to making other changes in the program. Following this increase, the administration will be giving an annual increment to incoming interns for the next year, raising the stipend to \$24,000. It was brought to the site visitors' attention that only \$2700 is budgeted for staff development activities for the staff as a whole. Some staff felt that this amount was not adequate for a staff of five full time professionals. Dr. Garni did indicate that he is sometimes able to juggle the budget to provide additional resources when a legitimate need arises.

The clerical support at the center at this time consists of one full time secretary who serves the center. Intern records are maintained using Titanium, a user friendly scheduling and record keeping system. This has been a recent change for the center and those we spoke with seem enthusiastic about it.

All offices are equipped with recently purchased video equipment that is hooked into the computer system. Several interns report that videotaping their clinical work is now easier than ever before, and several supervisors are now more regularly reviewing client sessions of their supervisees. Books and videos on topics of relevance are also available in a staff meeting room. The physical facilities are just adequate at present, but do not allow room for growth or expansion of program offerings. Each intern has his or her own office, and offices are nicely furnished and of adequate size. All offices including senior staff offices open onto a central waiting/reception/office area. The design of the space contributes to a sense of collegiality, and provides the director with a good overview of the ebb and flow of the center activities. There are two downsides to the space: Half of the offices are facing a main street near Massachusetts General Hospital and the street noises, e.g. police sirens, ambulances, honking horns, can be experienced as very intrusive in the work of psychotherapy, where clients may be soft spoken, anxious etc. and were intrusive even in the context of our meetings. The second downside is that there is no room for growth. For example, the staff conference room, also serves as the library and the file storage area, and would not really be an appropriate space for group therapy, an area that they would like to be able to develop a bit more. They are eliminating the paper files so that will be less of an issue, but the space is still tight. From talking with higher level administrators, it seems the university has recently acquired a new luxury high rise building and different units may be relocated there over time. As offices are potentially being relocated, the center could certainly benefit from, some additional space. Whether it would be better for the center to relocate to that new building or remain in its current location with additional space there should be considered in terms of its accessibility to students, its proximity to other offices of relevance, and the potential quietness of a new space compared to the current space. The noise was striking to the site visitors who frankly come from quieter communities. It is not clear whether other offices at Suffolk may be quieter, or whether

that is a reality of life in the city. The training setting seems appropriate to the program's training model.

### **Domain D: Cultural and Individual Differences and Diversity**

**The program recognizes the importance of cultural and individual differences and diversity in the training of psychologists.**

The training program had certainly attempted to attract and retain diverse staff and interns with considerable success. Staff members were diverse across multiple dimensions including: race, ethnicity, languages spoken, theoretical orientation, areas of expertise, gender, age, and personality. Intern classes over the past several years were diverse as well with a high proportion of international students. This seemed particularly appropriate since students at Suffolk come from 110 different countries.

Multicultural perspectives pervaded every aspect of the training program. All seminars, individual supervision, and case conference placed considerable focus on individual differences and cultural context. The multicultural seminar particularly focused on the needs and interests of each class of interns. All current and former interns cited this as one of the strongest aspects of the training program. The seminar leader sends out surveys about interns' interests, experience, and expertise and then redesigns the seminar each year to be maximally useful to each particular class of interns. In addition, the students seen in the counseling service were very diverse, reflecting the student body at Suffolk.

### **Domain E: Intern-Staff Relations**

**The program demonstrates that its education, training, and socialization experiences are characterized by mutual respect and courtesy between interns and training staff and that it operates in a manner that facilitates interns' training and educational experiences.**

The internship program at Suffolk University has effectively demonstrated that its education, training and socialization experiences are characterized by mutual respect and courtesy between interns and training staff.

Interns seem to be very well treated at the internship program. The Legal Ethical, Administrative and Professional (LEAP) Seminar certainly provides adequate training and exposure to the APA Ethical Code.

Program training staff members appear to be very accessible to the interns. There is generally an open door policy and interns know that they can seek consultation when needed from any staff member who has an open door. Dr. Garni, in particular, was generally described as having his door open as he is less frequently directly involved in clinical work. The interns' involvement in the crisis system, whereby they cover several crisis hours per week, seems to be an excellent example of where this open door policy is implemented. All interns knew that they would be able to seek consultation as needed from Dr. Garni, or any staff member who had an open door, whether it was their primary supervisor or not. In addition with the addition of the Titanium scheduling system, they can easily see what each staff member may be doing behind a closed door and can then determine what activities can easily be interrupted and who could be disturbed if the need arose. At the same time the staff is being very accessible to the interns, it should be highlighted that the staff is also very involved with the greater campus community and seems to be highly respected on campus. The director, who has been at the center for 36

years is known to everyone on campus and is highly respected, from the President on down.

It seems clear that cultural and individual diversity in the intern cohort is desired, valued and appreciated. Efforts are made to maximize diversity in the cohort.

The intern handbook that the interns receive upon arrival at the internship is very thorough, and provides excellent documentation. Intern files included completed evaluation forms that included not only the minimum required measures, but also contained substantive qualitative feedback. There were no files that seemed to reveal any required remediation plans for interns. In reviewing the intern files, it did seem to the site visitors that the culture of the center was generally to be very positive on written intern evaluation forms, rather than to more clearly lay out the areas of needed growth and development for the interns. It seemed to the site visitors that the supervisors were probably providing more substantive feedback for growth areas in their actual supervision than they may tend to in their written comments. The supervisors know there is a due process system, but seemed to indicate that they would go to Dr. Busse if there is a problem. The site visitors did provide some feedback that including areas for growth and development from the beginning in the intern evaluation process is an important component of the evaluation system and can be particularly essential if there is ever a real problem that would require the due process system to be used.

The center does have an appropriate intern certificate that it issues at the completion of the program..

## **Domain F: Program Self-Assessment and Quality Enhancement**

**The program demonstrates a commitment to excellence through self-study, which assures that its goals and objectives are met, enhances the quality of professional education and training obtained by its interns and training staff, and contributes to the fulfillment of its host institution's mission.**

The program had clear application requirements and selection criteria. Evaluation was extensive. All evaluations were completed and included in the interns' files. Supervisors give formal feedback regarding intern performance on objectives twice per year. In addition, informal feedback was given and received on a weekly basis.

Interns completed evaluations of their primary supervisor every fall and spring and evaluated every training seminar and training component on a similar schedule.

The training staff meets regularly and reviews outcome data and makes changes to the training program based upon this feedback. Outcome results indicate consistently high level of satisfaction with the training program. Training in outreach and consultation, providing supervision, legal, ethical and professional issues, and multicultural seminars were very highly rated. Subjective feedback given to these site visitors was consistent with these results. Both training staff and current and former interns noted that Dr. Busse, the training director, was very receptive to feedback and made changes to the training program as a result of feedback.

Outcomes tended to be evaluated primarily top down with regard to intern performance. Supervisors evaluated interns, but there was no systematic effort to survey consumers. Satisfaction with particular intern's services or problem resolution or goal attainment as a

result of treatment would be a useful added dimension of evaluation.

In reviewing the training program, three areas of relative weakness were identified: therapy groups only rarely occurred, and training in formal diagnosis and test-based assessment left former interns needing to supplement training post-internship to work effectively in subsequent employment.

Resources and opportunity for professional development were provided. The budget for continuing education for staff was \$2700 in the last fiscal year. The director indicated that despite this small budget he had consistently found funds to meet his staffs continuing education needs.

The training program is very highly valued by the university. The Training director receives \$7000 in supplemental salary for her training duties. Intern salaries have increased substantially since the last site visit. During the current year salaries were increased in order to reach the FLSA levels and next years intern salaries will include another raise to \$24,000. Staff are allowed ample time in their schedules for training activities and supervision.

## **Domain G: Public Disclosure**

**The program demonstrates its commitment to public disclosure by providing written materials and other communications that appropriately represent it to the relevant publics.**

The program is described accurately and completely in the internship website that is available to all prospective interns.

Its goals, objectives and training models as described in the self study are included in the website in a very similar form. The site visitors did note that the written materials could give applicants a sense that the program has a stronger exclusively Cognitive Behavioral Therapy focus than it actually does. The seminar provides excellent training but is really viewed as an additive training experience, rather than reflecting a strong orientation of the center. The other aspect of the training program that the materials could clarify is the minimal amount of group work that is happening. Applicants reported that this was made clear at the time of the interview, but was not as clear in the written materials. The selection process and the application process are laid out clearly in their website. The website includes links to autobiographical statements written by each staff member and each current intern. Generally it seems very thorough.

Its status with regard to accreditation is also laid out very clearly in a section on the first page labeled accreditations.

## **Domain H: Relationship with Accrediting Body**

**The internship program demonstrates its commitment to the accreditation process by fulfilling its responsibilities to the accrediting body from which its accredited status is granted.**

The training program appears to be in compliance with all published policies pertaining to its recognition as an accredited internship site.

All communications with the accrediting body have been timely.

All bills have been paid, and the program has maintained a good relationship with the accrediting body.

