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Goals and Means

The Doctor of Psychology program in clinical psychology aims to educate psychologists for practice in clinical and other applied professional settings.

The program does not adhere to a single model for training all students. It aims to provide the student with a solid foundation in clinical work, including the basic areas of psychology, within which much of clinical practice is grounded. Didactic training in basic psychological principles is coupled with practical, graduated instruction in a range of assessment and intervention modes. While advancing through the training program, the student has the opportunity to specialize in intervention modes oriented around several of the most widely accepted theoretical positions, and within particular problem areas of clinical treatment. Infused into all educational and training experiences are awareness of, sensitivity to, and consideration of appropriate approaches for

individual differences, such as those associated with ethnicity, culture, race, gender, sexual orientation, and national origin.

While encouraging the student to gain a broad appreciation of the roots of contemporary clinical practices, the program also encourages development of both student and faculty interest in areas of clinical and applied work that are innovative in nature -- one of the most important functions of a university. To this end, faculty members are engaged in applied scholarly or research programs oriented around new intervention modes and new modes of relating to societal issues. Students are encouraged to work in these programs.

Clinical training within a professional school of psychology permits the student to be immersed immediately in issues directly relevant to clinical and applied work. The student is encouraged to develop a specialty cluster focusing on an area of specific interest. This might be reflected in concentration within a specific theoretical orientation such as cognitive behavioral, psychodynamic, or systems; or a particular problem area such as children, community/organizational, marital, serious mental illness, anxiety disorders, substance abuse, or sport psychology. Specialty areas are designed by the student in consultation with his or her adviser.

There has been considerable change in professional clinical psychology during the past decade as managed care has influenced health care in general and resulted in diminished public access to mental health services. There is evidence, however, that the pendulum is slowly swinging back toward giving consumers increased protection and better access to services.

Along with the pressure of managed care requiring increasingly time-efficient interventions, another converging pressure for change has come from the development of empirically-based interventions in clinical treatment. These are treatment procedures that have a sound base of empirical support demonstrating their beneficial effects. Fortunately, a number of the GSAPP faculty have been intimately involved in the development of some of these treatment methods and are well positioned to educate students about these techniques.

Sensitive to the changing health care delivery system, GSAPP's goal is to produce graduates who will assume leadership roles in improving the development and delivery of mental health services, both in managed care and non managed care settings.

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