

Preparing Future Psychology Faculty at the University of New Hampshire

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The University of New Hampshire (UNH), located in Durham near the seacoast, is a residential public research-extensive institution with a total enrollment of about 13,000 students, over 10,000 of whom are undergraduates. The University offers a broad range of undergraduate and graduate programs. Doctoral degrees are offered in over 20 areas of specialization. Students are predominantly in the 18 to 23 age range. Most students are from New England, but a significant number are from other parts of the US and other countries. About 50% of undergraduate students are not residents of New Hampshire. The University also has an urban campus in Manchester, New Hampshire with an enrollment of about 1,500 undergraduates. The Manchester campus enrolls a diverse mix of adults and traditional college-age students.

The goal of the UNH PhD program in psychology since its start in the 1960s has been to prepare psychologists to secure faculty positions (Benassi & Fernald, 1993). Its centerpiece has been the background students receive in the area of college teaching and other faculty roles (Benassi & Fernald, 1991; 1993; Fernald, 1995; *Ferren, Gaff, & Clayton-Pedersen, 2002*).

In addition to engaging in coursework and research training, students participate in experiences designed to prepare them for a full range of faculty roles. These experiences vary depending on students' positions in the program. First-year students participate in a graduate proseminar and gain teaching and research assistant experience. Second-year students participate in teaching and research assistant experience, complete coursework in the UNH Summer Institute on College Teaching, prepare for teaching in their third year, and visit other colleges and universities. Third-year students participate in a two-semester Practicum and Seminar in the Teaching of Psychology, coursework in the Summer Institute on College

Teaching, and visits to other colleges and universities. They also take the first part of a specialty exam designed to prepare them for teaching a course in their specialty area during fourth year. Finally, fourth- and fifth-year doctoral students may teach in their specialty area, visit other colleges and universities, and prepare for the job search. They take the second part of a specialty exam designed to prepare them for their doctoral dissertation.

Experiences Related to Teaching, Research, and Service

Teaching

During the spring of their second year in the program and over the summer, students scheduled to teach Introductory Psychology begin to work with the next teacher of the Practicum and Seminar in the Teaching of Psychology. They enroll in Preparing to Teach a Psychology Course. Several important topics and tasks are addressed early in the process of preparing to teach the introductory course: the purposes of the introductory psychology course, principles of test construction and grading practices, classroom teaching methods, selection of textbooks and other materials for the introductory psychology course, preparation of a course syllabus, and preparation of several teaching modules (Benassi, Jordan, & Harrison, 1994). This course was made available in 2002 to doctoral students from universities other than UNH through support from the American Psychological Association (APA; Murray, 2002). To date, students from the following universities have participated in the course: Claremont Graduate University, Dartmouth College, Howard University, Miami University, Oklahoma State University, State University of New York at Albany, University of Colorado at Boulder, University of Connecticut, University of Georgia, University of Missouri at Columbia, and Yale University.

The Department offers a Practicum and Seminar in the Teaching of Psychology each fall and spring semester. Four senior professors take turns teaching this course. It provides third-year doctoral students with an academic foundation for teaching psychology. Concurrent with the course, students teach one section of Introductory Psychology during the fall and spring semesters. The Practicum and Seminar includes coverage of a broad range of topics

concerning teaching and learning, with special emphasis on the teaching of psychology. In addition, students receive group and individual supervision of their teaching. On several occasions the teacher observes doctoral students teaching their course. These students are also videotaped while teaching. The teacher observes the videotape with the students and provides feedback on their performance.

Students complete two specialty requirements. The first requirement is an exam geared toward preparing them to teach a survey course and providing them common background in their specialty area. The second requirement focuses on more in-depth study in students' areas of research specialization. During their fourth year and perhaps the fifth year, students teach a survey course in their specialty area and often an introductory course in statistics, with assistance and guidance from Psychology Department faculty.

Research and Service

Doctoral students work on research from the beginning of their studies in a specialty area offered in the department—brain, behavior, and cognition; human development; history of psychology; social and personality. The nature of this involvement varies with their prior background, interests, and seniority in the program. Graduate students continue to be productive, as evidenced by presentations at research conferences and by publications (cf. Benassi & Fernald, 1993). Students are also routinely involved in service activities for the Department (e.g., hiring committee), graduate school (e.g., Graduate Student Organization), and University (e.g., Women's Commission). Informal surveys of program graduates have indicated such service activities have served them well both during the job interview process and on the job.

Faculty as Advisors and Mentors

Graduate Proseminar

First-year doctoral students take a required two-semester proseminar that is taught by a senior faculty member. The proseminar meets biweekly for two hours. It focuses on the following areas: forming a professional identity, meeting Psychology Department faculty and

learning about their careers, establishing professional relationships with faculty, becoming knowledgeable about ethical issues in research and teaching, and developing a first-year talk. (Students prepare and deliver an end-of-the-year research presentation.) The proseminar includes presentations by Psychology faculty, staff of the Graduate School, the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, the Psychology Department's administrative coordinator, and advanced graduate students. A Preparing Future Faculty in Psychology Project Coordinator provides detailed information on the Psychology Department and university-wide efforts in the area of faculty development.

Interactions with Faculty from Other Institutions

The Psychology Department arranges visits to colleges and universities so that it's doctoral students meet faculty from places different than UNH and learn about what it is like to work at such places. The Psychology Department has sponsored visits to Howard University, St. Anselm College, University of New Hampshire at Manchester, Keene State College, and Dartmouth College. We selected these institutions for two main reasons. First, each differs on several dimensions (e.g., mission, size, location) from UNH and each other. Second, we already had good relationships with faculty from these institutions, making it relatively easy to establish the campus visits initiative.

Job Search

The preliminary stages of the job search process begin during students' third year of graduate study, when the teacher of the Practicum and Seminar in the Teaching of Psychology assists them in preparing a curriculum vitae and the beginnings of a professional portfolio. During the year that students begin the job search, faculty offer advice and assistance on identifying job openings, preparing cover letters, finalizing the portfolio, and preparing research- and teaching-oriented job talks.

Since the early 1990s, over 75% of the graduates of the program have secured faculty positions at the full range of postsecondary institutions—community colleges (e.g., New Hampshire Community Technical College), liberal arts colleges (e.g., Hobart and William

Smith College, Willamette University), comprehensive universities (e.g., Armstrong Atlantic State University, State University of New York College at Geneseo), research universities (e.g., College of William and Mary, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick Campus). If we include only those students who attempted to secure academic positions, the percentage is even higher. (Occasional graduates of our program seek career opportunities outside of academe—for example, in business, industry, or consulting.) Some of the program graduates first complete a post-doctoral fellowship before applying for a faculty position.

Integrating the Department Program with Other UNH Programs

We urge students to take advantage of several faculty development programs available at UNH—university-wide Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program, Academic Program in College Teaching (APCT), Summer Institute on College Teaching, and Center for Teaching Excellence. Through the APCT, most Psychology students work toward earning a minor in college teaching (granted in conjunction with the conferral of the PhD), while a smaller percentage work toward earning a master's degree in college teaching (a non-thesis degree that is also granted in conjunction with conferral of the PhD) (Seidel, Benassi, & Richards, in press). Students earn academic credit by taking courses in the summer teaching institute. UNH sponsors a university-wide PFF Program, and most Psychology students participate in program activities such as the PFF Breakfast/Lunch series during which students from across the University discuss, often with faculty guests from other colleges or universities, a variety of important issues (e.g., academic freedom, the job search, managing an academic career).

Dissemination Activities

The APA Education Directorate provides national leadership for the **Preparing Future Faculty Program in Psychology** (Nelson & Morreale, 2002; <<http://www.preparing-faculty.org/PFFWeb.Contents.htm#about>>). APA awarded grants to four institutions, including UNH, to develop and disseminate PFF programs. UNH PFF participants—both faculty and doctoral students—have been involved a variety of ways to disseminate

information about the UNH program to leaders of other psychology doctoral programs. Some examples of dissemination activities include presentations at the annual APA convention; participation in other national and regional meetings; offering workshops to Psychology faculty, administrators, and graduate students from other institutions where there is an interest in learning about the PFF initiative and in developing a PFF program.

Conclusion

The UNH Psychology PFF program has a firm institutional footing and a steady funding stream from permanent University funds. Students leave the program with several feathers in their caps related to their teaching, research, and service skills and accomplishments. Graduates have done very well on the job market, with the overwhelming majority securing faculty positions (Benassi & Fernald, 1993). This consistent commitment and support are essential to the program's success. As the landscape of doctoral education continues to change in significant ways, traditional programs that prepare doctoral students primarily as scholars/researchers, while ignoring other aspects of their professional development, will be viewed increasingly as offering necessary but insufficient preparation for a productive faculty career (Seidel et al., in press).

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