



HUS 37/28

Tabled by Chair

Date May 2, 2017

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Dr Paulette Hunter
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology
St. Thomas More College
1437 College Dr.
Saskatoon, Sk. S7N 0W6

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Paulette Hunter", written over a horizontal line.

Dear Dr Hunter:

I write in response to your letter expressing 'deep concern' about the closure of the clinical psychology residency program. I would like to offer our reasons, and perhaps clarify some misunderstanding. As you had copied your letter to other individuals, and as I am responding to them as well, I will perhaps provide more detail than you feel is necessary.

Firstly, RQHR is not cancelling the program. At this point we have only decided upon a one-year hiatus, beginning in September 2018. Our current residency commitments to students will be met.

Secondly, it is important to note that the Pre-doctoral Residency, with two students per year, is only one of the ways in which we support psychologist education and training. We also have a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Regina that allows us to support up to 17 students per year. We remain committed to this partnership with the U of R. Additionally, we are obligated, and pleased, to provide clinical supervision to provisionally registered psychologists on staff (most of whom are U of R grads). This work will continue as well. Supervision and training of professional staff, including psychologists, is and will continue to be a priority for RQHR.

Your note indicates that this is an inexpensive program for the Region. However, I must point out that you've under-estimated the costs. RQHR usually takes two students each year – these have always been from outside Saskatchewan, at a cost to the region of approximately \$72,000 per year. There are, however, additional costs associated with supervision. You've asserted that the supervision for these students could require as little as four hours per week, with half of that via regular team meetings. That has not been our experience. We currently dedicate 0.80 FTE, Ph.D. Psychologist to coordinate supervision and training in addition to the other psychologists that share in the supervision of these residents. While residency supervision is a valuable role, and one that has been capably fulfilled, this responsibility also takes away from direct clinical service.

Another contributing factor to our decision has been the need to balance our responsibility to the Pre-doctoral Residency with our commitment to partnership with the University of Regina. We have struggled to keep up with this commitment after the addition of the residency program. We feel that, for a short time at least, if we don't focus on one initiative or the other, we will fail to achieve the objectives of both. Having to make that difficult choice, we've chosen to honor our commitment to our local university – in no small part due to the fact that their students are more likely to settle and work in public service in RQHR. Of the 18 CPA residents (it appears from your note that you have incorrect information) over the past ten years only 7 remain employed by the region. Most of our other Psychologist positions are encumbered by U of R graduates.

You have remarked that taking a one-year hiatus may jeopardize the future of our accreditation status as a training program. In fact, the national accrediting body includes provisions for residency programs to take a one-year hiatus – which is precisely why we chose to do so.

In your note you make reference to the doubling of service capacity of some psychologists; our experience has been the opposite. Pre-doctoral residents have a maximum caseload of 12 clients, and their supervisor has a caseload of four. The average caseload of a full-time Psychologist is around 40-45 clients. While we do not want to diminish the role that residents can play in providing care, your suggestion that they are providing a significant amount of care would be incorrect. (By comparison, if our 0.80 supervision and training coordinator were devoted exclusively to seeing clients, her caseload would be larger than the two residents and herself as supervisor, combined. This is not including the added capacity of other psychologists who actually provide the day to day supervision.)

I hope this helps to clarify some of your concerns and correct some misconceptions. Our hope is to review our continuance after our one year hiatus which is an option offered by CPA and according to our representative not uncommon. Thank you for your support of clinical training of psychologists. We continue to support our local university to train students of psychology including those at the doctoral level.

Sincerely,



Lorri Carlson, MA, APE registered psychologist
Executive Director of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region

