



November 18, 2015

Dear Members of AASCB:

We are writing today regarding the evolving conversation that the counseling profession has been experiencing during the last several years regarding educational requirements.

The primary mission of AASCB is the protection of the public. AASCB holds a unique position due to this mission in relationship to other national counseling associations. Our members are regulators, and as such our focus must be on what is best for the consumers of counseling. This mission sometimes creates challenges as we deal with the development of counseling as a profession. While much that has taken place is positive for the public in the last several years, one area continues to cause difficulties. The attempt to find a way to agree upon educational standards has led to a splintering of our profession, rather than to consensus.

An analysis undertaken by the AASCB Executive Board, spearheaded by Dr. Susan Meyerle, PhD, currently president-elect of AASCB, resulted in the findings below:

***Several states have already begun to adopt the recommendation of the five-year proposal for endorsement. Delaware, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Oklahoma, Vermont, Ohio, Idaho, District of Columbia, and Utah (if someone has worked 4,000 hours) have all adopted, via statute, rule, or policy, a five-year endorsement process. Arizona has approved issuing a license after three years of licensure in another state. Virginia has approved issuing a license after two years of licensure in another state. Additional states allow for licensure after five years of practice, however, the applicant must still meet specific rules of licensure in the new state.***

***Educational requirements vary greatly from state to state. Thirty-four states currently require 60 hours of coursework in a Master's program as a basic requirement for licensure. Only nine states still require 48 hours for a Master's degree requirement. Most of the remaining states have somewhat vague language referring to consistency with current CACREP standards, although a couple of states do not list minimum hours for a Master's-degreed applicant.***

***Areas of specific coursework vary greatly as well. One state requires coursework in three categories while other states have sixteen and seventeen categories of coursework for licensure. Every state includes Human Growth and Development, Research, Professional Orientation and Ethics, and Counseling Theories and/or Helping Relationships. The majority of states also require Social/Cultural Foundations, Group Therapy, and Individual Appraisal or Assessment/Diagnosis coursework. CACREP is the educational standard consistent across most states with 23 states approving applications for licensure through CACREP.***

As regulators, our primary concern must be the protection of the public. Because of this, we believe that counseling programs, in whatever university situation in which they are housed, require a process that makes sure that the program itself, not only the university, is accountable to something other than itself or its own department. A program that follows an educational curriculum without an external reviewing body that holds the program accountable to specific standards, no matter what its best intentions are, is subject to internal bias. As regulators, the granting of licenses to well-prepared licensure applicants is the essential activity of our boards. Preparation includes excellent and accountable educational programs that assure the student of a solid professional identity and excellence in teaching.

CACREP currently offers this external accountability process, as described above. However, the reality of our profession is that many universities are unable to meet the standards of external accountability offered by the CACREP process. This may be due to a concern that the cost is prohibitive or to an understanding by the program that its professors would be unacceptable according to the CACREP standards. Additionally, some universities have elected to seek accreditation via a different accrediting body.

As currently constituted, the accountability **process** offered by CACREP offers an effective method for securing the best and broadest path for meeting these requirements and for making it possible for us to meet our regulatory mission. However, this process is aspirational for many excellent programs, programs that for the reasons outlined above have not chosen to seek CACREP accreditation.

We have reached the conclusion that the **process** of CACREP accreditation, not only the CACREP standards, is best for consumers as CACREP is the leading national, accrediting body for counseling programs. Creating consistency in the realm of accreditation will result in consistency of scope of practice and regulation of counselors across state lines. This uniformity will, in turn, mean greater protection of the public and access by the public to quality, regulated care. However, we are also keenly aware that this conclusion may mean little to states that have many universities that do not yet embrace these standards and that may consequently have little interest in making changes to their statutes and rules.

We are aware that many programs, especially those whose degrees are part of counseling psychology programs, will find this a difficult message to hear. The roots of counseling are clearly part of the counseling psychology world, and the many great psychologists and psychological theories on whose shoulders counseling stands deserve acknowledgement and thanks. However, the tipping point has been reached. Our profession needs to stand on its own, grateful for the past, but looking toward the future.

Although this may be another decade in reaching fruition, we are writing to let you know that, in order to provide the best possible outcome for the public, AASCB encourages State Boards to consider the costs and benefits of accepting CACREP as the industry standard. As more states and national organizations endorse one accrediting body, AASCB recognizes this momentum and the need for unified academic standards. At the same time, AASCB reiterates the need for liberal grandfathering options for individuals who did not have the opportunity to attend institutions that are CACREP-approved.

Yours, for counseling,

The AASCB Executive Board

CC: ACA (Thelma Duffey, David Kaplan, Richard Yep)  
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