
Brief History of NRC Rankings and Comment on their Importance

The National Academies

- Non-profit institutions that, under a congressional charter, provide policy advice and services to the government, the public, and to the communities of science, engineering, and health
 - National Academy of Science
 - National Academy of Engineering
 - Institute of Medicine
 - National Research Council

National Research Council

- Established in 1916
- NRC has become the principal operating agency of both the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering
- Beginning in 1983, the NRC has evaluated research doctorate programs about every 10 years (most recently in 1995)

NRC Evaluations/Rankings

- Began primarily as a ranking base on reputation
- Have become increasingly quantitative
- The current ranking will be entirely quantitative
- Very detailed methodology that clearly surpasses that in similar ranking efforts

Concerns of CCPTP with the NRC Methodology

- Current evaluation process began with the development of a taxonomy of fields and subfields
- Major categories:
 - Life Sciences
 - Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering
 - Social and Behavioral Sciences
 - Arts and Humanities

Criteria for Fields

- Began with NSF's Doctorate Records File
- Added new fields that met quantitative criteria
 - 500 doctorates in past 5 years
 - At least 25 institutions with programs that produced at least 3 doctorates in the last 3 years
- Psychology emerged as a field

Subfields for Psychology

- Subfields originally proposed for psychology were very limited and archaic
- Omissions included clinical psychology, social psychology, counseling psychology, and others
- APA and CCPTP formally responded to the request for comments in about 2005

Final Subfields for Psychology

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ■ Biological | ■ Developmental |
| ■ Clinical | ■ Health |
| ■ Cognition & Perception | ■ I/O |
| ■ Cognitive | ■ Personality and Social Contexts |
| ■ Community | ■ Social Psychology |

Early Concerns about the Omission of Counseling Psychology

- Would rank clinical programs but not counseling
 - Bad press, bad for recruiting, and potentially threatening to survival
- The productivity of counseling psychologists would not be counted toward department's ranking
 - Definite threat to the survival of programs in psychology departments

Actual Outcomes will be Less Severe

- NRC will rank only fields and not subfields
- The work of all faculty in psychology departments will be counted
 - But counseling faculty will have to list clinical as the closest subfield

We Should Still be Concerned

- “The names of subfields are provided to serve two purposes:
 - To assist institutions in placing their programs in the fields of the taxonomy
 - To indicate areas of research of program faculty **so that prospective students will have an indicator of what research specialties exist in each field**”

We Should Still be Concerned (cont.)

- Close relationship between the NRC and granting agencies, particularly NSF
 - May make it harder for counseling faculty to obtain funding
- Perpetuates the perspective of counseling psychology as being an “illegitimate outsider”
 - Within our institutions
 - Within our field

Ten Years to Fix the Problem

■ Obstacles

- Most programs are in colleges of education (not evaluated by NRC)
- It is not clear that quantitative criteria were applied to subfields, but this is a potential problem
- CP not well recognized as a research discipline
- Division within our own ranks on how to respond to this issue

Ten Years to Fix the Problem (cont.)

■ Assets

- Produce many doctorates
- Have become much more politically influential within APA, creating a strong potential ally
- Have committed leaders who can educate the NRC, and other groups, about our commitment to science and research and our research productivity

Goal

- Counseling Psychology listed as a subfield
 - Minimally listed as clinical/counseling
- Will greatly assist programs in psychology departments
- Will benefit all programs by raising the visibility of the discipline