**New Master’s Accreditation: Summary of Roundtable Discussion**

A roundtable discussion of the new master’s accreditation took place at the CCPTP 2011 midwinter conference in Tamaya, NM. The roundtable was conducted after a presentation of the history and current state of master’s education in counseling psychology. The roundtable discussion was attended by 47 members of CCPTP, representing their respective counseling psychology training programs.

**Discussion points**

1. CCPTP’s role is to address training and accreditation issues for master’s level education, and SCP will not have a formal role in the master’s training and accreditation issue. Our understanding is that SCP will examine master’s education within the context across the spectrum of professional practice.
2. MPAC stands for Master’s in Psychology Accreditation Council. This organization will become Master’s in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council (MPCAC). MPAC, soon to be MPCAC, has not been approved as yet by CHEA (Council of Higher Education Council). This will be a next step after launching the new accreditation. It is believed that with increased numbers resulting from more master’s education programs from counseling psychology becoming MPCAC accredited, MPCAC will be able to obtain CHEA. Previously, MPAC membership had consisted of fewer than 20 institutions. With the increased numbers, CHEA designation would become more viable.
3. The Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) of APA has discussed master’s accreditation issues for decades. BEA has training guidelines (Benchmark Competencies?) for each level of training except the master’s level. Barry Chung has been on a task group to draft statements about BEA’s perspective on master’s education and accreditation. The statement communicates a recognition that we train master’s level people in psychology and we should attend to the issues involved in that process. Barry Chung encourages our support of BEA’s agenda to address master’s level training. One outcome could be that APA endorses master’s level training or endorses different levels of practice. SCP has initiated the process of addressing the master’s training issue by starting a special task group led by Barry Chung and Cindy Juntunen. They have done their work and have ‘sunsetted’ the Master’s Training Issue STG because APA states that no individual Division should address accreditation issues. Barry and Cindy will still work on this issue in their roles as individuals apart from their roles within SCP. Thus, CCPTP is the counseling psychology organization that has formally taken on the business of master’s accreditation and training.
4. Our relationship with MPAC originated when Barry Chung and Cindy Juntunen chaired the SCP task group on the master’s training issue and the CACREP issue, and found people in counselor education who were dissatisfied with CACREP. Barry was introduced to that group and worked with them. CAMPP (Council of Applied Master’s Programs in Psychology) approached Barry and asked him to look into MPAC. CCPTP had entertained the possibility of starting a new accrediting body on our own, but we believed it would cost too much money and take too much time. A sense of urgency originated from the CACREP rule change, effectively blocking counseling psychology trained faculty from master’s education in CACREP programs. Thus, CCPTP approached MPAC.
5. We project that by the end of this month (February) a formal relationship with MPCAC will be a reality. In March, the formation of a new accreditation body will be announced at ACA. The new accreditation executive board will be comprised of three academicians, three practitioners, and one outside person. Two councils will be formed, one for psychology and one for counseling.
6. The new council will not lobby for licensure for master’s individuals at the level of psychologist but to accredit counseling and psychology programs at the master’s level.
7. CCPTP members were encouraged to provide individual comments in support of the BEA statement on master’s education. CCPTP as an executive board have already provided a comment in support of APA and BEA developing guidelines and an orientation to master’s education.
8. We believe one of the goals of MPAC is to create a process that is user friendly (i.e. low cost and efficient process for accreditation). We also believe the new accreditation will promote an attitude of inclusiveness for master’s education.
9. How to be effective in lobbying state boards regarding accreditation? Training is available on effective lobbying. The CCPTP committee assigned to approach licensing boards about the new master’s accreditation will help in writing letters that introduce the new accreditation to master’s licensing boards in individual states. The focus is on lobbying master’s in counseling licensing boards. Every licensing board acts differently and is governed by differing rules. It is important to align with governors as well. Again, every state is different. It is important to have a concerted effort to introduce the new accreditation in every state.
10. It was suggested that more people go to American Association of State Counseling Boards conference that happens in January. CCPTP should send someone to this conference. Also, lots of opportunities for informal lobbying.
11. Mike Scheel has drafted master’s curriculum standards that are competency-based, and emphasize diversity training, social justice, and ethics and science as a professional grounding. An excellent opportunity exists right now to help craft master’s education standards, curriculum and guidelines that will have positive influences on the profession and assist graduates from master’s programs to be prepared to enter practice.
12. Barry Chung stated there have been conversations for four years within APA and efforts have been made to reach out to CACREP with little effect. An ACA contingent is supportive of MPCAC and will collaborate with counseling psychologists in this new accreditation movement.
13. We need to inform our Deans, Department Heads, and our students of the new accreditation movement and developments. We all are aware that during these poor economic times, the viability of counseling psychology may be questioned. We believe we do an excellent job in training master’s level practitioners, and we want to make sure that others realize this as well and that this remains an important role for counseling psychology.
14. We also recognize the importance of being inclusive and collaborative with counselor educators. We do not want to emulate the exclusive stance taken by CACREP. Our collaborative efforts that reach beyond a ‘Guild Mentality’ are crucial to address the needs of our students, our clients, and of the professions of counseling and psychology. The practice of counseling and psychology requires cooperation across disciplines.

**Action Steps**

1. We should work to replace counseling psychologists who have rotated off BEA. We need to nominate and support other counseling psychologists to be elected to BEA. We also need liaisons to BEA (CCPTP). Liaisons can talk about these issues and should connect with SCP, School Psych, and CAMPP. We will also talk to Cathy Grus from BEA who regularly attends CCPTP conferences.
2. A committee is being formed of training programs that will pilot the new accreditation. Nadya Fouad and Mike Scheel have volunteered to co-chair that committee and nine programs thus far have volunteered as pilot programs. Other programs should notify us if they are interested in joining this committee.
3. Form a committee to attend conferences and lobby state licensing boards. A liaison relationship with the American Association for State Counseling Boards should be pursued through this committee. Find out when the AASCB conference is and send a CCPTP representative. This committee would also help in preparing individuals to be effective lobbyists on this issue. The committee would also organize a network of people in each state to connect with state licensing boards.
4. A committee will be formed to work on master’s education curriculum and competencies to conform to the new master’s level accreditation and to connect with master’s education benchmark competencies. It was also recognized that Benchmark Competencies at the master’s level are not in the Benchmark Competencies document. Efforts will be made to write Benchmark Competencies at the master’s level. Jim Lichtenberg will either be a leader or on this committee.
5. The CCPTP executive board will comment on MPCAC standards when these come out during the public comment period. Individuals are also urged to submit comments.
6. One more suggestion is to educate students about current issues. SAS could assist in this process.
7. Could get the 7-10 college of education dean who are counseling psychologist. We could have them Caucus and educate the other deans.
8. Laura Palmer will be presenting on the master’s education and training issue at COGDOP.
9. Addressing how this influences programs such as preparing future faculty. Sue Jacobs volunteered to talk to Kathy about this issue.
10. We want to encourage SCP to inform Divisions 12 and 16 about the master’s education issue and the new accreditation.
11. Continue to make attempts to reach out to CACREP
12. The CCPTP liaison to ACCTA Liaison to ACCTA should discuss this issue.
13. MPAC does not have a liaison to BEA. We could suggest that MPCAC request a liaison role with BEA.