May 1, 2009

David Ashley
President
University of Nevada Las Vegas
Office of the President
4505 Maryland Parkway, Box 451001
Las Vegas, NV 89154-5001

Dear President Ashley,

At its meeting on April 2-5, 2009 the Commission on Accreditation (formerly the Committee on Accreditation) conducted a review of the Ph.D. program in Clinical psychology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. This review included consideration of the program's most recent self-study report, the preliminary review of June 3, 2008 and the program’s response to the preliminary review on July 7, 2008, the report of the team that visited the program on October 16-17, 2008, and the program's response to the site visit report on December 12, 2008.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of this review, the Commission voted to award accreditation to this program. In so doing, the Commission scheduled the next accreditation site visit to be held in 2015. During the interim, the program will be listed annually among accredited programs of professional psychology in the American Psychologist and on the Accreditation web pages. The Commission also encourages you to share information about your program's accredited status with agencies and others of the public as appropriate.

Dr. Carlton Parks recused and therefore did not participate in the discussion and vote on your program.

The Commission would like to provide the program with a summary of its perceived relative strengths and weaknesses. This will be provided below according to each of the accreditation domains. At the end of the letter, the program will be provided with an itemized list of any actions that the program needs to take prior to the next accreditation review. A summary of the Commission’s review of this program is provided below.

Domain A: Eligibility
As a prerequisite for accreditation, the program's purpose must be within the scope of the accrediting body and must be pursued in an institutional setting appropriate for the doctoral education and training of professional psychologists.
The Ph.D. program in Clinical psychology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas is an integral part of the Department of Psychology and the University and enjoys their full support for the program's training mission. The department is housed within the College of Liberal Arts. The University of Nevada Las Vegas is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. The program meets residency requirements, has policies committed to diversity, and has written policies and procedures as required for this Domain.

The program is consistent with the provisions of this domain.

**Domain B: Program Philosophy, Objectives and Curriculum Plan**

The program has a clearly specified philosophy of education and training, compatible with the mission of its sponsor institution and appropriate to the science and practice of psychology. The program's education and training model and its curriculum plan are consistent with this philosophy.

The program espouses a scientist-practitioner model of training and carries this out through didactic and experiential training. The experiential components are integrated with the didactics through weekly seminar discussion and through regular meetings with the Program Director. Practicum experiences are sufficient in number and consistent with the program's model of training.

The preliminary review letter of June 3, 2008 questioned how the program provides coverage of affective aspects of behavior via *Cognitive Psychology* (PSY 703). In the response to preliminary review, the program indicated that this coverage was addressed in other required courses (e.g. *Assessment of Children* (PSY 715), *Assessment of Adults* (PSY 716), *Intervention with Children* (PSY 725), *Intervention with Adults* (PSY 726) and *Psychopathology*). These courses appear to be clinical in nature rather than providing a knowledge base in scientific psychology and affective bases of behavior. In a narrative response due by **September 1, 2009**, the program is asked to explain how it provides students with the means to acquire and demonstrate substantial understanding of and competence in affective aspects of behavior consistent with Domain B.3(a) of the *Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation* (G&P). The program is asked to provide the most current version of any syllabi mentioned along with their response.

In the preliminary review letter, the program was asked about its coverage of human development given the required course (*Developmental Psychology* PSY 705) appeared to focus on, as the syllabus indicates, “conception to adolescence.” The response to the preliminary review indicated that the “class is very theoretically-oriented and that many of the theories covered in class apply to adult development.” In the professional judgment of the Commission, the coverage provided does not appear to be sufficient to cover the entire human lifespan. In a narrative response due by **September 1, 2009**, the program is asked to explain how all students are provided with the means to demonstrate substantial broad and general understanding and competence in human development consistent with Domain B.3(b) of the G&P and Implementing Regulation C-16 (attached). The program is asked to provide the most current version of any syllabi mentioned along with their response.
The course described as meeting the history and systems requirement (History and Foundations of Clinical Psychology PSY 714) appears to focus on the history of professional psychology with a heavy focus on history and systems of psychotherapy, rather than providing broad and general training in history and systems of psychology. In a narrative response due by September 1, 2009, the program is asked to explain how it provides students with the means to demonstrate broad and general understanding in history and systems of psychology consistent with Domain B.3(a) of the G&P. The program is asked to provide the most current version of any syllabi mentioned along with their response.

The site visitors noted that 60% of students take an elective course (Introduction to Clinical Supervision PSY 762) that provides clear coverage in supervision (site visit report, p.3). This course is identified as an elective in the self-study (p.11). In the professional judgment of the Commission, it is unclear whether the required courses identified in the self-study (History and Foundations of Clinical Psychology PSY 714 and practicum) provide coverage in theories and methods of supervision. In a narrative response due by September 1, 2009, the program is asked to explain how it provides coverage in theories and methods of supervision to ALL students consistent with Domain B.3(c) of the G&P. The program is asked to provide the most current version of any syllabi mentioned along with their response.

Domain C: Program Resources
The program demonstrates that it has resources of appropriate quality and sufficiency to achieve its education and training goals.

The program has an identifiable core faculty with the requisite expertise to provide students with a quality educational experience and appropriate models as scientist-practitioners. The students are well qualified for the program and sufficient in number to provide peer interaction and socialization. The program has access to sufficient practicum experiences to provide quality experiential training.

The site visitors noted (site visit report, p. 7) that there is a shortage of office space for graduate students that do not have teaching assistantships. The site visitors also reported that this issue is being discussed by the Dean and Provost. In a narrative response due by September 1, 2009, the program is asked to update the Commission on the program’s progress in resolving the shortage of office space for all graduate students.

The site visitors noted that the Center for Individual, Couple, and Family Counseling training site has no permanent staff, but relies on graduate students to cover administrative duties (site visit report, p.7). In the next self-study, the program is asked to discuss whether this arrangement is sufficient to provide the administrative support needed for a quality practicum site experience for students and whether the program has sufficient clerical support consistent with Domain C.3. of the G&P.
Domain D: Cultural and Individual Differences and Diversity

The program recognizes the importance of cultural and individual differences and diversity in the training of psychologists.

The program describes systematic, coherent and long-term efforts to improve the diversity of faculty and students. The program is to be commended on their efforts to recruit and retain students that are members of ethnic minority groups. There has been more success in increasing student diversity than faculty diversity, partly due to limited recruiting opportunities for clinical faculty. In the closing pages of the self study, the program describes efforts since the previous site visit to improve the diversity climate in the program, and these efforts appear to have been successful as described by the program and by the site visitors. The program provides both didactic and experiential training in diversity for students.

The program is consistent with the provisions of this domain.

Domain E: Student-Faculty Relations

The program demonstrates that its education, training, and socialization experiences are characterized by mutual respect and courtesy between students and faculty and that it operates in a manner that facilitates students' educational experiences.

Student-faculty relationships appear to be collegial and respectful with mutual perceptions of strong contributions to the program. The program is to be commended for their efforts in recognizing and ensuring respect for students in the program. The program shows respect for cultural and individual diversity. Faculty are accessible to students, provide guidance and supervision, and serve as professional role models. Students receive annual written feedback on their progress through the program. Students are given information regarding program requirements, expectations, and termination procedures. The program maintains adequate records of formal student complaints.

The program is consistent with the provisions of this domain.

Domain F: Program Self-Assessment and Quality Enhancement

The program demonstrates a commitment to excellence through self-study, which assures that its goals and objectives are met, enhances the quality of professional education and training obtained by its students, and contributes to the fulfillment of its sponsor institution's mission.

The program is clearly engaged in an ongoing self-evaluation and improvement process. As described in the narrative and in response to preliminary review, this process includes students in self-assessment discussions in a variety of ways. The program uses these measures to ensure quality and make changes to the program. The program has taken a number of self-improvement actions in response to feedback from the Commission on Accreditation as noted in the narrative self-study (pp. 34-35).
1) The program, with appropriate involvement from its students, engages in regular, ongoing self-studies that address:

(a) Its effectiveness in achieving program goals and objectives in terms of outcome data (i.e., while students are in the program and after completion);

As it increases the number of graduates from the APA accredited program, the program is examining their own outcomes in terms of licensure and placement, and considers what balance of professional psychology jobs for graduates is appropriate for their scientist-practitioner model. In a narrative response due by September 1, 2009, the program is asked to provide additional information on its expectations regarding graduate licensure and report on any data obtained regarding licensure. The Commission understands that the program has little, if any data on this issue given that the program is new and has few graduates that are several years beyond graduation.

The program provided a list of goals, objectives, and competencies in the self-study. Many of these are focused on course work. In Domain F, the program reports courses as the predominant activity for obtaining competencies. The program has provided other activities in which students engage such as thesis, dissertation, mentorship, and Comprehensive Examination. In the narrative for each of the goals listed in the Domain F tables, the program provides descriptive information on completion of the activities listed. From the narrative provided, it is unclear how this information reflects evidence that students have indeed achieved the competencies cited as central for this scientist-practitioner program. The program is asked to reexamine their goals, objectives, and competencies to provide more concrete definitions of competencies that can be evaluated either through quantitative or qualitative means. In a narrative response due by September 1, 2009, the program is asked to provide the Commission with a process to begin this examination of its competencies. Subsequently, in a narrative response due by September 1, 2010, the program is asked to provide more specific information about these newly defined competencies that are linked to the program goals and provide the Commission the measures (quantitative or qualitative) that it will use to assess student competency in each of those areas it has designated. In order to streamline this process, the program is strongly encouraged to use the B.2. and B.3. table templates (attached) provided in the self-study instructions as these help to ensure that the program has provided clear information on the required G&P areas to demonstrate that the program is in compliance. The Commission also looks forward to reviewing a more robust set of aggregate data, both on students while they are in the program and after program completion, in the next self-study.

The program states a broad definition of minimum levels of achievement that are not directly tied to the competencies stated. Once the program has better defined its competencies and provided information about the assessment of those competencies, it will need to provide more specific information on how the program will use these evaluative measures in determining minimal levels of achievement for each stated competency. In a narrative response due by September 1, 2010, the program is asked to provide the minimal level of achievement for each
of the program's newly defined competencies. In the next self study, the program is asked to review the minimum levels of achievement that it has set and discuss how these have been used in making program changes, as needed.

**Domain G: Public Disclosure**

*The program demonstrates its commitment to public disclosure by providing written materials and other communications that appropriately represent it to the relevant publics.*

The program provides information to potential students and the public via Department and program websites. The program provides a description regarding the nature and philosophy of the program, admission and graduation requirements, resources for students, administrative policies and procedures, the Program Handbook, and practicum experiences. The program is to be commended for their organization of information on their website including outcome data as required in Implementing Regulation C-20.

The program presents the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation's phone number and a link to the office's website. The program is encouraged to add the address of the office to this listing to be in full compliance with Domain G of the G&P.

The program is consistent with the provisions of this domain.

**Domain H: Relationship with Accrediting Body**

*The program demonstrates its commitment to the accreditation process by fulfilling its responsibilities to the accrediting body from which its accredited status is granted.*

The program has been consistent in its communication with the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation regarding any changes and in providing required materials and fees in a timely manner.

The program is consistent with the provisions of this domain.

In order to keep the Commission informed of the program's commitment to the ongoing self-study process, the program is asked to address the following issues in a narrative response by September 1, 2009:

- Update the Commission on the program's progress in resolving the shortage of office space for all graduate students.
- Provide additional information on its expectations regarding graduate licensure and report on any data obtained regarding licensure.
- Reexamine the program's goals, objectives, and competencies to provide more concrete
definitions of competencies that can be evaluated either through quantitative or qualitative means. Provide the Commission with a process to begin this examination of its competencies.

The program is asked to address the following issues in a narrative response by September 1, 2009 for formal review by the Commission:

- Explain how the program provides students with the means to acquire and demonstrate substantial understanding of and competence in affective aspects of behavior consistent with Domain B.3(a) of the G&P. The program is asked to provide the most current version of any syllabi mentioned along with their response.

- Explain how all students are provided with the means to demonstrate substantial understanding and competence in human development consistent with Domain B.3(b) of the G&P and IR C-16. The program is asked to provide the most current version of any syllabi mentioned along with their response.

- Explain how the program provides students with the means to demonstrate broad and general understanding in history and systems of psychology consistent with Domain B.3(a) of the G&P. The program is asked to provide the most current version of any syllabi mentioned along with their response.

- Explain how the program provides coverage in theories and methods of supervision to ALL students consistent with Domain B.3(c) of the G&P. The program is asked to provide the most current version of any syllabi mentioned along with their response.

The program is asked to address the following issues in a narrative response by September 1, 2010:

- Provide more specific information newly defined competencies that are linked to the program goals and provide the Commission the measures (quantitative or qualitative) that the program will use to assess student competency in each of those areas it has designated. The program is encouraged to use the B.2. and B.3. tables provided in the self-study instructions in this process.

- Provide the minimal level of achievement for each of the program’s newly defined competencies.

Please note that while these annual report items are considered an addendum to the data provided in the Annual Report Online (ARO), they are not to be submitted online. Narrative responses to the items listed above should be identified as ‘Narrative Response – Program Review’ and mailed or faxed to the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation by the designated due date(s).
In closing, on behalf of the Commission on Accreditation, I extend congratulations to faculty and students of the professional psychology program for their achievements. The Commission also expresses its appreciation for your personal commitment, and the corresponding support of your administration, to develop and maintain the best possible quality of graduate education and training in psychology. If the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation may be of service at any time on administrative matters of accreditation, please call upon us.

Sincerely,

Susan F. Zlotlow, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation

cc:    Chris Hudgins, Dean
       Mark Ashcraft, Ph.D., Chair
       Christopher Kearney, Ph.D., Program Director
       Michelle Carro, Ph.D., Co-Director
       Steven Beck, Ph.D., Chair of Site Visit Team
       John Askew, Ph.D., Member of Site Visit Team
       Bernard Whitley, Ph.D., Member of Site Visit Team