August 18, 2014

Bernadette Gray-Little, Ph.D.
Chancellor
University of Kansas
Chancellor's Office, 230 Strong Hall
1415 Jayhawk Boulevard
Lawrence, KS 66045

Dear Chancellor Gray-Little:

During its meeting on July 17-20, 2014, the Commission on Accreditation (CoA) conducted a review of the doctoral Ph.D. program in Clinical psychology at the University of Kansas. This review included consideration of the program's most recent self-study report, the preliminary review of October 16, 2013 and the program's response to the preliminary review on December 30, 2013, the report of the team that visited the program on April 17-18, 2014, and the program's response to the site visit report on May 27, 2014. Based on this review, the Commission was unable to render an accreditation decision at this time, due to lack of sufficient information regarding certain issues. As a consequence, the Commission has decided to defer making a decision on this program, as provided in Section 4.3 of the Accreditation Operating Procedures, and is affording the program the opportunity to supplement the record with regard to the issues noted below.

Drs. Mark Ashcraft, Wallace Dixon, Kurt Freeman, Barry Hong, Philinda Hutchings, Karl Koob, James Mulick, and Stephen McCutcheon recused and therefore did not participate in the discussion and vote on your program.

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 education and training of professional psychologists.

1. According to the site visitors the program is in compliance with the requirement that at least 2 of the 3 years be at the institution (site visit report, [SVR], Domain A.4). However, neither the self-study (pp. 7-8) nor the graduate bulletin articulates such a requirement. The program is structured in such a way that it would appear impossible to complete without at least 2 years at the institution, and inspection of student files apparently confirmed this fact (SVR, Domain A.4). However, the location of the formal policy regarding student residence could not be located in the program's public documentation. Please provide a copy of the program's formal residency requirement.

2. Based on meetings with program personnel and review of the self-study, the site visit team was impressed that the program "engages in numerous actions indicating respect

for and understanding of cultural and individual diversity" (SVR, Domain A.5). The self-study describes gender balance on the faculty, ethnic and sexual orientation representation among the students, and student satisfaction with the program's success in demonstrating racial, cultural, sexual, and individual diversity sensitivity. However, other aspects of diversity (e.g., age and disability) are not directly addressed. The program is asked to clarify how respect for and understanding of cultural and individual diversity, consistent with Domain A.5 of the *Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation* (G&P), is reflected in the program's policies for the recruitment, retention, and development of faculty and students.

Domain B: Program Philosophy, Objectives and Training 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.

3. Upon review of Table B.2 the Commission identified several concerns regarding how the program had defined its goals, objectives, and competencies and the associated evaluation mechanisms used to evaluate student competence. The program is asked to submit a revised version of Table B.2 to address the following issues and is encouraged to consult the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation in compiling its response:

   a. There is no clear distinction between some of the program's goals and the accompanying objectives. For example, Goal #1 is "[t]o produce graduates who have a fundamental understanding and knowledge base regarding the field of psychology." Goal #1's only objective is that, "[s]tudents will gain and demonstrate a fundamental understanding and knowledge base regarding the broader field of psychology," which is a restatement of Goal #1. Similarly, Goal #2 is "[t]o produce graduates who have a fundamental understanding and knowledge base in clinical psychology," and Goal #2's only objective is that "[s]tudents will gain and demonstrate a fundamental understanding and knowledge base regarding the field of clinical psychology." A goal should be broader than an objective, and typically one goal subsumes several objectives. The program is asked to provide the specific objectives it seeks to achieve for each of these first two goals.

   b. Competencies should reflect the knowledge, attitudes, and skills the program expects students to achieve upon program completion. The competencies provided appear to reflect successful completion of a variety of training activities (e.g. coursework, Comprehensive Exam) and ratings on various evaluations (e.g. Post-Thesis defense evaluations, Internship Candidate Competence Evaluations). In general, the competencies provided appear to reflect how outcomes are measured, rather than the actual competencies that the program expects students

to achieve. In revising the table, the program is asked to clarify the expected student competencies (as defined above) and to identify the relevant evaluation mechanisms in the "How Outcomes are Measured/Minimum Levels for Achievement" section of the table.

c. Each objective includes as a competency that "[s]tudents will report themselves as being well trained on this learning objective." This is evaluated by students providing a "satisfactory" rating on all survey items. While student satisfaction ratings contribute to program assessment, they are not an effective measure of student competence. The revised Table B.2 should only include evaluation methods that are relevant to student competence.

d. Some competencies (e.g., Competency 3, Goal #1, Competency 4, Goal #2) note that "on Post-Thesis defense evaluations, students will be rated by the faculty as making progress toward competence, or competent, on indicators of these objectives" (preliminary review response [PR-R]). Upon review of the evaluation (self-study [SS], p. 113), it is unclear what "indicators" are relevant to each competency. Also, the form evaluates broad domains covered in coursework (e.g. Biological, Cognitive, Affective, etc.), which seems a redundant evaluation of competence in those areas given that grades are also used to evaluate competence. The program is asked to identify the specific indicators (e.g., items on the form) that are relevant to each competency and to explain how the breadth of training items on the evaluation form are factored into evaluation of the curriculum areas.

e. The minimum expected threshold for the Post-Thesis defense evaluation form (e.g., Goal #1, Competency 3, Goal #2, Competency 4) is identified as "making progress toward competence, or competent" (PR-R). The program is asked to clarify this minimum level and discuss how it assures all students achieve competence when satisfactory performance could be rated as "making progress toward competence" rather than being rated as competent for all indicators.

f. Many of the program's goals identify curriculum areas that are difficult to align with syllabi. For example, Goal #2 identifies successful completion of coursework related to individual and cultural diversity; it remains unclear which specific courses are used to provide training in this area. The program is asked to provide specific course numbers/titles for competencies that entail successful completion of coursework.

g. For Goal #2, Competency 2 the program equates competence to successful completion of a proseminar series on professional issues in clinical health psychology. Successful completion is defined as 75% attendance over six semesters. Since attendance is not a sufficient gauge of competency achievement, the program is asked to identify the specific competencies to be achieved via the proseminar series and how competence is evaluated.

h. On the Student Competency and Assessment Form (Goal #4, Objective #4B, Competency 2), the program indicates that students must achieve "satisfactory practicum ratings" (PR-R, Table B.2). However, the corresponding evaluation form does not have a rating defined as "satisfactory" (SS, p. 497). The ratings provided for this form are: Advanced, Intermediate, Developing, and Not Applicable. The program needs to clarify the minimum threshold of achievement for this form.

i. Finally, Goal #4, Objective #4B, Competency 4 refers to "programmatic outcome assessment and data collection" (PR-R, Table B.2). It was unclear to the CoA what this training activity entails. In the revised table, the program is asked to include clarification regarding this competency.

4. Table B.3 identifies the required academic/training activities to ensure coverage in the required curriculum areas. Upon review of the syllabi, the CoA was unclear how broad and general coverage, consistent with Implementing Regulation [IR] C-16 (attached) is provided for all courses that may be used to fulfil certain curriculum requirements. The program is asked to respond to the following issues:

a. Social Aspects of Psychology - PSYC 777 - *Social Psychology: Theory Research, and Clinical Applications* covers social relationships and social interactions; but does not cover other traditional domains of social psychology. PSYC825 - *Social Development* provides a developmental approach to a set of social psychological topics, but does not appear to be broad in its coverage of social psychology. The program is asked to clarify how it ensures broad and general coverage in social aspects of psychology for all students.

b. Human Development - PSYC825 - *Social Development* is also an option for satisfying coverage in human development. However, it does not appear to encompass the range of human development as defined in IR C-16. Likewise, it is unclear how PSYC 863 - *Clinical Neuropsychology Across the Lifespan* systematically ensures coverage as developed and understood by researchers and scholars in this area.

c. Cognitive Aspects of Behavior - PSYC 863 - *Clinical Neuropsychology Across the Lifespan* is also an option for satisfying cognitive aspects. The course is concerned with cognitive effects of damage to different brain systems; however, as with human development, it remains unclear how this course systematically covers cognitive aspects of behavior as developed and understood by researchers and scholars in this area.

d. Affective Bases of Behavior – The program reports that PSYC 960 - *Advanced Psychopathology*, PSYC 961 - *Biological Foundations of Psychopathology,* and

PSYC 946 - *Theories and Methods of Psychotherapy* provide coverage in this area. However, after careful review of these syllabi, it is not clear how these courses provide students with the "breadth of scientific psychology" and research methods in affective aspects of behavior. Although there are some readings in each about the applications of research in affective aspects, the program has not clearly demonstrated how it ensures broad and general coverage of affective bases of behavior. The program is also asked to clarify on what basis faculty rate students in this area on the post-thesis and pre-internship rating forms.

e. <u>Professional Standards and Ethics</u> - The Student Handbook (p. 9) indicates that PRE 880 - *Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues* can substitute for PSYC 975 to satisfy the professional and ethical issues area; however, Table B.3 does not include PRE 880 as an option for coverage in this area. Further, no syllabus was provided for this course. The program is asked to clarify whether PRE 880 can be substituted for PSYC 975 and, if so, to reflect this in the revised Table B.3 and provide a syllabus for PRE 880.

In revising Table B.3 the program is asked to only include *current* coursework offered. The program should delete courses that are no longer in use and/or do not provide sufficient coverage in the required curriculum areas.

5. No syllabi were provided for a variety of courses that students have not taken in the past seven years; however, many of these courses remain options for satisfying current Domain B.3 requirements (e.g., PSYC 776 - *Advanced Social Psychology II – Current Issues*, PSYC 725 - *Cognitive Neuroscience*, PRE 811 - *Statistical Methods II*, PSYC 800). The program is expected to provide syllabi for ALL coursework that students may elect to take and the program is expected to regularly evaluate the appropriateness of courses that can still be used to satisfy program requirements and meet program goals. The program is asked to provide syllabi for any coursework that may be used to meet program requirements. As noted above, courses should be removed from Table B.3 if they are no longer offered.

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

No additional information in Domain C is required at this time.

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.

6. In the response to preliminary review, the program notes that it has no diverse faculty to retain. The program outlines a coherent and thoughtful plan to retain faculty in general;

however, no considerations are made to target the retention of *diverse* faculty. Consistent with Domain D.1 of the G&P, all accredited programs are expected to identify systematic and coherent efforts to retain diverse faculty, regardless of whether the current faculty is diverse. The program is asked to discuss its systematic, coherent, and long-term efforts to retain diverse faculty, consistent with IR C-22.

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.

7. Faculty support of research appeared to vary by track, with generalist students feeling less supported than health track students (SVR, Domain E.2). The site visitors further noted that this concern has already come to the attention of program leadership and the program is working to resolve the issue. However, based on this feedback and the fact that the required student disclosure data (per IR C-20) indicates that there has been an increase in students' time to completion over the past few years, the CoA has concerns about faculty sufficiency. The program is asked to discuss ongoing efforts to address research support to generalist track students, and how it ensures faculty are accessible and provide a level of guidance and supervision that encourages timely completion of the program.

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.

8. The proximal and distal outcome data provided appear to align with the goals, objectives, and competencies identified in the current Table B.2; however, given the concerns outlined in Domain B of this letter, the program will need to provide a plan (and any available data) that will demonstrate attainment of competence consistent with the revisions to Table B.2 and IR C-32 (attached). As noted in Domain B, attendance and satisfaction/self-assessment is not a sufficient demonstration of student competency.

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.

9. The program website and student handbook (available on the website) do not specify the goals and objectives as they are represented in Domain B of the self-study. The program is asked to ensure that the program's goals and objectives (consistent with recent revisions) are reflected accurately and completely in documents that are available to current and prospective students.

## 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.

No additional information in Domain H is required at this time.

The program is asked to provide additional information relevant to the above issues to the Commission by **February 15, 2015** to facilitate the completion of the review process and the determination of an accreditation decision. If the additional information is lengthy (i.e. containing necessary appendices or other material), please send **three (3)** copies of your response. Do not send a revised self-study in response to these issues.

If the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation can be of assistance in responding to these issues, please do not hesitate to contact us at (202) 336-5979.

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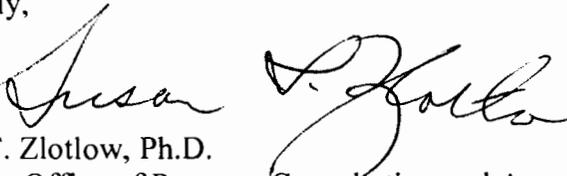
Susan F. Zlotlow, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation

cc: Danny J. Anderson, Ph.D., Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
        Rick Ingram, Ph.D., Director of Clinical Training
        Ruth Ann Atchley, Ph.D., Department Chair