11 October 2005

The current Graduate Handbook specifies that, in order for a student to pass the dissertation defense, ¾ of the members of the dissertation committee must vote to pass. Now that we have changed our rules for committee composition to require only three faculty members on a dissertation committee, this would mean that the faculty vote must be unanimous in order for a student to pass the defense. The faculty voted today to change the wording of this section of the Handbook to read that a two-thirds majority is required for approval. This change will be effective immediately

17 January, 2006

The Clinical Faculty voted unanimously to include in the Graduate Handbook the following section describing additional procedural recommendations *for clinical students*, effective immediately:

<u>Background Checks for Clinical Psychology Students</u>

In order to complete the training program in clinical psychology, students are required to participate in external practica, placements, and internships. Clinical psychologists and trainees should expect to be required to complete background checks in certain practicum and placement sites (e.g., when working with children, when working at federal agencies) and when applying for internship, for licensure as a psychologist, and for privileges to treat or admit patients in hospital settings. The following are samples of the types of questions you should expect to be asked on these background checks: Has disciplinary action, in writing, ever been taken against you by a supervisor, educational or training institution, health care institution, professional association, or licensing / certification board? Have you ever been suspended, terminated, or asked to resign by a training program, practicum site, or employer? Have you ever been convicted of an offense against the law other than a minor traffic violation? (A DUI is *not* considered to be a minor traffic violation.) Have you ever been convicted of a felony?

If you will need to answer “yes” to any of these questions, it is possible that you will not qualify for certain clinical training experiences. In addition, it is important to understand that, when you apply for the required APA-approved internship, you will need to fill out a form that asks specifically about prior disciplinary action and prior legal convictions, and you will need to discuss your responses on this form with the Director of Clinical Training. Because legal convictions may have important implications for your clinical placements, your success in the internship match, and your eventual licensure, we strongly encourage you to discuss with the Director of Clinical Training as soon as possible any such incidents that occur during your training. While we do not *require* this type of disclosure prior to your filling out the paperwork for internship, sharing this information with the Director of Clinical Training will allow him or her to more effectively provide you with guidance about whether a conviction has negative implications for your professional development and about how to proceed in strengthening your applications for subsequent clinical experiences.