

# **Addendum Regarding Licensure/Accreditation and Practica/Internships**

## **Licensure/Accreditation**

Our group received a list of programs that lead to licensure or require accreditation (other than HLC) from Academic Affairs. Our group contacted program coordinators and collected information about licensing agencies, accrediting bodies, and potential concerns for students graduating in spring and summer 2020. In terms of licensing, all licensing agencies that were mentioned by our contacts have provided specific guidance related to COVID-19. Several programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, and College of Health Sciences do have concerns about students meeting licensure requirements. Specific concerns expressed have to do with lack of clarity on meeting licensure requirements and worries about how to meet licensure requirements in the future, particularly licensure requirements that discount simulations. In terms of accreditation, program coordinators did not bring up concerns for current graduates, but concerns about the future were mentioned.

## **Substitutions for Practica/Internships**

Our group contacted department heads to complete a survey providing information about required practica/internships in Spring 2020 and Summer 2020, what substitutions or changes were made to the requirements of those practica/internships, potential negative consequences, and plans to collect data on and remediate those consequences. Responses were received from the following units: Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Education, Engineering and Applied Sciences, and Health Sciences. The most frequent type of substitution made in required practica/internships was replacement of on-site experiences with online, remote, virtual, simulation, and/or telehealth experiences. In addition, instructors reported making changes to the length of placements, offering courses as substitutes, waiving requirements, acquiring independent experiences, relocating practicum sites, and providing additional assignments. When asked about potential negative consequences, two departments indicated potential delays for graduation (Division of Communication Disorders and Department of Social Work). Other impacts included the need for additional skills or equipment to manage the substitute practica/internship requirements, and the need for students to gain independent experiences. Suggestions for data collection include data on graduation rates, licensure tests, surveys of students/graduates, and tracking gaps in courses that have been moved online for future coverage. For remediating negative consequences, a suggestion was made to provide professional support for graduates as they go into careers to assist with any less developed skills.

## **Recommendations:**

- These data affirm our recommendations that implementation and decisions be made at a departmental or college level, and that flexibility be provided to students so that they can meet licensure requirements.
- We recommend that program coordinators keep students informed about changes in licensure requirements made by the relevant licensing boards.
- We recommend that a survey be conducted for both current students and graduates who were enrolled in courses that required practica/internships, to see how the changes impacted their own understanding of their acquisition of skills, knowledge, and competencies for their careers, as well as their ability to graduate and gain employment. Colleges may already be doing such surveys on a semi-annual or annual basis. In addition, we recommend that program coordinators track licensure test rates.
- Subsequently, we recommend that review of these data be used to potentially design and deliver targeted professional development as needed.