



REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM

SEEKING ACCREDITATION VISIT 1

For Institutions Seeking Initial Accreditation

The Reiss Davis Graduate Center

October 12-14, 2017

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The team evaluated the institution under the WSCUC Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective judgment for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission. The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. Once an institution achieves either candidacy or initial accreditation, the team report and Commission Action Letter associated with the review that resulted in the granting of either candidacy or initial accreditation and the team reports and Commission Action Letters of any subsequent reviews will be made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution Visit

The Graduate Center for Child Development and Psychotherapy began operating as an independent non-profit, non-sectarian organization in 1976 offering programs including PhD, PsyD, MA, and certificate programs eventually approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE). Its mission was to provide training in psychodynamic treatment for children, youth and their families. The program continued to grow and develop over the years. The program awarded 56 doctoral degrees during its first 31 years before it could no longer be maintained due to extremely low enrollment and no financial backing.

In 2007, representatives from the Graduate Center approached The Reiss-Davis Child Study Center with the request to merge, seeing the institution with a similar purpose and vision of having a long, successful history of postgraduate psychodynamic training in child and adolescent diagnostics and psychotherapy. The merger occurred and the Reiss-Davis Graduate Center for Child Development and Psychotherapy began to operate as a nonprofit, nonsectarian graduate school program of the Reiss-Davis Child Study Center, a division of its parent agency, Vista Del Mar (VDM) Child and Family Services, retaining the Graduate Center's original administrative coordinator. The program is offered on the campus of VDM in separate buildings housing the administrative offices and three large classrooms throughout the complex of VDM. Immediately after the merger, planning for the design of a revised and combined PsyD and PhD Clinical Child Psychology program began, using much of the former curriculum and some of the same instructors and was launched as the Traditional PsyD Program in 2009. Upon further modifications, the Weekend PsyD Program was launched in 2013. In 2016, The Reiss-Davis Graduate Center Board approved the name change from The

Reiss-Davis Graduate Center for Child Development and Psychotherapy to the Reiss-Davis Graduate Center (RDGC). In 2017, the BPPE approved the name change.

The mission of the Reiss-Davis Graduate Center is “To provide a quality, psychodynamically oriented and neurobiologically informed doctoral program in clinical psychology that prepares clinicians to address the mental health needs of children, adolescents, and their families in a culturally competent manner.” During the academic year 2015-16, the RDGC’s Center Management Committee (CMC) submitted the WSCUC Eligibility Application. Approval was received in the WSCUC Eligibility Review Committee (ERC) Panel Letter of March 31, 2016, and the institution was given five years through March 29, 2021 to achieve Candidacy. Reiss-Davis submitted a request to go through the Seeking Accreditation process and its institutional report was submitted in August 2017 with an evaluation team visit scheduled for October 2017.

The RDGC is organized and operates solely as an educational institution that has, being approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE), granted PsyD and PhD degrees in Clinical Child Psychology since 1983, under its previous name, the Graduate Center for Child Development and Psychotherapy. Since merging with Reiss-Davis in 2008, it retained its approval from the BPPE and has continued to grant degrees first under the name The Graduate Center for Child Development and Psychotherapy and more recently as the Reiss-Davis Graduate Center. Recent BPPE approval to operate has been granted to RDGC until July 19, 2022.

At the time of the merger in 2008, interest in WSCUC accreditation began because it was recognized that the higher standards WSCUC demanded would make the program a better educational experience for students. It was also recognized that WSCUC accreditation would

open the potential for students to have access to government loans, and that the PsyD degree would be recognized not only in California, but across the country. The RDGC acted to voluntarily begin pursuing accreditation in 2014, and thereafter, the State of California passed SB1247 into law on January 1, 2015 that made WSCUC accreditation vital.

Degrees Offered

Reiss-Davis Graduate Center (RDGC) offers the PsyD in Clinical Child Psychology. No new degrees have been added since eligibility was granted nor are there off-campus sites or distance education programs.

Before the visit began, the team raised questions about the legitimacy of a PsyD in Clinical Psychology not leading to licensure which would require 3,000 hours of supervised professional experience, at least 1,500 of which must be completed post doctorally. For admission to RDGC's program, licensure as a LCSW, LMFT, LEP, or LPCC is required but the 3,000 hours of supervised experience in those programs do not count toward licensure as a clinical psychologist in California. In advance of the visit, RDGC was asked to provide examples of institutions accredited by WSCUC which offer a PsyD without required hours of supervised experience; during the visit they provided the name of California Southern University as noted below.

During the visit, a call was made to a recent member of the California Board of Psychology to ask about the appropriateness of a PsyD without required clinical hours and he agreed with the concern about such a program. However, the team wondered why BPPE would approve such a program so the staff liaison made contact with BPPE asking why they approved such a program. The application from RDGC to BPPE clearly indicated that the program did not lead to licensure which is also included in all marketing materials from RDGC. The BPPE contact

said that in programs approved by California licensing agencies, they do not review the application materials about the specific degree but automatically accept the licensing approval as a reciprocity understanding, in this case, from the Board of Psychology, and in all cases from other state licensing agencies. In further direct contact with the Board of Psychology by the staff liaison, they stated that if BPPE approves a program, they also approve the program without in depth review which means neither agency reviewed the curriculum.

Up until the second afternoon of the visit, the team concluded that it would be necessary to add a clinical hour component and additional course content to have a legitimate degree. In a meeting with the Board, the staff liaison informed them that it appeared to the team that the degree would need to be changed to meet the team's approval. However, in a later open meeting with students, a lawyer in the program with MFT licensure informed the team that she had been a student at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, a WSCUC-accredited institution in Los Angeles which recently received a 10-year reaffirmation by the WSCUC Commission, and was enrolled in such a program and had transferred to RDGC because she valued their approach to child therapy and psychodynamics. She had no interest in getting an additional license. When asked about the possibility of misrepresentation of their scope of practice between the various licenses, the students were clear that their ethical standards would prevent such misrepresentation or practice and that their license number is required on their business cards and representation to the public. The team had remaining concerns that these differences in licensure might be confusing to the public who are unaware of these differentiations. The team also discovered that WSCUC also accredits California Southern University which offers a PsyD without an internship requirement.

Additional evidence was provided by RDGC on the second afternoon of the visit about the due diligence they had conducted with the Board of Psychology. In an e-mail provided to the team, Director of Academic Affairs, RDGC Administrative Coordinator, wrote the Licensing/Registration Analyst, California Board of Psychology, in the name of RDGC rather than as a student inquiry, on January 28, 2016:

You have been so helpful in the past answering our questions and I am hoping you can provide some clarification for me regarding licensure.

Are there any specific courses required by the Board of Psychology that they must see on a PsyD doctoral program in order for the student to be considered for licensure (in addition to coursework in human sexuality, child abuse, substance abuse, spousal abuse, and aging and long-term care)?

The Analyst responded on February 2, 2016,

Our Board does not determine what courses are required or should be on your transcript to obtain your doctorate degree or apply for licensure. All degree requirements (courses/internships/training) would be up to each academic institution. Prior to issuance of your license, you will need to show proof of completion in human sexuality, child abuse, substance abuse, spousal abuse, and aging long-term care training. However, you are not required to complete these courses in your graduate program. If possible, it is best to take these courses in your graduate program or you may take the training on-line through approved continuing education provider(s). The substance abuse training is the only course that requires it be to be a graduate level course, completed at an approved or accredited academic institution, and not less than 15 hours of training. You may apply for licensure and take your exams without completing the pre-licensure courses.

Further investigation revealed that PsyD's have not retained their original meaning (i.e., Doctor of Psychology) and are now used more generically to represent a doctorate with an applied emphasis in a number of fields. While a *Wikipedia* article would not normally be cited in an accreditation report, the following sentences about the PsyD are informative:

The Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D., D.Psych, or Dr.Psych.; [New Latin Psychologiae Doctor or Doctor Psychologiae](#)) is a [professional doctoral degree](#) intended to prepare graduates for practice in [psychotherapy](#). Earning the degree was originally completed through one of two established training models for [clinical psychology](#).¹¹ However, Psy.D. programs are no longer limited to Clinical Psychology as several universities and professional schools have begun to award professional doctorates in [Business Psychology](#), [Organizational Development](#), [Forensic Psychology](#), [Counseling Psychology](#), and [School Psychology](#).

However, the team remains concerned that confusion could result when both the license to practice at the master's level and the PsyD are both in a mental health field. The public is unlikely to discern the differences (much like the team and program had to work to identify them). Whatever the institution can do to avoid this confusion would benefit the consuming public.

Educational Approach

Reiss-Davis Graduate Center offers training in psychodynamic child and adolescent therapy. As stated by a member of its Board, it is a "program conceived in passion" and its curriculum focuses on three primary factors, psychodynamic theory, neurobiological human development, and social/cultural influences on development. Students are steeped in the

overlap of psychological development with neurodevelopment, the blending of classical theories with neurobiology, and are taught to appreciate the role of the therapeutic relationship.

Evaluation Team Visit

In anticipation of the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1, the visiting team read the materials, report, evidence, and appendices, supplied by RDGC. They held a conference call one month prior to the site visit to plan a strategy for the visit. The chair of the team participated in a conference call with the President of RDGC prior to the visit and the assistant chair communicated several times via email and phone with the RDGC Academic Liaison Officer (ALO) prior the team visit.

B. The Institution's Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 Report: Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report

The Reiss-Davis Graduate Center team created a comprehensive report outlining the institution's evolutionary history, describing its mission in depth, and addressing each of the four WSCUC standards. Every CFR within each standard was methodically addressed in order and thoroughly. After addressing each of WSCUC's concerns raised in the eligibility review letter of 2016, the team addressed other issues concerning the institution and reflections for improvement. Finally, RDGC appended 152 detailed documents with evidence to support statements within the report, significantly more explanation and evidence than typical in this type of review.

C. Response to Issues Raised in the Eligibility Review Committee Letter

Criterion 7

- *Further implement WSCUC Independent Governing Board, specifically delineating the reserved powers kept by the Vista del Mar and reconsideration of Advisory Board terminology.*

RDGC worked with Vista Del Mar to establish an independent Board of Directors. The team had a valuable meeting with the new Board who evidenced clear and sustained commitment to the mission of RDGC, in particular, the PsyD degree. Most of the new Board had personal experiences with training from RDGC in its former incarnation and attested to their determination to make the quality of this training available to a wider audience of therapists. Their goal was to provide more therapists with the tools to appropriately treat the increasing number of children and adolescents needing mental health care. They were convincing in their determination to do whatever it takes to provide this degree opportunity.

Criterion 8

- *Prepare a projected budget without a deficit not based on assumption of WSCUC accreditation.*

The 3-year projected budget forecast from RDGC provided to the team projected total income and expenses from 2018 through 2020. The forecast includes growing income from tuition revenue, and reduced support from Vista Del Mar (VDM) Child and Family Services however, if the enrollment projections are not met over the next three years, the potential for greater deficits remains. At the time of the visit, both the CEO and CFO indicated their commitment to continued financial support as part of the mission of the

sponsoring organization, and with this continued support the RDGC remains financially stable. The support is, however, not in perpetuity and both officers indicated that though they are committed to RDGC, RDGC has to continue its growth to be fiscally viable. The CEO, CFO, and the RDGC management believe that through accreditation, RDGC will be able to achieve fiscal viability, thus reducing the support from VDM over time and meeting their 3-year budget projection. The 5-year budget took into account WSCUC accreditation and shows a surplus with reduced dependence from VDM. RDGC has shown, for the past three years, a steady increase in tuition revenue, though for the fiscal year 2017 (FY17), they experienced approximately a \$100K shortfall in tuition made up from subsidies from the sponsoring institution typical for other similar institutions. The team met with the admissions team and asked for an explanation. It was indicated that the reason for this shortfall is the uncertainty of the outcome of accreditation. The management team at RDGC indicated that though their inquiries and applications are higher than before, due to the lack of financial aid, and scholarship awards, and the uncertainty of the outcome of accreditation, about 50% of their current prospects are deferring until the outcome from the accreditation process is known.

- *Present to the SAVI team an analysis of the financial strength of Vista del Mar and ongoing and long term specific financial commitments to Reiss-Davis.*

VDM's roots go back to 1908 when B'nai B'rith Lodge Number 481 began the Jewish Orphan Home of Southern California to care for the many Jewish

orphans found on the streets of Los Angeles. Using a “cottage plan” for orphans, they eventually took over a property in 1925 between Culver City and Century City in Los Angeles which they have occupied ever since while expanding their mission beyond Jewish orphans. Some of the best known names in the movie and music industry in Hollywood have given strong support to VDM in the one hundred years of its existence which now includes a music program funded by Herb Albert. Currently children with mental and psychological challenges that do not enable them to be in regular schools are referred to VDM by local public school districts. VDM also has one of two “lock down” residential facilities with educational programs for children in California. Approximately 90% of VDM’s program service revenue and public support is provided by various government agencies. Management anticipates that it will continue to run these programs, although there can be no assurance that VDM will be able to obtain future grant agreements upon the expiration of the current term of the contracts. Management is confident that despite potential legislative changes within federal agencies, they will continue to provide much needed services and grow. They also indicated that with certain legislative changes within California, they are poised to increase their income in their residential programs. VDM’s Board of Directors has approved a spending policy that will distribute a specific payout rate (5%) of the endowment base of approximately \$30M to support VDM’s programs. This policy allows for a greater predictability of spendable income for budgeting purposes and for gradual steady growth for the support of operations, including RDGC, by the endowments. This policy minimizes the probability of

invading the principal over the long term. An analysis of the financial statements done by the team, show strong ratios indicating an organization that is fiscally strong and stable at this time. In speaking with various stakeholders during the visit, the team saw evidence of ongoing and long-term specific financial commitments to RDGC as part of VDM's mission.

Criterion 9

- *Prepare a more detailed strategic plan with budgetary implications and goals.*

The team was provided a strategic plan from 2016-2020. The plan addresses a scholarship plan for the students of RDGC, library services, additional staff as student enrollment grows, a student information system that integrates enrollment, curriculum and student business services and a plan to increase diversity amongst their students. The team saw evidence of RDGC developing a continuing education program that will increase the revenue stream to fund scholarships for potential students. The team suggested that RDGC work with VDM to leverage dollars to fund scholarships which could potentially increase the number of students in the program. The team did not see evidence in the strategic plan for enrollment. Currently, RDGC does mass mailing as part of their recruitment. A finalized enrollment management strategy and plan should clearly identify the market segments served by RDGC, and the multiyear plan for enrollment should reflect those segments.

Criterion 11

- *Full implementation of assessment plans and program review is expected.*

RDGC provided alignment maps that show the core competencies are aligned with its institutional learning outcomes; identified the inputs that will support student achievement of the core competencies; and indicated that measurement of student achievement of the graduate core competencies is accomplished in one of three assessment activities. These are: signature assignments in the 1st year, second year comprehensive exam, and a final capstone dissertation.

While the team applauds these efforts, the institution needs to develop a separate and coherent plan for assessing student achievement of the graduate core competencies with all faculty needing to be able to play an active role in the assessment of the competencies at the course and program levels.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE WITH WSCUC’S STANDARDS

The Reiss-Davis Graduate Center 2017 annual report to WSCUC states that the Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) in Clinical Psychology degree was implemented in 2013 as approved by BPPE. It is identified as degree level “Professional Doctorate.” The current program results in a PsyD degree acceptable to the Board of Psychology. However, students are not provided with a pre or post internship which is required to become eligible to sit for California licensing exam as a psychologist. The institution is clear about this in its marketing materials and statements students sign upon entry which were revised to become even more explicit during the team visit. Most programs incorporate an internship into the training program whereby a student’s clinical training is overseen by the program. RDGC’s approach necessitates that students find an internship outside the program to accumulate the required training to qualify to sit for licensure in CA. This program may not be the best vehicle for

achieving those goals more widely if a licensing track is not ultimately included. Changing the program will require significant changes in the program and a greater financial commitment if RDGC chooses to change its program. The Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services mission and passion to provide mental health services to children and adolescents in the greater Los Angeles area is palpable and commendable.

There seems to be limited understanding of what constitutes coursework of high integrity in a doctoral program or even the ultimate purpose of this doctoral program. The recent letter submitted for review states: “We will, however, continue to clarify to each of our students that obtaining a PsyD in Clinical Child Psychology is not permission to refer to oneself as a psychologist.” The recent letter drafted by RDGC to be distributed to students stated “Rather, the title of psychologist is awarded upon receiving licensure from the Board of Psychology.”

Credit/No credit courses are currently the norm at RDGC. This can be problematic for doctoral level work and has been recognized as such by Dr. Nancy Ezra, the Director of Curriculum Development and the Faculty Liaison. Dr. Ezra reports that RDGC is evaluating grading standards.

It is unclear how the institution will be sustainable without substantial subsidies from VDM or outside donors for the life of the Center. There are many competing programs that prepare students for licensure and no indication of high demand for this program. The heavy psychodynamic focus is contrary to current trends in treatment where evidence-based therapies whose effectiveness can be quantitatively studied, are preferred. However, the team recognizes that WSCUC has accredited other psychology-centered institutions with the psychodynamic approach for many years.

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

The purpose of the institution became clear after extended discussion with RDGC's principals. However, external consumers may experience confusion due to the requirement for licensure or license eligibility for admission, while at the same time, students are not prepared for psychology licensure during training.

The team identified that RDGC has demonstrated it currently meets the following CFRs from Standard 1 at a sufficient level for Initial Accreditation: CFRs 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8.

The team identified that RDGC has demonstrated it currently meets the following CFRs from Standard 1 at a sufficient level for Candidacy: CFRs 1.2, 1.4. (See below for areas of needed improvement.)

The institution has an appropriate mission statement aligned with the academic program offered (CFR1.1). They have demonstrated commitment to academic freedom and due process procedures for students, faculty, and staff and are transparent about the goals and outcome of their PsyD program (CFR 1.3). The Reiss-Davis Graduate Center took appropriate steps to guarantee an independent governing Board and has implemented those policies (CFR 1.5). Student policies are clear, as are its business and financial practices. Finally, RDGC has demonstrated open and honest communication with WSCUC (CFRs 1.7 and 1.8).

Institutional Purposes (CFR 1.2)

CFR 1.2 Educational Objectives are widely recognized throughout the institution, are consistent with stated purposes, and are demonstrably achieved. The institution regularly generates, evaluates, and makes public data about student achievement,

including measures of retention and graduation, and evidence of student learning outcomes.

Reiss-Davis does not have sufficient data for a meaningful (statistically valid) assessment of student learning outcomes since the student numbers are so small. They are collecting these data and are committed to analysis when the sample size grows, developing a culture of continuous quality improvement across the institution.

Integrity and Transparency (CFR 1.4)

CFR 1.4 Consistent with its purposes and character, the institution demonstrates an appropriate response to the increasing diversity in society through its policies, its educational and co-curricular programs, its hiring and admissions criteria, and its administrative and organizational practices.

Students are overwhelmingly female and increasing diversity is a goal. Numbers are really too small for meaningful cohort comparisons and disaggregated data. Their student population is not different, however, from other institutions of its type. Plans to recruit diverse populations are in the incipient stages. The RDGC is a victim of its current circumstances. The Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Disability, Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Disability Services, commented that accreditation is a key factor for the PsyD program because candidates from diverse socio-economic groups often cannot afford to study at a non-accredited school where federal loans are not available. The RDGC team members admit that improvements in cultural competence among students are necessary from their analysis of student learning outcomes.

After evaluation of the comprehensive exams, the Faculty Council, with guidance from Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Disability, began a systematic attempt to thread trainings in cultural competence throughout the curriculum. Dean explained that, historically,

psychoanalytic training centers have been isolated and self-contained with a Eurocentric tradition. Faculty and staff, with the help of Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Disability, are working hard to correct this in the RDGC curriculum.

The WSCUC team finds that RDGC meets Standard 1 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation, understanding that only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

STANDARD 2: ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES THROUGH CORE FUNCTIONS

The team identified that RDGC has demonstrated it currently meets the following CFRs from Standard 2 at a sufficient level for Initial Accreditation: CFRs 2.2, 2.5, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.12.

The team identified that RDGC has demonstrated it currently meets the following CFRs from Standard 2 at a level sufficient for Candidacy: CFRs 2.1, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 2.14.

RDGC's roots and goals are consistent with its desire to provide a "psychodynamically oriented and neurobiologically informed program of study." The faculty appear qualified to teach these courses. The courses introduce appropriate and relevant material. The students get an opportunity to incorporate that learning into their actual clinical practice. Case conference classes have recently been added and students are required to bring in their own clinical cases. Discussing the theoretical concepts in the context of student case presentations allows students to apply the knowledge to their clinical cases. The assessment class syllabus carries a disclaimer that "This course is not designed nor intended to qualify students to competently or ethically administer psychological tests; thus, students will not be instructed in procedures or specific

administration.” The warning is appropriate but the larger concern is that individuals with PsyD’s are expected to do just that—competently and ethically administer psychological tests. The assessment class syllabi also indicates, “A solid understanding of basic statistical concepts is required.” Upon reviewing the required statistics class, there is no lab whereby students can practice and acquire a solid understanding of statistics. The syllabus indicates that SPSS Grad Pack is optional and useful and “...a calculator with square and square root capabilities should suffice.” Currency of reading material should be reviewed. Understandably, there are many classic readings from the founders of the field (e.g., Jung). However, some classes have readings where the most recent reading is 55+ years old. Many developments have occurred in the field in the meantime that need to be incorporated into the classes to provide students with current knowledge of where the field stands. Students do not appear to obtain basic tools for evaluating psychological assessment information and research in the field. Without that students will not be able to thoughtfully evaluate psychological tests (e.g., the Rorschach) or the research literature. The depth of the course work is not what one expects from a doctoral program. The research methods class (Psy 630) is less rigorous than typical undergraduate courses on the same topic. For example, see WSCUC guidelines for review of graduate programs <https://www.wscuc.org/content/guidelines-review-graduate-programs> .

Another course requires a final paper of 1000-1500 words. If an assumption is made of 250 words per page, that translates to papers 4-6 pages in length.

To summarize, CFR’s 2.1 and 2.2b are concerned with the appropriateness of the curriculum for the degree offered and the ability of students to apply the knowledge to their practice. The concerns expressed relate to those CRF’s.

Teaching and Learning (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7)

A review of the curriculum indicates that most of the courses deal with clinical content and all of the students need to be licensed mental health practitioners to be admitted. Further, one syllabus (Psy 630) indicates that the course material meets expectations for a “generalist clinical psychologist.” Thus it appears to be a clinical degree to the reviewers. If it is, then appropriately supervised external practicum and internship placements should be developed and incorporated into the curriculum in order to better meet the CFR.

The Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are found on all syllabi (i.e., Theoretical Knowledge, Scholarly Research, Clinical Practice). Individual instructors provide additional specification for what students will be able to do at the end of the course. The factors taken into account in determining the student’s pass/fail grades are generally the same across the syllabi the team reviewed. The criteria focus on preparation, presentational skills, expression of ideas, attendance and participation but do not appear to capture aspects of the SLOs, but rather the PLOs. Directly linking these would help the program move toward meeting 2.4 and 2.6 at an Initial Accreditation level. Currently it appears that the standard syllabus template was created by the program leaders and simply adopted by individual instructors with little modification. Greater engagement by the faculty in the process would make the syllabi a more useful vehicle for conveying program and course expectations to students.

In several content areas, the program shows its strength. The attachment, child psychopathology, and psychodynamic theory sequences in year 1 have good courses in the context of the program’s goals. There are graduate level readings required and the topics are central and important for child clinicians. The recently added case conference may help the students apply the knowledge to their own cases but without direct supervision it is difficult to

know for certain. In general, the program does not have mechanisms to insure that newly acquired knowledge transfers to clinical practice. Standard mechanisms for doing this include labs, viewing of videos of students' cases by supervisors, direct observations of clinical work, co-leading therapeutic sessions, etc. Adding some of these would increase the adherence of the program to CFR 2.5. This point is reflected in the Student Experience Survey. Students were queried on their satisfaction with the theoretical material they are exposed to in classes and are generally happy with it.

Scholarship and Creative Activity (CFRs 2.8, 2.9)

Turning to CFR 2.8, many of the standard outcome measures are not yet able to be realized given the program's recent creation in its current form. The question of whom the program should request formative evaluations from until the summative evaluation data are able to be gathered is an important question. This relates to the initial question of whether the program wants to produce license eligible clinical psychologists or continue to emphasize theoretical training in psychodynamic theory. The guidance will be very different depending on the goal and the program will need to make an informed choice.

RDGC is primarily a program focused on clinical work. Its faculty are working clinicians who typically teach a class or two at RDGC. The faculty are, in at least some cases, active in making presentations to local organizations in their areas of expertise and some have published books. Providing students with the proper classes to prepare them to do research and having faculty qualified to supervise dissertation research is something not yet fully achieved at RDGC. The research sequence needs substantial strengthening and recruiting new faculty with more research experience would be an important first step. The program appears to recognize this and has had the Dissertation Director working on this aspect of the program. Please see

WSCUC guidelines for review of graduate programs <https://www.wscuc.org/content/guidelines-review-graduate-programs>. Though the program has a research sequence throughout the third year of coursework, discussions are being held about having an introductory research course in the first year. Those are positive steps but meeting CFRs 2.8 and 2.9 will be a challenge for RDGC.

Student Learning and Success (CFRs 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14)

Given that the current curriculum was initiated in 2013 and the cohorts are small, it is hard to speak to issues of retention and progress generally. Retention rates presented by the program indicate that retention is high. The student experience survey indicates that the students who completed it (56% of student body) were generally pleased with the program. Interviews with the students during the site visit indicated the same (CFR 2.10). The program is designed for working adults and they attend classes for one weekend a month. There are some co-curricular activities, (e.g., Saturdays at the Center, Edna Reiss-Sophie Greenberg Chair, Lunchtime Case Presentations, etc...). The program really is designed to provide these activities, however, students may not have the time to take advantage of them (CFR 2.11). In typical graduate training programs, there is an effort to provide opportunities for students to apply theoretical knowledge from the classroom to the field. This is in the beginning stages. Clinical case conferences have been added and some research presentations were available for the team to review. The co-curricular activities are important and strengthening them would improve the program and compliance with CFR 2.11.

The site visit team met with groups of students to explore the issue of what students' expectations were for the program. It is worth noting that in the student experience survey, there was a question that asked the students to respond to the statement, "There is guidance and

opportunities for outside internships and licensure.” No student agreed with that statement.

Approximately half of 13 students who were interviewed on site indicated that they had plans to pursue licensure as psychologists (CFR 2.12) and had fairly well developed plans for doing so.

The initial letter prospective students receive is silent with regard to the licensability of the PsyD degree obtained from the program although RDGC presented to the team their plan to have every student sign a more explicit understanding. RDGC students would likely benefit from a frank discussion of this issue with continuing support available to them as their thinking evolves.

The program is seeking WASC accreditation so is not eligible to provide financial aid to students until Candidacy is granted as a non-profit institution. This is indicated to the students from the beginning. Other forms of support are provided (e.g., writing, mentoring and dissertation), but by individual faculty rather than on a program wide basis. For a small program that may be the only realistic way to provide such support and students generally seem to view the support they receive positively (CFR 2.13).

The relevant transfer policy for this program is the Transfer Credit Policy (CFR 2.14). That policy indicates that no more than 10 units can be transferred and they cannot be more than 12 years old. The units can come from non-regionally and regionally accredited institutions.

The WSCUC team finds that RDGC meets Standard 2 at a level sufficient for Candidacy, understanding that only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

Standard 3: Developing and Applying resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

The team identified that RDGC has demonstrated it currently meets the following CFRs from Standard 3 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation: CFRs .3.1, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8.

The team identified that RDGC has demonstrated it currently meets the following CFRs from Standard 3 at a sufficient level for Candidacy: CFRs 3.2, 3.4, 3.7, 3.9, 3.10.

Faculty and Staff (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)

RDGC operates the PsyD program through faculty and staff who are very passionate of the institution's mission and vision. RDGC reports that its faculty and staff are "highly qualified" and "fairly diverse" in comparison to their peers. The curriculum vitae and resumes provided and the interactions with faculty, staff, and administration during the site visit indicated a good foundation of experience and skills are in place. It should be noted that all faculty are currently contracted part-time, and RDGC only has one full-time faculty. RDGC employs an Adjunct Teaching Model (ATM) where faculty are differentiated between Core Adjunct Faculty who teach at least two or more courses per academic year and Associate Adjunct Faculty who teach less frequently. This model is appropriate for RDGC's small single degree program at this time. All faculty have terminal degrees in their area of teaching, training in psychodynamically oriented models, and they work in private practice which serves to provide a rich classroom experience. As student enrollment increases, the institution would be expected to develop a prioritized plan and hire full-time faculty (CFR 3.1).

RDGC has a fully formed employee manual with policies and procedures in place. Though many of the employees at RDGC are part-time, a collaborative approach is practiced. There is an annual employee evaluation and review process. The team also noted that employees fulfill multiple roles and functions across the organization. The team suggests

reviewing personnel practices to consider how RDGC can achieve greater continuity and sustainability in core functional areas.

As RDGC adds full-time faculty, policies and practices will need to be developed, both in terms of employment as well as review and decision-making/governance issues. This should include the frequency and expectations of faculty meetings, the role of faculty in the faculty review process, and the expectations and academic ranks of full-time faculty (CFR 3.2).

The institution has provided internal professional development activities for faculty and staff. As RDGC grows, professional development planning for full-time faculty will need to be implemented. In addition, as staff take on additional roles, external development activities should be identified and provided, equipping staff with adequate resources for training, resources that professional associations supporting higher education could provide. All levels of organization, from board members to mid-level staff could benefit from participation in those associations. A few examples of these organizations include the Association of Governing Boards (AGB), the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRO) (CFR 3.3).

Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources (CFRs 3.4, 3.5)

VDM is financially stable and has clean audits. The continued support of VDM is key to the success of RDGC while it continues to grow its student enrollment and continues its path to accreditation. The memo from the CEO of VDM to the Provost of RDGC aids in understanding the future intentions of VDM. A clear multi-year agreement will aid the institution in planning, and also establish contingencies for fiscal solvency if VDM withdraws support.

A finalized enrollment management strategy and plan should clearly identify the market segments served by RDGC, and a multiyear plan for enrollment should be developed (CFR 3.4). RDGC has sufficient physical and information resources for its operations, and those resources (e.g., classroom, scheduling, instructional technology, data needs) are scalable for anticipated enrollment increases over the next few years (CFR 3.4).

Students and faculty have access to a physical library and an electronic library. RDGC also employs a part-time librarian to assist students during in-residency. Textbooks are reviewed and supplemented each term with updates suggested by the part-time faculty member teaching the course.

Efforts are being made to improve its library capabilities and to improve space and access (CFR 3.5). Information and technology resources appear to be sufficient to meet the current needs. The visiting team found that the RDGC technology redundancy plan was more than adequate. Additionally, RDGC is moving to a unified student information system called Populi that will assist in both student, course, financial aid and library management. (CFR 3.5). At the time of the visit, RDGC was working on Populi and expect to go “live” in January 2018.

Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10)

WASC Criteria for Review 3.6 anticipates that an institution’s leadership “...is characterized by integrity, high performance, appropriate responsibility, and accountability.” The team observed a collaborative spirit among the institutional leaders both on the administrative and academic sides. There was a sense of integrity, purpose, accountability, and a spirit of compliance at all levels with external laws and regulations (CFR 3.6, 3.7, 3.10).

However, the team found the current organizational arrangements reflect responsibilities and accountabilities inconsistent with those expected in higher education. Although the team was provided with a concise organizational chart, the team remained confused as to who has the authority to make many decisions. The team also noted that one person currently holds the CFO position for both VDM and RDGC. While the institution's size may not financially justify separate fulltime individuals holding these positions, RDGC should explore the option of a fulltime CFO as the school grows (CFR 3.8). Currently, the Provost for RDGC reports to the RDGC Board. The team recommends that the Provost's title should be evaluated to be consistent with that expected in higher education.

The Board of Directors also need to work with the Provost and Dean on a succession plan. In meetings and conversations, it was evident to the team that there is no succession plan in place for the two driving forces of the program. There is a need for the Board to develop a realistic and effective leadership succession plan as an act of prudent institutional responsibility (CFR 3.9). Finally, the team found the degree of engagement of members of RDGC board to be exceptional in nature. The team recommends that the board organize its committee structure and operations of its governing board based on the recently revised WSCUC Governing Board Policy. The board of directors for RDGC should review academic, financial, and operational performance, including reports on complaint and grievance process and response, at their regular standing meetings (CFR 3.9).

Discussions with the board of directors underscored a collaborative and collegial engagement and decision making process. A review of meeting minutes, as well as a discussion by all members of the visiting team in an in-person meeting with the entire Board

of Directors, presented clear evidence of the independence of the Board and commitment to the educational mission. Of further note, the members of the Board representing VDM expressed a belief in and commitment to the future of RDGC and a commitment to providing resources to keep it viable and to realize its vision and mission (CFR 3.6, 3.7, 3.9).

The WSCUC team finds that RDGC meets Standard 3 at a level sufficient for Candidacy, understanding that only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

The team identified that RDGC has demonstrated it currently meets the following CFRs from Standard 4 at level sufficient for Initial Accreditation: CFRs 4.4, 4.5.

The team identified that RDGC has demonstrated it currently meets the following CFRs from Standard 4 at a sufficient level for Candidacy: CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7.

Quality Assurance Processes

CFR 4.1

RDGC has designed a deliberate set of quality-assurance processes in academic areas, including course evaluation, comprehensive program review, assessment of student learning, and other forms of ongoing evaluation. The process of tracking results is established.

However, the assessment efforts in the academic area are fairly new; and the assessment of co-curricular programs is only partially complete. It is important for RDGC to continue to

focus on the academic processes and begin to focus efforts on building a solid, systematic process for co-curricular assessment that will align with academic processes and further guide future decision-making and planning efforts. More specifically, it would be prudent to streamline the program review process by focusing on tracking data, and connecting it to improvements; tying program changes to the budgetary planning process; and evaluating the impact of undertaken improvements over time. Additionally, RDGC will need to continue to focus on improving the dissertation process, creating a more structured process with improved communication as identified as a need by its students. (CFR 4.2)

RDGC has established an Evaluation and Planning Office (EPO), led by the Director of Evaluation and Planning. The EPO Director is engaged with the appropriate committees on campus; oversees institutional data collection, analysis, and supports program review efforts.

Data was provided in the report, and is available on the institution's website

(<http://www.reissdavis.org/student-achievement-and-learning.html>).

. Overall, data collection, institutional research, and effectiveness efforts at RDGC seem to be a relatively new process developed over the past two years. It is crucial for the center to continue building its institutional research (IR) capacity while identifying which reports need to be produced over time and how often in order to guide the institution in its planning, decision-making, and improvement processes. It would be beneficial to develop an EPO Operational Plan aligned with the strategic plan that incorporates external benchmark data for comparison. There is no assessment in place for IR. (CFR 4.3)

While there is a growing commitment to formalized processes of data collection and utilization of that data in analysis and improvement of student learning and program quality, there is also a need to increase the systematic process for data-driven decision-making. The

EPO should be the hub for this activity moving forward. The center is encouraged to continue the systematic assessment of teaching, learning, and making this a part of the climate. RDGC should continue building its capacity for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting information needed for the purpose of making data-guided decisions and creating a stronger culture of evidence and improvement. It would be helpful to clearly articulate how assessment and institutional research results impact budgetary decisions at different levels and for different center units. (CFR 4.4)

RDGC is engaged in inquiry regarding the processes of student learning. The center has completed an initial design and implementation of assessment and program review processes to ensure the achievement of the established standards of performance. The faculty evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes by utilizing signature assignments, locally developed rubrics, and administering regular course evaluations. The continuous improvement process is focused on becoming more systematic. The team suggests that the Center assess and evaluate the existing assessment and program review cycles to ensure sustainability and manageability of its educational effectiveness efforts. Faculty participation in professional development opportunities and/or conferences would be beneficial for improving overall assessment methodology, as well as curricula, pedagogy and, ultimately, student learning and success. (CFR 4.5)

RDGC faculty and staff are involved in the assessment, evaluation, and alignment of the educational program with the Center's mission and vision. Students are familiar with the program learning outcomes, however, they are not fully informed about assessment processes, nor engaged in various assessment projects, such as peer reviews or rubric refinement. The report does indicate that students are not yet involved in the assessment and alignment of the

programs. This is an area of opportunity. Student focus groups and committee representation can provide feedback and suggestions for campus and program improvements. The report shows there are some initial efforts to identify learning inputs of the established assessment processes that are aligned with the learning outcomes, RGDC needs to sustain this systematic process (that involves the appropriate stakeholders) to assess institutional effectiveness. Alumni involvement is also an area of opportunity for the center. External assessors will be engaged in assessment in year five of the process (2021-22). (CFR 4.6)

The institution's report states that, "Program review at Reiss-Davis Graduate Center (RDGC) focuses both on academic and non-academic areas in order to iteratively improve the institution as a whole." Non-academic assessments include evaluations for co-curricular events as well as the student experience survey. In fact, the report states that they still need to expand the "...scope of review to the entirety of the institution." Additionally, when meeting with support staff they too indicated that there is no process yet for non-academic reviews. Throughout the report there is a sense of an aspiration for growth in assessment and a determination to produce change that will support their educational goals. In this context, the Center's priorities need to be clearly articulated in its strategic plan and supported by budgeting and resource planning. Non-academic (co-curricular) assessment is not a current goal in the provided strategic plan. RDGC has a strategic plan that details goals, tasks, budget considerations, and timelines for tasks. What the plan lacks are regular reviews of the plan, assessment of the plan, and closing of the loop. Additionally, RDGC should work closely with VDM to link their strategic plan to the goals of VDM that are specific to RDGC. (CFR 4.7)

Within the context of its mission and financial realities, RDGC aims its educational program at a unique group of the students. Changes that are currently taking place in higher education need to be considered when planning.

The WSCUC team finds that RDGC meets Standard 4 at a level sufficient for Candidacy, understanding that only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

SECTION III. PREPARATION FOR ACCREDITATION UNDER THE 2013 HANDBOOK OF ACCREDITATION

Degrees Programs: Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees

RDGC offers a psychodynamically oriented and neurobiologically informed PsyD degree program in Clinical Child Psychology, aligned with its mission and institutional purpose. RDGC has a distinct student audience, already licensed mental health professionals who want to work diagnostically and therapeutically with children and adolescents from a psychodynamic perspective. In the areas of “quality” and “integrity” of its program, RDGC points to the alignment of the program student learning outcomes with its institutional student learning outcomes. At the same time, RDGC recognizes the need to measure outcomes and quality at the institutional and programmatic levels and is in the process of implementing an assessment design that includes data collection, analysis, and follow-up of findings for the PsyD program. The results and follow-up based on the assessment findings should assist RDGC in providing distinct experiences and enhancing the quality of the program for students.

Sustainability: Preparing for the Changing Higher Education Environment

RDGC understands the importance of increasing its dependence on student enrollment for tuition revenue. The institution has talented support staff to address the challenges of marketing and enrollment within the region and to overcome the barriers many similar institutions face. RDGC's fiscal sustainability will need to be continuously monitored with the support and assistance of Vista Del Mar as they work towards growing student enrollments. Positions that will provide capacity for supporting the institution's efforts in the area of student success, enrollment management, assessment and institutional research will need to be developed and staffed as the institution grows. There are also plans to put in place the information technology necessary to adequately support the academic and administrative functions of the institution, and the implementation is currently underway.

SECTION IV. INVENTORY OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

The Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) reflects the faculty's collective responsibility for the overall development and assessment of the academic program. It includes setting PLOs and standards, assessing student learning, and demonstrating achievement of standards. These components and the Guide for Determining Minimal or Substantial Compliance were reviewed by the team as evidence of educational effectiveness. These documents, together with the self-study and findings of the onsite visit, contribute to the team's evaluation of the institution's level of compliance with the Standards of Accreditation and CFRs. The team reviewed RDGC's IEEI to understand how comprehensively and successfully it addresses both the quality of its student learning and the quality of the learning and assessment infrastructure. In this regard, the team found the submitted IEEI reflected the emerging stage of RDGC's educational effectiveness efforts.

RDGC developed and published formal learning outcomes and objectives and they are available in the catalog, program syllabi, and on the website (CFR 1.2, CFR 2.4). RDGC has also worked to define levels of student achievements (CFR 2.2). However, successful development of assessment tools, such as signature assignments and signature activities to assess every learning outcome, (CFR 2.2b, CFR 2.3) is not yet adequate. Established processes and procedures for interpreting the evidence (CFR 2.4) are established and at a nascent stage. At the time of the team's onsite visit, RDGC had only successfully completed one year of a five year program review process. RDGC was not able to demonstrate that its graduates consistently achieve the established learning outcomes (CFR 2.6) or how the findings are used for improvement in pedagogy, curriculum, resource allocation, or faculty and student support (CFR 2.7). The IEEI does indicate that new outcomes will be evaluated with vetted rubrics and the program review process, external reviews will be incorporated, and findings will be used to inform the future iterations of the strategic plan and will be used to guide professional development and program improvement.

SECTION V. FINDINGS AND COMMENDATIONS

The financial fragility of a freestanding RDGC is worrisome. It will be necessary to demonstrate long term sustainability without substantial support annually from Vista Del Mar moving forward.

Potential confusion about licensure impacts perceived integrity and transparency. The team suggests this might be clarified by a change in program title so that the average consumer would be better served and for purposes of accurate marketing.

The team noted the following commendations:

1. The program demonstrates commitment to and passion for the mission of the institution.
2. Student, faculty, and staff are deeply committed to the success of the program.
3. Vista Del Mar's commitment to the program is commendable.
4. The program has strengths in attachment theory, affect regulation, psychodynamic theory.
5. The newly constituted Board's determination and commitment to the mission and the institution is evident.
6. There is a growing commitment to a formalized process of data collection and using it for improvement of student learning.