Editorial: An Introduction to the Special Section on *Diverse Origins of Graduate Training Programs in Behavior Analysis*

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Applied behavior analysis has grown considerably as a profession in recent decades, an assertion that is supported by numerous metrics. In the USA alone, dozens of state laws have been enacted to fund behavior-analytic treatment (Autism Speaks, 2016) and regulate behavior-analytic practice through licensure (Association of Professional Behavior Analysts, 2016). In addition, the demand for behavior-analytic practitioners in the USA more than doubled from 2012 through 2014 (Burning Glass, 2015) and the number of Behavior Analyst Certification Board® (BACB®) certificants has grown by 154 % in the last 5 years (to 22,908 in April 2016). These recognition and demand variables have led to the development of a number of new graduate training programs in behavior analysis, and continued growth will likely necessitate further program development and expansion.

Developing a new graduate-training program or increasing the capacity of an existing one can be challenging due to bureaucratic barriers and funding constraints. Fortunately, however, we have witnessed in recent decades the inception of a number of new graduate-training programs in behavior analysis. Some of these programs were developed in innovative and somewhat nontraditional ways, bypassing or mitigating some of the traditional barriers associated with new-program development. The

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purpose of this special section is to highlight a sample of these programs such that their unique stories, told together in a single location, can illustrate a variety of ways in which new programs might grow and develop. This information might then prove useful for creative and motivated academicians (or future academicians) in their efforts to begin or expand graduate-training programs in behavior analysis.

For the special section, we invited articles from current or former faculty members associated with the inception of five graduate training programs: Auburn University, Caldwell University, Florida Institute of Technology, Munroe-Meyer Institute, and University of Nevada-Reno (UNR). These programs were selected because they are all relatively young (the oldest, UNR, is less than 25 years old), they originated under somewhat uncommon circumstances, and they represented a variety of institutional arrangements. Two are located in public institutions (Auburn University and UNR), two are located in private institutions (Caldwell University and Florida Institute of Technology), and one is located in a public medical center (Munroe-Meyer Institute, part of the University of Nebraska Medical Center). In addition, the programs have all demonstrated some degree of success in terms of ongoing faculty and program resources and student enrollment and graduation.

The mechanisms associated with the inception and growth of each of the programs are quite unique. Auburn University's master's program was based on a 1-year program structure and innovative funding of the program and its students. Caldwell University's master's and doctoral programs evolved from a stand-alone course sequence, in part, through the use of strategic public relations activities to leverage administrative support. Florida Institute of Technology's on-campus and online programs evolved through faculty entrepreneurship and the leveraging of distance-education resources to support on-campus activities. The doctoral program at the Munroe-Meyer Institute used the existing resources of a medical center's clinical and research programs—instructors, potential students, and access to training opportunities—to start one of the newest doctoral programs in the discipline. Finally, UNR, in one of the earliest innovative origin stories, used a self-capitalized approach to develop new master's and doctoral programs. Although these five programs have different stories to tell, there are noteworthy commonalities across the programs. All of the faculty originators were hard-working, motivated to solve a training deficit, creative and entrepreneurial in their approaches, and incremental in their strategies. In addition, these faculty members, not surprisingly, used deficits in the production of masters-level practitioners and/or doctoral-level practitioners and faculty as the primary "problem" for which their proposed program was the solution.

We should note that the five programs featured in this special section do not represent every new graduate-training program developed in recent years, nor are they featured as the "best" or most accomplished programs. Programs that developed under more traditional circumstances (e.g., one or two faculty members supported by an administration) were not considered given the focus of the special section. The present sample was specifically selected to illustrate a variety of innovative approaches to program development. There are undoubtedly others and their stories might be shared in the future. We should also note that all of the programs featured in the special section are located in the USA. This was not deliberate; it was merely a function of the geographic density of recently developed programs consistent with the focus of the special section.

As our discipline continues to grow along with the need for new training programs, and as the higher education landscape continues to evolve, we will likely need a number of new and expanded training programs. The stories of the five programs highlighted in this special section and the potential lessons derived from them are intended as a source of ideas for individuals considering participating in training-program development. We will undoubtedly need additional guidance on the formation of new training programs, along with analyses of factors related to training program success and maintenance. In the meantime, we hope this special section, and its case studies, will prove useful as a starting point in the explicit consideration of new-program development.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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