Dear Prospective Intern,

The Training Committee at the Tomah Veteran Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) Doctoral Psychology Internship is pleased that you are interested in our program. We hope that the enclosed materials will provide you with more information regarding the uniqueness and quality of our program.

As a new VA internship program, we are allotted two intern slots per year for the first two years. Therefore, we offer a high intern-to-supervisory psychologist ratio (2:10) in order to provide quality mentorship as well as clinical supervision. Our program is based on a scholar-practitioner philosophy of training responsive to the multicultural setting within our rural community, with an emphasis on empirically-based assessment and psychotherapies. We value a healthy work-life balance and expect that interns manage a reasonable workload and are thus able to end their day after eight hours and typically don’t exceed a 40-hour work-week.

The Tomah VAMC offers interns a warm, welcoming and psychologically safe environment conducive to a stimulating and nurturing training experience. Visitors to our campus consistently comment on our caring and courteous climate -- the open friendliness of a small-town atmosphere. This courteous climate extends to our professional and technical staff who follow a servant leadership model which values support and teamwork. As staff members, interns are also afforded opportunities for self-care through an ongoing wellness program and access to three fitness facilities.

Our internship is a full-time (12 month), single-site, stipend-supported program (start date is June 24, 2019). Interns are offered two six-month Major rotations and three Minor rotations (four months in duration). Intern skill levels, experience, interests and goals are considered in formulating a training plan for the year. Interns may choose two Major rotations and three Minor rotations:

Major Rotations
PTSD Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs (PTSD RRTP)
Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs (SA RRTP)
Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI)
General Outpatient MH
Health Psychology
Outpatient PTSD Clinic

Minor Rotations
All Major rotations are also offered as Minor rotations as well as two additional clinics:
Compensation and Pension (C&P)
Acute Inpatient Mental Health
Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs for PTSD (PTSD RRTP)
Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs in Substance Abuse (SA RRTP)
Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI)
General Outpatient MH
Health Psychology
Outpatient PTSD Clinic

For example, an intern may select the PTSD RRTP and General Outpatient MH Clinics as their Major rotations and the SA RRTP, C&P and PCMHI as their Minor rotations. Interns are trained in evidence-based practices (e.g., Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Prolonged Exposure, Cognitive Processing Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia, Problem Solving Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy for Depression). There are opportunities to work with supervisors who are specialists in a variety of theoretical orientations including Interpersonal, Cognitive-Behavioral, Existential, and Client-Centered.

The Tomah VAMC was established in 1943 and is located on 175 acres surrounded by a golf course. Located in beautiful Western Wisconsin, it is especially well-suited for those who enjoy the outdoors. An extremely picturesque area with abundant rivers, woodlands, prairies, and bluffs offering opportunities for kayaking, trail-running, biking, hiking, horseback riding, fishing, and camping in the summer months and cross-country skiing, down-hill skiing, winter-camping, fat-tire biking, snow-shoeing, and tobogganing during the winter. Another advantage of rural living is of course the abundant array of wildlife. While rural, Tomah is only 45 minutes from La Crosse, a city of 52,000, with three universities and an exciting combination of music and other entertainment. Moreover, the Tomah area offers easy access to Madison WI and Minneapolis/St. Paul MN. As compared to larger urban communities, the Tomah area boasts a significantly lower cost of living, enhanced personal safety, and absolutely no traffic jams!

As a newly established Doctoral Psychology Internship program, we are in the process of seeking American Psychological Association (APA) accreditation. While we cannot guarantee that we will achieve accreditation, we remain very committed and are planning to seek full APA accreditation. Our commitment is reflected in our dedicated faculty as well as our routine consultation with advisors/mentors from well-established APA-accredited internships. We will also be requesting a ‘Match number’ from the
Association of Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) as a non-APPIC member since we are not eligible, as a new program, to be a full member of APPIC. It is important to note that if you successfully complete our internship program (while we are awaiting accreditation), you are eligible to apply for VA employment as a post-doctoral psychologist.

Our internship is part of a larger organizational transformation which began a few years ago. Since that time, we have accomplished national award-winning innovations in Rehabilitation, developed new patient-centered service lines (i.e., Whole Health), established a Psychiatry Residency program, and expanded existing services (PTSD and SA RRTP). We have been recipients of multiple grants aimed at increasing access for rural Veterans and incorporating evidence-based practice. Moreover, during the past two years, empirical-based survey data has demonstrated exceptional patient, staff and psychologist satisfaction results.

As an intern at the Tomah VAMC, you will contribute to innovative and pioneering work by providing supervised mental health services to underserved rural Veterans (i.e., telehealth or video-conferencing). Recently, a Veteran with severe mobility challenges, living 70 miles from the campus, informed our administration that they were astounded and overjoyed by the prospect of conducting psychotherapy from their kitchen using a VA-provided laptop. Additional state-of-the-art clinical applications available to interns include: US Army’s Virtual Reality Combat Simulator, Exposure-Based Therapy and interdisciplinary applications of spirituality, yoga, Tai Chi Chuan, healing touch, Whole Health, reinforcement-based addiction treatment, mindfulness, and Battlefield Acupuncture for psychological trauma, chronic pain and addiction.

We hope that you find the following pages informative and helpful as you begin the process of choosing an internship. We wish you all the best in your internship application process.

Sincerely,

Psychology Internship Training Committee
Tomah VA Medical Center

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