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Dr. Frederick Bellemare
Senior Psychologist, Health Services
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Dear Dr. Bellemare,

On behalf of the Executive and the membership of the Canadian Council of Professional Psychology Programs (CCPPP), I am writing in regard to work we are undertaking concerning advocacy for additional predoctoral internship placements in Canada. The CCPPP represents the various university-based psychology programs and psychology internship settings in Canada that train professional psychologists such as clinical psychologists, counselling psychologists, and clinical neuropsychologists, as well as other branches of professional psychology.

In my own role as an internship director and as President of the CCPPP, I am aware of the desire of current staff to offer internship training at forensic locations, as well as the need for psychologists to fill vacancies and meet service demands. Contacting you in your capacity as national senior psychologist seemed a logical progression in our work.

There are many reasons why additional internship placements are needed in Canada, and why having resident trainees will benefit the Correctional Service of Canada. As a psychologist, you know that the predoctoral clinical internship is a requirement in obtaining a doctoral degree in clinical psychology. You may not know that psychology internships are in short supply in Canada, in comparison to the number of students prepared to apply for psychology internships each year by the academic programs at our universities across the country. As such, more positions are needed. Furthermore, like many other professional groups in Canada, we face similar issues of anticipated human resource attrition in the coming decade with the retirement of our baby-boom cohort, making the need for preparation of replacement professionals urgent. As an employer with a national presence, greater involvement of the Correctional Service of Canada in the preparation of clinical psychologists would be an extremely valuable contribution to Canadian society.

A colleague informed me that corrections is the single largest employer of psychologists in the country. Psychologists have made valuable contributions to multidisciplinary teams in corrections across the country, in service delivery to clients, team and institutional management roles, program development, program evaluation, accreditation, and development of assessment tools, for example. An abundant scientific literature has been accumulating over three decades demonstrating the value of psychological interventions. Psychology interns are in their final, formal year of clinical training. As such, they provide highly-skilled services that are cost-effective. Interns invigorate a work environment, with new ideas, energy, and fresh perspectives on committees and research projects, as well as knowledge of cutting edge treatment techniques. Top quality staff members may be attracted by the reputation and prestige of a service with a doctoral internship program, especially those interested in teaching and supervision. A high quality training program subsequently contributes to the reputation of the facility.

Furthermore, it is in the interest of the Correctional Service to develop its own internship programs as experience tells us that sites are frequently successful in recruiting new staff from the psychologists that they help train. Through involvement during the training process, staff benefit from familiarizing themselves with potential recruits and knowing the nature of the contributions that these individuals will be able to make to the team. It also allows the Correctional Service to shape the development of the young professional to develop skills sets that will be most desirable and beneficial to your service needs. I understand from a colleague who attends CPAP meetings that CSC is interested in encouraging more of its staff psychologists to obtain registration in the jurisdiction in which they are employed. If CSC were to become more involved in internship training, they would be more closely involved in the preparation of psychologists who more readily meet registration requirements.

In closing, for all these reasons and others which I may have overlooked, I hope you will be interested in collaborating on the concept of developing new psychology internships within Correctional Services facilities and services. Please let me know if the CCPPP can be of any assistance. I am also copying this letter to the Canadian Psychological Association, as they are frequently involved in the proliferation of psychology training experiences.

Yours sincerely,

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President, CCPPP

LJW/

Copy: Dr. Karen Cohen

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