



Newsletter from Reitan Neuropsychology Lab

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Dear Colleague:

The current issue of the *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology* contains a critique of the Houston Conference on Education and Training in Neuropsychology written by me, Jim Hom, Janet Van De Voorde, Dan Stanczak, and Deborah Wolfson. I should like to communicate some personal conclusions regarding the Houston Conference Policy Statement.

I just don't think it is fair for a small group of neuropsychologists (six in number) to take it upon themselves to convene a conference that was charged with defining the future standards of training and practice in neuropsychology. This group of six people set the agenda for the conference and selected the persons that they wanted to write the forthcoming Policy Statement. The 48 persons selected to attend the Houston Conference were, in the great majority, academicians and neuropsychologists employed by institutions. Few practitioners were selected as delegates, even after the disparity was made clear. Pressures were brought to bear to publish the Policy Statement without editorial review and without a change in even a word or syllable. No input was allowed from the people who were denied participation as delegates, who far outnumbered the delegates selected by the six people who organized the Conference. When these unfair disparities were called to the attention of the six people who organized the Conference, they were either ignored or denied.

When I asked for a little time at the Conference to present the opinions of persons who had conveyed their opinions to me, Dr. Hannay, who was the chairperson of the six-member policy group, flatly denied my request, saying that the six organizers had already set the agenda. When I suggested that input be obtained from the profession generally in planning the agenda of the Conference, rather than having it set by six self-selected persons, the suggestion was ignored.

Is this any way to plan and implement standards for education and training in neuropsychology? Do we have any sense of fairness? Although the Policy Statement has been called a work in progress, when Robert Ruff, then President of the National Academy of Neuropsychology, tried to convene a group to evaluate the progress made, the persons originally in charge of developing the conference refused to participate, indicating that the Policy Statement, was, in effect, a done deed! Apparently, they had accomplished their purpose and imposed it on the profession, in the form they had intended.

As noted initially in this letter, a group of us have published a paper in the current issue of *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology* that reviewed some of these issues. (We were required to undergo peer review and make changes, as suggested by editorial

consultants, in our comments, but at least the paper was approved for publication.) If you care about these issues, please read the paper. (You can access the paper at our website, www.reitanlabs.com. Click on the APublications@ box on the left side of the page.) In addition to the procedural problems I have listed in this letter, the paper reviews many substantive limitations of the Houston Conference Policy Statement. In effect, the conclusions tend to classify many of us as second-class neuropsychologists.

After reading the paper, if you still feel that the Houston Conference dealt with the profession unfairly, please write to the editor of ACN (address below), or to me, or to both of us. You don't have to be a member of any organization to express your opinion. We *do* need standards for education and training in neuropsychology, but these standards must be developed fairly. We need to revoke the Policy Statement of the Houston Conference, begin again, and establish standards in a way that is fair and representative of the entire profession. We really need your input, and feedback from neuropsychologists generally, if we care about fairness, our own professional future, and the future of the profession.

Sincerely,

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If you would like to send your comments to Dr. Gouvier, the editor of ACN, use the address below:

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