

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Leadership of Academic Departments of Psychiatry

Approved by the Board of Trustees, July
2020

Approved by the Assembly, April 2020

“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

Issue:

The Council on Medical Education and Lifelong Learning supports the American Association of Chairs of Departments of Psychiatry position that leaders of academic departments of psychiatry should be board certified psychiatrists. Within the training realm, it is important that residents have training directors who are psychiatrists and that those training directors also report to a chairperson who is also a psychiatrist. While current ACGME policy requires that training directors be physicians, there is no requirement that academic department chairs be physicians. Given the changes occurring within medicine, financial and staffing pressures within psychiatric departments can impact training programs. Department leadership by board certified psychiatrists is required to ensure that physician program directors have support which ensures the integrity of their training programs. Departmental leadership by a psychiatrist also ensures that trainees have role-models and mentorship for psychiatrists in leadership positions.

APA Position:

The American Psychiatric Association strongly believes that Departments of Psychiatry having training programs must be chaired particularly by a psychiatrist. No other mental health profession has similar training nor the same priorities as psychiatrists. It is important for psychiatric physician trainees to have strong physician role models in leadership positions. We believe the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education should ensure that psychiatry accreditation standards reflect this position.

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Collaborators: American Association of Chairs of Departments of Psychiatry