

**PUBLIC NOTICE OF A MEETING FOR
STATE OF NEVADA BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINERS'
APPLICATION TRACKING EQUIVALENCY AND MOBILITY "ATEAM"
COMMITTEE**

Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2023

1. Call to Order/Roll Call to Determine the Presence of a Quorum.

Call to Order: Committee Chair Soseh Esmaeili called the Nevada Board of Psychological Examiners' Application Tracking Equivalency and Mobility ("ATEAM") Committee to Order on September 8, 2023, at 10:32 a.m.

Roll Call: Committee Chair Soseh Esmaeili, Psy.D., and Committee Members Dr. Stephanie Holland and Stephanie Woodard were present. Committee Member Catherine Pearson was not present. Despite Dr. Pearson's absence, the Committee had a quorum.

Also present was Laura M. Arnold, the Board of Psychological Examiner's Executive Director and two of the applicants being considered.

2. Public Comment. NOTE: Public comment is welcomed by the Board and may be limited to three minutes per person at the discretion of the Committee Chair. Public comment will be allowed at the beginning and end of the meeting, as noted on the agenda. The Committee Chair may allow additional time to be given a speaker as time allows and in their sole discretion. Comments will not be restricted based on viewpoint. No action may be taken upon a matter raised under this item of the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action may be taken (NRS 241.020).

There was no public comment at this time.

3. (For Possible Action) Discussion and Possible Approval of the Meeting Minutes from the July 14, 2023, Meeting of the Application Tracking Equivalency and Mobility (ATEAM) Committee.

The Committee had no changes or revisions to the proposed July 14, 2023, meeting minutes.

On motion by Stephanie Holland, second by Soseh Esmaeili, the ATEAM approved the meeting minutes of the Regular Meeting of the ATEAM held on July 14, 2023. (Yea: Soseh Esmaeili, Stephanie Holland approved, and Stephanie Woodard approved to form not content.) Motion Carried: 3-0.

4. (For Possible Action) Discussion and Possible Action on Applications for Licensure as a Psychologist or Registration as a Psychological Assistant, Intern or Trainee to Determine Equivalency with Nevada Requirements, Including Education and/or Training.

a. Smetana, DeAnn

Dr. Smetana was not present. Dr. Pearson did a very thorough review of Dr. Smetana's application, although Dr. Pearson was not present for the meeting. She did, however, prepare notes for the ATEAM's review.

Dr. Esmaeili reviewed the responses from Dr. Smetana that responded to Dr. Pearson's questions, but she is concerned that Dr. Smetana did not properly answer the questions. For instance, Dr. Smetana states that her hours were from a licensed psychologist, but whoever was attesting stated clearly that there were not licensed psychologists at the time, which is a big discrepancy. Dr. Esmaeili did not feel like that was addressed.

Dr. Holland did not believe the ATEAM could move forward without Dr. Smetana's appearance as there are many questions. The executive director confirmed they would table this application and she will let Dr. Smetana know the same. The executive director stated an issue she anticipates Dr. Smetana will address regarding licensure of another licensee. Accordingly, Dr. Smetana's application was tabled for the next meeting.

Dr. Woodard added that as the meetings have been held, the ATEAM has been very conscientious about the precedent set when considering applications. She stated it would be helpful to have more information related to the other licensee. The executive director could only find what she has provided to the ATEAM due to the length of time that has elapsed, and indicated that it should be on Dr. Smetana to establish the parallels between with the licensee to whom she referred.

Dr. Smetana's application was tabled for the next meeting.

b. Grimes-Vawters, Jennifer

Dr. Grimes-Vawters was present before the ATEAM. Dr. Esmaili inquired with Dr. Grimes-Vawters regarding the hours that were provided from 2011 to 2015 that were identified as a doctoral intern while the other 2 were different types of internship (CPC and mental health counselor hours). The executive director interjected that Dr. Grimes-Vawters was previously approved by the Board and there are communications related to approving her as a psychological assistance, but with the question of equivalency not clearly resolved from the available information. The last communication she found was that the Board previously approved her as a psychological assistant, but that equivalency was not established and she would not be able to move forward with licensure.

Dr. Grimes-Vawters confirmed she received correspondence in 2018 that explained what was missing and she submitted additional information to the Board with clarification regarding the equivalency. It does say there was a subsection of her equivalency that was not on the transcripts, so Dr. Grimes-Vawters said she ensured the Board had everything it needed in 2018 so that she was previously approved by the Board by July 1, 2019, to be registered as a psychological assistant. The executive director notes that the lack of clarity related to the equivalency issue is what has Dr. Grimes-Vawters appearing today, especially considering the changes to regulations and policy since then.

Dr. Esmaili clarified that the ATEAM would be considering the application as a new application. The executive director stated it is a new application and that she was simply providing the history of what has previously occurred with this applicant. Dr. Esmaili also had a question she was not sure was resolved regarding from the 2011-2015 internship, that being that her supervisor did not appear to be a licensed psychologist. Dr. Grimes-Vawters indicated that was not correct as Dr. James Carter-Hargrove was her supervisor during that time. Dr. Esmaili clarified it was about someone attesting to her hours that there was not a licensed person at that time. Dr. Grimes-Vawters was not aware of that, but indicated it was put through the PLUS system at that time.

Dr. Holland stated that the questions from the ATEAM historically and present were to caution Dr. Grimes-Vawters because of the equivalency questions from the program. Dr. Woodard followed up by asking if there are questions of substantial equivalency up to this point and the ATEAM was to authorize moving forward with the required clinical hours for licensure, was the word of caution was that Dr. Grimes-Vawters could get those hours and the ATEAM would revisit the application and due to the substantial inequivalency the ATEAM would then be unable to license her? The executive director confirmed that was what the Board stated to Dr. Grimes-Vawters last time. She also

indicated that the current policy is that unless there is a path to licensure, they do not want to send applicants down that path.

Dr. Holland asked whether part of the work to be completed by the ATEAM to establish substantial equivalency and to provide if there is a separate pathway to get to a place of substantial equivalency so the applicant can understand all of the requirements to be considered for licensure. The executive director confirmed. Dr. Holland asked when the ATEAM or Board reviewed the application previously related to course work that was determined to be needed. The executive director said she did not see that reflected in the meeting minutes.

Dr. Grimes-Vawters stated she was confused because she had all of her equivalency and coursework submitted to the Board, Dr. Papa originally, before the ATEAM was a committee for it to be reviewed. She was never told there was any issue with the class, except for something in August of 2018 that says there was an issue with no clarification of what the issue was, but that she received confirmation back that she did everything she was supposed to for approval. She said that the June 10, 2019, meeting minutes showed everything was approved and Dr. Grimes-Vawters was approved to move forward.

Dr. Esmaeili stated she did not see any issues with her coursework, she thought the coursework was complete when she reviewed the transcript, the question was on the PLUS application - the individual she mentioned that signed off on her hours that was a licensed psychologist (Dr. Hargrove) and that individual was a different designation (not mental health). Dr. Esmaeili asked who her supervisor was in 2011-2015, to which Dr. Grimes-Vawters stated it was Dr. Don Huggins. Dr. Esmaeili asked about supervision provided by a psychiatrist and social worker. Dr. Grimes-Vawters stated she had secondary supervision by a licensed psychologist and she believed Dr. Huggins was also a licensed psychologist. The PLUS application confirmed her successful completion of supervision. Dr. James Hargrove was the supervisor that was attesting to the application for 2011-2015 internship, but when he attested to the hours, it listed 3 psychiatrists and 3 social workers as Dr. Grimes-Vawters' supervisors. The PLUS later indicated a difference so Dr. Esmaeili wanted clarification that he was a licensed psychologist and he attested to her hours. Dr. Grimes-Vawters confirmed.

Dr. Holland asked Dr. Grimes-Vawters what her title was an intern – Dr. Grimes-Vawters responded with uncertainty due to that title being used so long ago. Dr. Holland indicated from what she can see the title was a CP intern and asked if it sounded correct, to which Dr. Grimes-Vawters confirmed it did. Dr. Woodard believed that is what is causing part of the confusion to determine substantial equivalency. She posed a question of the other ATEAM members' thoughts on removing that information from the PLUS so they can do a clean review of all the education training and experience towards licensure as a psychologist in the state. Dr. Esmaeili indicated she

believes the hours at Kids Cottage for a doctoral intern would be the only applicable hours as the others were for CP intern or mental health counselor designation. Dr. Grimes-Vawters thought that was separated as she recalls prior discussions regarding the same. She then read a letter received from the Board dated February 19, 2019, and a subsequent letter indicating the hours were verified and confirmed. Dr. Holland asked if a new PLUS application was resubmitted, and Dr. Grimes-Vawters confirmed it was resubmitted 3 times total. The executive director confirmed the one Dr. Holland has was the most recent PLUS Application submitted in April. Dr. Holland asked if Dr. Esmaili did the PLUS application review and wanted to know, aside from the clinical experience that is still on the application, if she was able to find internship hours that would meet the requirements for licensure and if they were sufficient. Dr. Esmaili referred to her notes and advised that her biggest question was about supervision and the total number of hours that totaled 1,375 for the internship with the individual supervision being 624 and no group supervision. She said that would be the only hours that the ATEAM could consider from Dr. Esmaili's review that was under a doctoral level training. Dr. Holland stated that from the PLUS Application of the 1,375 hours completed at Kid's Cottage under the supervision of Dr. Carter Hargrove who is a licensed psychologist that the time of the internship was almost 5 years (4 years and 10 months), but Dr. Holland believed internship equivalency required that it be no more than 2 years. She then asked Dr. Grimes-Vawters to expand and clarify why her internship took longer than normal. Dr. Grimes-Vawters referred to her logs that included the group supervision from March 2011 through May 2012. She did work for them longer, but everything that was completed was done between March 2011 and May 2012. She said she would be happy to provide that to the Board if that is not available to them at this time, but it breaks down the hours. Dr. Holland thought maybe the PLUS Application should be redone again and having the information removed that is not necessary for their review because the dates on the application may include employment dates versus just the internship. Also, the total number of hours as reflected on the PLUS system over the span of 4 years and 10 months is 1,375 and she is not sure if that is accurate, but if it is, then there is another question of equivalency as the requirement is 2,000 hours. Dr. Holland said she was not sure how many hours were acquired as part time or full time and Dr. Grimes-Vawters confirmed it was full time and the log she had broke down the hours and it totaled over the 2,000 hours needed.

Dr. Grimes-Vawters stated that she did previously confirm she was complying with the Board's requirements and worked hard to ensure the same. Dr. Holland suggested that the PLUS Application be resubmitted and updated for clarity now and for the future to clean up and take out the hours that are related to the CPC and other hours that are not specific to the internship in the state to make the record much cleaner. Dr. Holland discussed one more point of clarification regarding the degree from Walden was in counseling psychology and that there is a place on the PLUS system that says clinical

psychology and it may be helpful for Dr. Grimes-Vawters to be mindful for her to keep the information consistent to clarify (on page 6 in two different places).

The executive director clarified that the coursework update is fine, but the further discussion is related to the internship for the amount of time and the number of hours. Dr. Esmaili confirmed the supervisor should be clarified for the ATEAM. The executive director also confirmed that pursuant to Dr. Holland's suggestion, Dr. Grimes-Vawters should be consistent in stating clinical or counseling psychology. Dr. Grimes-Vawters confirmed it was counseling psychology. Dr. Holland also stated that Dr. Grimes-Vawters should remove the other hours so it is solely and consistently regarding psychology hours. As such, Dr. Grimes-Vawters' Application was tabled to the next meeting.

Dr. Grimes-Vawter wanted to know what was different moving forward if the application was approved before, and if she is clear in understanding that she could go through this and not be approved again moving forward. Dr. Holland sought clarification on Dr. Grimes-Vawters' comment regarding approval. Dr. Grimes-Vawter stated a previous executive director informed her that the Board approved Dr. Grimes-Vawters' psychological assistance in 2018 (as confirmed by Dr. Esmaili) and by the ATEAM at the time. She said it was reapproved on June 6, 2019, and she has that certificate of approval as a psychological assistant. There was prior acknowledgment of the discrepancy in the hours. The executive director stated she did mention this issue to Dr. Owens and Dr. Owens advised her recollection was about approving Dr. Grimes-Vawters for registration but the ATEAM had still a question of equivalency. However, the executive director could not tell from the June 2019 meeting is if the equivalency issue was ever answered. According to Dr. Grimes-Vawters, however, the executive director stated there is understanding there was a resolution of the equivalency issue, but there is no documentation of that despite her searching for the same. Per the May 6, 2019, meeting minutes as read by Dr. Grimes-Vawters, it indicated that a prior executive director recommended the Board move forward with the registration, to which Dr. Holland specified that moving forward with registration does not necessarily mean equivalency. The executive director believed that at the time, they gave Dr. Grimes-Vawters registration, but the policy has changed since then, which creates a difference and concern related to the equivalency issue being satisfied or determined. Dr. Esmaili thought the internship hours clarification will help the ATEAM further determine the equivalency issue. Dr. Grimes-Vawters confirmed she will clean that up and resubmit through the PLUS system, which the executive director stated she will send to the ATEAM immediately upon notice from PLUS that it is available. Dr. Esmaili asked to put Dr. Grimes-Vawters on the agenda for the next meeting, which the executive director confirmed she would do.

c. Mejia, Viola

Dr. Mejia was present before the ATEAM. The executive director provided an overview of her notes for the ATEAM, stating that Dr. Mejia is an applicant for licensure and is a current licensed psychologist in California since April 2022, having obtained her Psy.D. from a non-APA accredited school (California Institute of Integral Studies) in 2019. She said that the education included one year of fulltime residency (fulfilled between 2011-2019), just over 2,700 internship hours between 2018-2019 and 2,700 post doc hours (between 2019-2022). Her application is nearly a year old, but she has another year to complete everything. The executive director noted that the Waivers and background checks are still needed for licensure, as well as taking and passing the State Exam, but the PLUS report provided enough information for the initial ATEAM review.

Dr. Holland wondered if Dr. Mejia did not meet equivalency in Nevada due to the internship hours taking multiple years, should the ATEAM look at the state equivalency related to her licensure with California, which Dr. Holland believed to be two years to meet that requirement. The executive director thought it was 5 years to bypass the ATEAM process and Dr. Mejia was only licensed for a little over a year. She added that another reason Dr. Mejia is before the ATEAM is because California is not a state that is equivalent with Nevada's requirements (it is considered a red state) and the fact that her school was not APA accredited. In order to make everything "clean", Dr. Holland specified that Dr. Mejia would need to be licensed in California for 5 years. The executive director confirmed.

Dr. Woodard indicated that unless someone from the ATEAM can determine that there was substantial equivalency with a non-APA accredited program and her pre/post doc hours were equivalent, then she could not move forward with her application for licensure. Dr. Woodard asked if there has been an individual review of Dr. Mejia's application to determine the equivalency. The executive director noted that the application was sent out to the ATEAM members prior to the meeting and Dr. Esmaeili stated she did briefly review the application prior to the meeting. She advised she did not see any major issues with the coursework, but there were 2 issues with the internship: the supervision times may not be enough (1 supervision a week for both sites and the second site did not have a group supervision). Dr. Esmaeili's questions concerned the supervision. Dr. Holland also noticed that, as well as the number of weeks of supervision, the number, type, and time that expanded related to supervision are in question. The Committee members continued their review of the application.

Dr. Holland asked if Dr. Mejia wanted to clarify on those questions at this time and further confirmed that Nevada requires that to meet equivalency, internships need to expand not over more than 2 years, be a minimum of 2000 hours, have 2 hours of individual supervision by a licensed psychologist, and an additional 2 hours of group supervision by a licensed psychologist. Dr. Mejia stated that is not how it is in

California. Dr. Holland specified that the only way to get around that to meet equivalency in Nevada would be to be licensed in another state, like California, in good standing for 5 years. Dr. Mejia asked if she waited to reapply after 5 years of licensure in California, would she then have equivalency. The executive director stated that she believes 5 years is the minimum number and she confirmed with the policy. Dr. Mejia asked if the 2 hours of individual supervision and 2 hours of group supervision per week were for a pre or pre and post-doctoral internship. Dr. Holland confirmed it was just for pre doctoral internship. Dr. Mejia then confirmed that the ATEAM is looking for 2,000 hours of pre doctoral internship, which was confirmed by Dr. Holland not to expend more than 2 years. The executive director stated the policy reads that California equivalency would require at least 5 years of active licensure, no disciplinary or adverse actions taken against them towards their license, and not less than 1,500 hours in each of the internship and post-doctoral years. Dr. Mejia confirmed the 1,500 hours for pre- and post-doctoral hours. The executive director said she believed after 5 years of licensure in California, the hours are reduced to 1,500 hours each and Dr. Mejia would bypass the ATEAM with the other conditions satisfied as mentioned above. Dr. Esmaeili asked what the ATEAM's decision for today would be – for Dr. Mejia to reapply after 5 years? Per the executive director, she is not sure there is any action required of the ATEAM unless they want to deny the application but the other option is to let the application ride and for Dr. Mejia to reapply once she has satisfied the bypass requirements. Dr. Esmaeili, Dr. Holland agreed that is where Dr. Mejia's application stands right now. Dr. Mejia clarified that she would have to go through the application process again once the 5 years passes. The executive director indicated she would essentially need to reapply. Further discussions related to Dr. Mejia's options were discussed by the ATEAM and Dr. Mejia. No action was taken on Dr. Mejia's application.

5. (For Possible Action) Discussion of ATEAM Committee Operating Procedures, including the Applicant Review Forms; and Possible Action to Propose Revisions to and/or Make Recommendations to the Board of Psychological Examiners for Adoption of the Revised Procedures and/or Review Forms.

Dr. Woodard, Dr. Holland, and the executive director discussed options moving forward that may be helpful while reviewing these applications. The executive director also suggested specific assignments being made related to these applications.

Dr. Owens and the executive director have discussed a spreadsheet that deciphers the difference between those who graduated before and after 2018 from non-APA accredited programs. For instance, the post 2018 graduates are more of a competency review rather than strictly the coursework. The executive director stated that the spreadsheet is basically for the applicant, but may be helpful for the ATEAM to review, too, so she will forward that to the applicants and ATEAM moving forward for post 2018

non-APA program graduates. Dr. Holland thinks highlighting or flagging the pre or post 2018 will also be helpful.

6. (For Possible Action) Discussion of Upcoming Meeting Dates for the ATEAM Committee.

The next ATEAM Committee meeting will be held on October 13, 2023, following the meeting of the regular Board meeting (10 a.m. or later).

7. Items for Future Discussion.

The Committee did not have any items for future discussion.

8. Public Comment.

There was no public comment at this time.

9. (For Possible Action) Adjournment

There being no further business before the Committee, Chair Esmaeili adjourned the meeting at 11:37 a.m.