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# BEYOND THE LEAKY PIPELINE: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF DIVERSE LEADERS THROUGH EARLY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

# PSYCHOLOGISTS AS LEADERS

- Psychologists offer many skills that contribute to leadership needs.
- Many training models do not currently offer training opportunities in leadership.
- An intentional, concerted focus on enhancing leadership development opportunities for psychologists is vital.



# LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

SAVANA NAINI, M.A.



# APA & VA COMPETENCIES

## American Psychological Association

### APA Competency Benchmarks

- Professionalism
- Relational
- Science
- Application
- Education
- Systems
- **Management-Administration**
  - **Leadership**
  - **Advocacy**

## VA Leadership Competencies

### OPM Competencies for Executive Core Qualifications

- Leading Change
- Leading People
- Results Driven
- Business Acumen
- Building Coalitions
- Global Acumen

# COMPETENCIES FOR VA PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP ADMINISTRATIVE & LEADERSHIP ROTATIONS

- VAPTC workgroup developed a Profession Wide Competency Crosswalk and Toolkit in 2020, which encompasses the 4 sub-competencies of APA's management and administration competency category:
  - **Management**
  - **Administration**
  - **Leadership**
  - **Advocacy**

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# SOCIALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP

- 
- Expecting a more diverse pipeline of VA psychology leaderships
  - Infusing diversity and multiculturalism into leadership training and practice
  - Improve recruitment and retention outcomes.



# REGIONAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING

CHERYL LOWMAN, PH.D.



# REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE MINOR

## VISN 5 Administrative Minor

Designed to address gaps in Psychology Trainee leadership development.

Rotation structure was mapped from content areas outlined in the Office of Personal Management Leadership Competencies (OPM, 2015).

Additional rotation content was developed with input from stakeholders involved with intern training and career development.

Pre- and post-knowledge assessment covering four major domains:

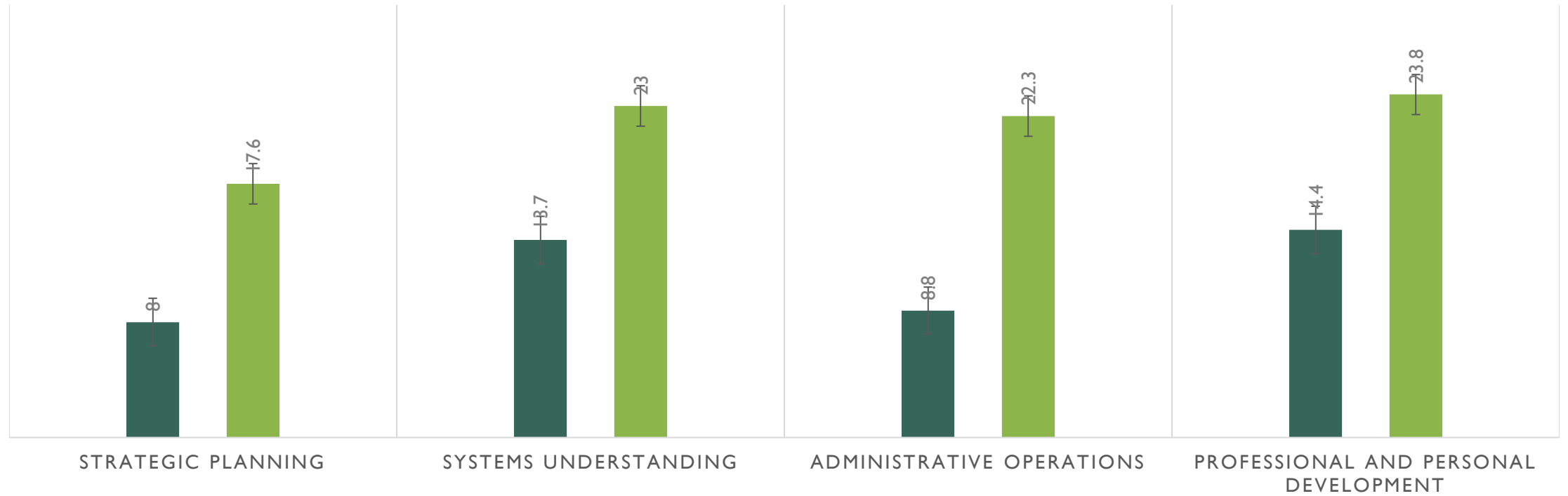
- Strategic planning
- Systems understanding
- Business operations and program evaluation
- Professional and personal development.

Requirement to design and implement Quality Improvement or Program Evaluation project.



## PRE TO POST RATING CHANGES IN ADMINISTRATIVE DOMAINS

■ Pre-Test ■ Post-Test



## OUTCOMES/FEEDBACK

“On this rotation I have gained an understanding of how healthcare policy is implemented from a systems level perspective. This inside look into the processes by which congressional bills become policies, and how those policies are turned into actions directly benefitting Veterans, has given me a greater appreciation for the complexity of our system. From this I have also gained an appreciation for the high standards VA is held to and the thoughtful work that is done on every level of leadership. This unique perspective has inspired me to pursue a career in VA leadership, and I recently applied and was accepted for a post-doctoral fellowship at the DC VA.”

“This experience provided me with greater appreciation for the complex system in which we work, all the good the VA system can and does do, and the ongoing process to continually improve the VA in the pursuit of providing the best possible care to Veterans.”

“This has opened my eyes to the broader picture of what we do, and can do, in VA, and has changed my trajectory within VA from being an obedient follower of policy, to an informed and involved VA psychologist. Going forward with this understanding, I will be able to engage with leadership and policy in a more effective and collaborative nature, ultimately benefiting my Veterans and the clinics in which I serve.”

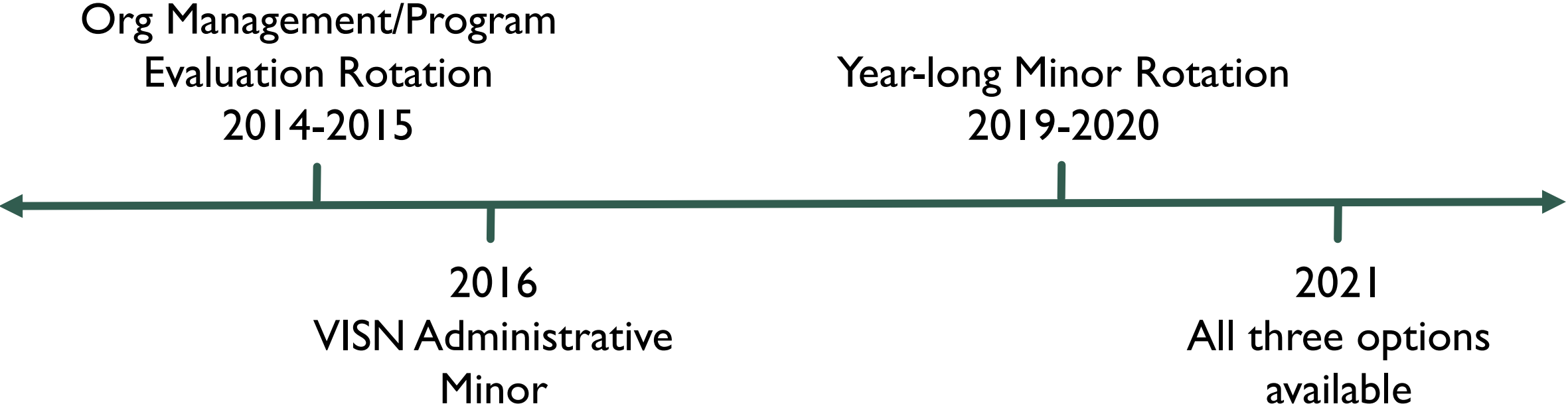


# LOCAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING

MARY FERNANDES, PH.D.



# EVOLUTION OF THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE MINOR



# STRUCTURE OF THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE MINOR



Training director surveys program managers, clinic leads, leadership staff



Intern meets with several staff to plan potential project/team



Plans are reviewed by supervisor(s) and training director



Post-rotation evaluation



Supportive didactics, lectures, meetings, and discussions

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# BENEFITS TO PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAMS AND TRAINEES

- 
- Strengthening and diversifying the pipeline of psychology leaders
    - A draw for prospective trainees
  - Creative and energetic contributions from junior colleagues to complex systemic problems
  - Providing trainees with long-requested and necessary training opportunities
  - Rewarding and helpful experience for supervisors/mentors

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## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Widespread implementation of leadership, administrative, policy, and management trainings within and outside VA training
  - Policies (e.g., guidelines/best-practices)
- Objective evaluations of training
  - Data-driven leadership programs

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## FEEDBACK FROM TRAINEES

"I honed several leadership skills through this training, and equally important was the confidence that the experience instilled in me. Psychologists are uniquely positioned to draw upon our training in human behavior to make meaningful change in every setting that we find ourselves. **Being a leader is an identity that I have come to embrace, and this leadership training experience reinvigorated my passion for mental health policy, advocacy, and leadership in a government setting.**"

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## FEEDBACK FROM TRAINEES

"In pursuing the leadership rotation, I have come to appreciate the many ways in which psychologists are well-positioned for leadership positions. For instance, I have been encouraged by my supervisor to harness my clinical training (e.g., patient-centered, solution-focused, and culturally responsive care) and use these skills to approach conflict management as a future leader. Further, I have been able to apply my research skills when analyzing and interpreting various metrics used within the hospital system. **Through this experience, I have realized my leadership potential and feel more confident in using transferrable skills to propel institutional goals forward.**"

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## FEEDBACK FROM MENTORS

**"Serving as a mentor and facilitator to the learning of the next generation of psychologists is a role that is both humbling and inspiring.** As a cis-gender, multiracial woman who is a parent to two elementary age children, the salience of representation is omnipresent in this work. Our internship program is fortunate in that we have a track record of matching with diverse intern cohorts each year. As with many programs, and the field in general, we generally have mostly women interns, thus the majority of the interns I have mentored in this way are women, and many have been Women of Color, or women from other traditionally underrepresented groups in the field. I place great importance on modeling both general leadership skills, while also acknowledging the ongoing gender and racial biases that I experience in my leadership roles, without dampening the ambition of the highly talented, creative and clever interns with whom I am fortunate to work. "