



## **FSBPT pursues renewed Buros accreditation in 2014**

*Lorin Mueller, PhD, FSBPT Managing Director of Assessment and Anja Römhild, Buros Center for Testing, University of Nebraska – Lincoln*

In 2014 FSBPT will submit information to the Buros Center for Testing to be evaluated for accreditation of the National Physical Therapy Examinations (NPTE). This process requires a substantial documentation effort that reflects NPTE development processes and analysis of test data. The feedback FSBPT receives through the accreditation process helps to ensure that the NPTE program adheres to best practices in measuring the knowledge and skills necessary to perform effective physical therapy.

### **Buros Accreditation Program**

The Buros accreditation program offered by the Buros Center for Testing ([www.buros.org](http://www.buros.org)) was created in response to a growing need for quality assurance in the proprietary testing sector. As an independent, not-for-profit organization whose name has been associated with the critical evaluation of tests and testing programs since 1938, Buros provides psychometric expertise and independent professional judgment to assist testing organizations meet current quality standards of the testing community and to promote valid uses and interpretations of test scores.

Buros accreditation is based on the *Buros Standards for Proprietary Testing*, which were developed from guidelines and standards issued by the testing community including the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, the *Guidelines for Computer Based Testing*, the *Test Adaptation Guidelines*, and the *International Guidelines on Computer-based and Internet Delivered Testing*.

The accreditation process is conducted in two stages beginning with a general audit of the testing program's processes and procedures (Stage 1) followed by an optional Stage 2 review of specific tests and test forms.

The Stage 1 audit focuses on the review of the testing program's organizational structure and capacity, the general processes for test development and validation, and policies and procedures regarding test administration, maintenance, and security.

The Stage 2 review of the accreditation process focuses on psychometric indicators of quality for specific tests and test forms. At the completion of each audit stage, Buros provides the testing program with evidence of adherence to the Buros Standards and suggest ways in which the policies or procedures could be modified or improved to meet the highest expectations of the professional community.

Successful testing programs who meet the Buros accreditation standards are able to communicate to the public a strong commitment to quality procedures and competence in testing and provide assurance to test users that the accredited tests and test forms meet psychometric standards of quality.

### **Value to FSBPT**

The NPTE is one of FSBPT's most important tools in fulfilling our mission to protect the public. One potential threat to accomplishing that end is the need to operate the examination in a secure environment: many testing programs operate in a vacuum without adequate feedback from their stakeholders and peers. Without this feedback, even the best testing programs might develop gaps in their development and analysis processes that reduce the ability of the examinations to produce the most valid pass fail decisions possible.

FSBPT last achieved Stage 1 accreditation in 2009, and has maintained Stage 2 accreditation each year since. This year FSBPT will again be pursuing Stage 1 accreditation. The feedback we have received over the last few years have led to several important initiatives, including substantial improvements to NPTE security, more complete documentation of the examination development processes, a review of item fairness, and a better understanding of the meaning of scores for candidates educated outside of the United States. These efforts substantially enhance the quality and defensibility of the NPTE.



**Lorin Mueller, PhD, FSBPT Managing Director of Assessment**

Lorin joined the FSBPT's Assessment Department in November 2011. Prior to joining FSBPT, Lorin spent 10 years as Principal Research Scientist at the American Institutes for Research in Washington, D.C. He has contributed his expertise in statistics, research design, and measurement to projects in a wide variety of areas, including high-stakes test development, work disability assessment, K-12 assessment, assessing students with cognitive disabilities, teacher knowledge, teacher performance evaluation, and school climate. He is a nationally-recognized expert in the field of setting standards for occupational assessments and has published or presented in nearly all of the areas he has worked. Lorin received his Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology with a specialization in statistics and measurement in 2002 from the University of Houston.



**Anja Römhild, Buros Center for Testing, University of Nebraska – Lincoln**

Anja Römhild is project coordinator in the Psychometric Consulting unit at the Buros Center for Testing. She leads the work for the Buros accreditation program and has conducted numerous evaluations and reviews of tests and testing programs. In addition to her work in test accreditation, Ms. Römhild has worked on consulting projects in the areas of test validation, standard setting, alignment, and score equating and calibration. She is currently completing a doctorate in the Quantitative Qualitative and Psychometric Methods program at the University of Nebraska.