From out of the Suggestion Box

Feedback From Applicants for Improving the Postdoctoral Recruitment Process

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Disclaimer

The opinions and suggestions contained within these slides are not necessarily held by other presenters and/or moderators who participated in the Summit on Current Issues in Postdoctoral Training where the slides were originally presented.

Additional Take Aways from 2016 Survey

Several Problems

- 68%: Two-system recruitment process is difficult to manage.

- >70%: Applying to/deciding btw match & non-match programs causes distress.

- 60%: Felt pressured to accept or decline positions before match.

- Nearly ½ wished they had more time to consider if to remain in the match after receiving an offer.

Encouraging Signs

- 82%: Satisfied w/ outcome after accepting non-match position PRIOR to match.

- 73%: Satisfied w/ outcome after going through APPCN match.

- Implications?
  - There is room for improvement!
  - Changing the systems may not diminish satisfaction.
  - Doing so may reduce distress/difficulty w/ process.

What do group data from students suggest we do about it?
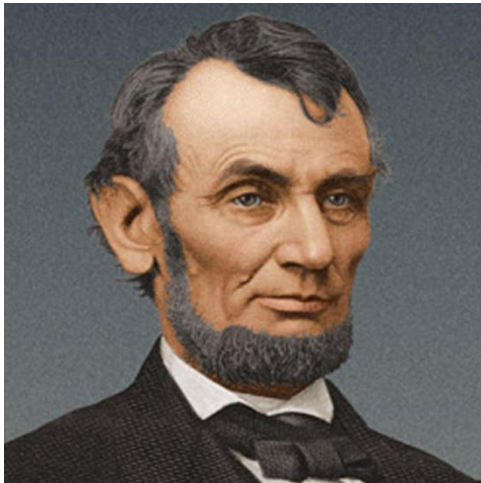
50% say all programs should be in the match!

48% say that there should be no match!

We know what you're thinking…

THANKS FOR NOTHING

Please allow us to reframe it for you…

"You can please some of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time."

So what are we really going to do about it?

Quotes from the Suggestion Box!

"A universal location to find all postings of match & non-match fellowships would make the process much easier!"

"Non-match programs interview & offer far enough in advance that you can't really call a match program to solicit ranking information before you interview with them, or if their application deadlines haven't even passed."

"It would be nice if all sites, match & non-match, had info on a website saying they were recruiting."

"The option to solicit match information from APPCN sites if you have a non-match offer isn't very useful because of the timelines."

"I could have made a more informed decision if the non-match offer was given the week after INS."

"It was cumbersome to have to go through different listservs, word of mouth, APPCN, etc to find sites."

"All stakeholders need to comply with the rules."

Making Use of Qualitative Themes

- **Universal location to find postings for fellowships.**
  - Program lists should be centralized & updated with info on:
    - Whether or not they are recruiting
    - Match vs. Non-Match status
    - Application requirements, deadlines & interviewing formats

- **Establish a practical timeline for non-match offers and acceptance deadlines.**
  - Make it possible for applicants to make informed decisions.
  - Allow applicants the option to elicit ranking info from match sites AFTER the sites have concluded interviews.

- **Programs who knowingly put applicants in an uncomfortable position should be held accountable.**

The Example of NY and NJ

- **Psychology Directors of New York State (PSYDNYS) & New York New Jersey Association of Directors of Training (NYNJADOT) developed externship guidelines.**
  - Date before which applications are not accepted.
  - Date before which offers could not be extended.
  - Specified amount of time for which applicants were permitted to hold offers.

- **Centralized website with >200 participating sites.**
  - http://psychpracticum.fdu.edu/index.php/Main_Page
  - Provides site descriptions, TD names/contact info, application requirements.
  - States if recruiting that year/when positions filled.

- **Created a grievance portal.**
  - Students were able to complain if treated unfairly by sites.

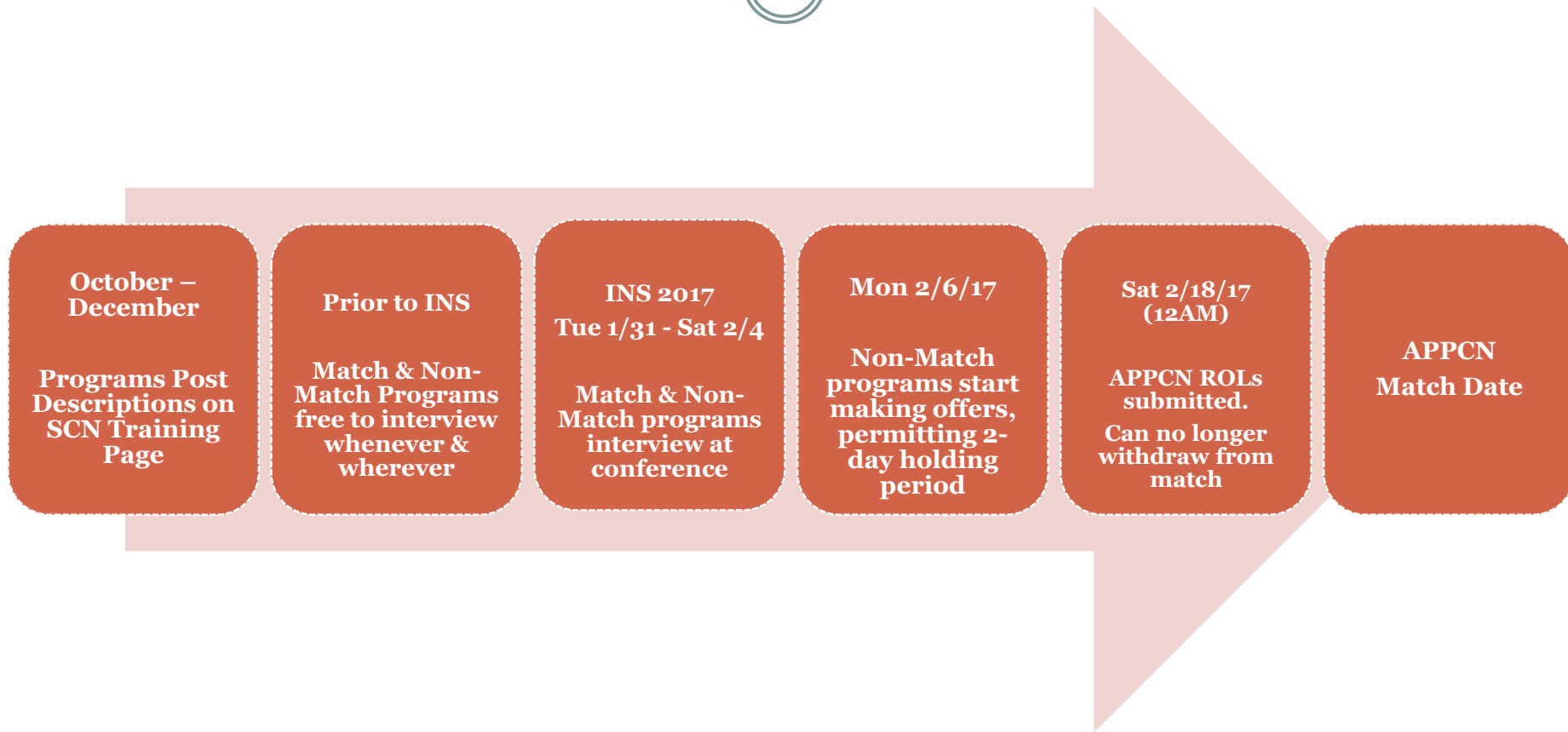# A Possible Starting Point Has Already Started

- **Society for Clinical Neuropsychology (SCN) has set up a Training Programs web-page to centralize information:**
  - http://training.scn40.org/search_results.php

  - <u>Strengths</u>:
    - Neutral organization w/o allegiance to match or non-match.
    - Requests info on program characteristics, accreditation status, stipends/benefits, interviewing formats (e.g., at INS), & HCG adherence.

  - <u>Drawbacks</u>:
    - Not all programs use this site.
    - Even if programs use the site, pages are not always updated.
    - Detailed responses to requested sections may not be provided.
    - No grievance portal.

Proposed Suggestions

- **Shared standards for advertising & describing positions:**
  - Programs should utilize the SCN Training page & complete their pages in full.
  - Include a tab stating if a position is recruiting that year.
  - Include a tab specifying when the position has been filled (if non-match).

- **Shared guidelines on extending/accepting non-match offers:**
  - Non-match programs should not make offers until the Monday after INS ends (start of business).
  - If applicants wish, they may hold a non-match offer for at least 2 days (i.e., accepting or releasing the offer by start of business on the 3rd day).

- **Modified deadline for APPCN ROL submission:**
  - Extend time btw INS & submission of ROL to 2 weeks (i.e., 10 business days).
    - Reduces urgency of hearing back from more preferred sites.
    - May reduce programs' anxiety about recruiting most preferred applicants.

Potential Timeline

October – December	Prior to INS	INS 2017 Tue 1/31 - Sat 2/4	Mon 2/6/17	Sat 2/18/17 (12AM)	APPCN Match Date
Programs Post Descriptions on SCN Training Page	Match & Non-Match Programs free to interview whenever & wherever	Match & Non-Match programs interview at conference	Non-Match programs start making offers, permitting 2-day holding period	APPCN ROLs submitted. Can no longer withdraw from match	

Proposed Suggestions

- **Programs not adhering to the above guidelines must say so in advertised materials:**
  - If this is not explicitly stated in written materials & a student feels wronged by a "pre-mature" offer, there is grounds for grievance.

- **Establish a mechanism for reporting applicant grievances:**
  - Embed a grievance portal into the SCN Training Page.
  - Identify a committee to oversee complaints & develop/enforce guidelines to remediate problems (e.g., suspension from posting on Training Page).

Summary

- **Postdoctoral training in NP is essential for the preservation and advancement of the specialty.**

- **The dueling postdoctoral recruitment system creates difficulty & distress for applicants.**

- **Centralizing & standardizing info on a common (neutral) site may reduce difficulty.**

- **Allowing applicants to interview through INS may reduce distress.**

- **Modifying the due date of APPCN ROLs & permitting 2-day holding periods for non-match offers may reduce a sense of urgency.**

- **A centralized portal for grievances may increase accountability.**

Thank You for Your Attention & Consideration