

DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT REPORT 2012

The Counselor Education Masters programs (Clinical Mental Health, School, and Student Affairs in Higher Education) along with the doctoral programs are nationally accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). To maintain accreditation, CACREP requires that programs undergo continuous evaluation by multiple means. Also, accreditation standards require a report that documents the outcomes of a comprehensive program evaluation, with descriptions of any program modifications to students in the program, program faculty, institutional administrators, personnel in cooperating agencies, and the public. This report includes findings from a formal comprehensive evaluation undertaken for CACREP Re-accreditation and program modifications made as a result of these findings. Areas include: (1) modifications resulting from survey data (program graduates, employers of program graduates, and site supervisors); (2) concentration areas modifications; (3) CACREP re-accreditation modifications; (4) course modifications; (5) comprehensive examinations results; (6) doctoral programs modifications; and (7) College Park Campus at Meridian.

SURVEY DATA, STARKVILLE CAMPUS

Survey of Program Graduates

Surveys were sent to program graduates from 2010- 2012. The survey was conducted in summer 2012. The majority of survey questions were developed from the program goals for the core area courses and each program concentration area. Other questions to provide additional assessment information were also included. Graduates responded to each evaluation using a Likert scale of 1-4: 1-strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- agree, and 4-strongly agree.

Out of 134 surveys mailed, 26 (33.5%) were completed and returned from masters program alumni. There were no doctoral graduate responses. Of the surveys returned, 17 (73.9% were women, and 6 (26.1%) were men ranging in age from 24 to 56 with a mean age of 32.2. The respondents consisted of 17.4% African American students and 82.6% White students.

Graduates ratings indicated a mean score of 3.5 or higher. Areas of strengths in the graduates' preparation in core knowledge and skills included: social and cultural diversity, group work, ethical and legal issues, and advocacy skills. Areas of strengths regarding the counseling program in general included: developed positive working relationships with faculty and other counseling students, had opportunities to apply theory to practice, had competent instructors and clinicians who enhanced student professional growth, faculty members took an interest in them, increased counseling skills, and enrollment in a quality counseling program. Areas of strength in practicum and internship included: quality preparation for the transition to work, quality clinical sites, and individual/ group supervision.

Areas of strength in graduates' preparation in Clinical Mental Health Counseling included: understanding of the history/ philosophy/ trends/ and current issues in clinical mental health counseling, ethical issues, clinical mental health counselor roles and professionalism, diversity issues, understanding a comprehensive mental health agency, advocacy, and preparation for counselor licensure and the world of work.

Areas of strength in graduates' preparation in School Counseling included: multicultural issues, working with support personnel and parental involvement, needs assessment and program development, preparation to work as a school counselor, and faculty who took a genuine interest in them. Areas of strength in graduates' preparation in Student Affairs included: historical foundations, legal issues, program development, the ability to serve as a student affairs professional in a variety of environments, and excellent practicum and internship preparation for the world of work.

Areas not as highly endorsed included: assessment, career issues, research, and program evaluation.

Survey of Employees

Surveys were sent to 134 program graduates from 2010 to 2012. Graduates were instructed to give their employer the employer portion of the survey. The survey was conducted in summer 2012. The majority of the survey questions were developed from the program goals for the core area courses and each program concentration area. Other questions to provide additional assessment information were also included.

Thirteen employers of masters' program alumni returned their questionnaires. There were no responses from employers of doctoral programs graduates. The employer questionnaire contained a five point evaluation scale (0 = No opportunity to observe/ NA, 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree) to rate the graduate on 25 competencies. Despite the fact that only 13 surveys were returned by employers, the results from employers were also very encouraging. The majority of responses had a mean score of 3.5 or higher. The only question that had a mean score of below 3.0 focused on applying administrative/leadership skills to practice in counseling/student affairs. The results of the survey indicate that students are performing their tasks effectively in their respective employment settings.

Survey of Site Supervisors

Surveys were sent out to 108 clinical supervisors who provided clinical supervision to counselor education masters and doctoral students between 2010 and 2012. Of the 108 surveys sent out, 37 were returned. Of the 37 surveys, 10 were incomplete, leaving a total of 27. The survey was conducted in summer 2012. There were no responses from doctoral student supervisors. The majority of survey questions were developed to address student competencies in CACREP and program concentration areas relevant to practicum and internship experiences. Other questions to provide additional assessment information were included. Supervisors responded to each evaluation question using a 5 point Likert scale (0- No opportunity to observe/NA; 1-strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3-agree, and 4-strongly agree. Supervisees were rated on 25 competencies. Over 90% of the responses had a mean response of 3.00 or higher, with the highest at 3.7.

Highly rated strengths included: skills in conducting counseling sessions/meetings with clients/students/staff, good goal setting and decision making skills, collaborative relationships with colleagues, accepting feedback, ethical and professional behaviors, and program planning.

Areas not as highly endorsed (below 3.00) included: fostering appropriate career development with clients/students.

Supervisors were also given the opportunity to include comments on the strengths and areas in need of further growth for practicum/internship students and what the program could do to improve the students' experiences. Below are the comments.

Concentration Areas Strengths

Areas of strength in Clinical Mental Health counseling students included: counseling skills, ethical standards, treatment planning and report and record keeping , group/ family/ individual therapy, establishing a relationship with clients, excellent knowledge base, willingness to learn, assessment and writing skills, well developed theoretical orientation, open to feedback, and good understanding of when to request consultation outside of scheduled supervision.

Areas of strength in School Counseling students included: clinical skills, individual/career/ group counseling, the importance of a safe school climate, sensitive to client needs, counseling theory, collegiality and organizational skills, rapport with students, very knowledgeable of ASCA model, skilled at program development and implementation.

Areas of strength in Student Affairs students included: big picture of student affairs, professionalism and team players, counseling and recruiting, knowledge of student affairs, collegiality/decision making/leadership skills, openness to and implementation of feedback, and counseling/advising/program planning.

Areas for Further Growth

The majority of site supervisors rated students strongly on their practicum/internship experiences. Although the comments in this section are gleaned from the perceptions of a small number of supervisors, they are helpful in appraising faculty of the areas of professional growth needed by students and help to inform curricular modifications.

Areas for further growth in Clinical Mental Health students included: assessment/ diagnosis and referral, agency expectations behavior, and more real world experiences. Areas of further growth for School Counseling students included: classroom guidance, knowledge of resources, non-counseling areas of school responsibility (scheduling, records, state testing and regulations, paperwork), orientation to the school climate, and adapting to real world school issues. Areas of further growth for Student Affairs students included: budgeting, administrative theory, assessment, content specific work, understanding how other universities function, programming, and goal setting and learning outcomes.

A. CORE PROGRAM AREA CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

1. The practicum/internship coordinator will explore alternative methods of supervisor training such as online supervision for those supervisors who are unable to attend the annual supervision workshop.
2. All university supervisors will continue to maintain bi-weekly contact with site supervisors and provide site supervisors with more information on supervision expectations and requirements. The newly initiated supervision contract (Fall 2012) addresses the clinical responsibilities of the student, university supervisor, and site supervisor.
3. Professional issues and agency culture are topics in all practicum and internship courses. Lectures on these topics will continue to be included and emphasized in foundations, skills, and content specific courses.
4. Faculty will encourage doctoral student supervisors to model appropriate field supervisor experiences and expectations to counseling skills, practicum, and internship Masters students they supervise. This will help to reinforce professional behaviors and expectations from Masters students, a concern that was mentioned by site supervisors of Masters students.
5. Student engagement in increased observation of other counselors/professionals or site visits to gain more exposure to their respective fields is a required component of many concentration area courses.
6. More theory to practice (exposure to real life experiences and practices) has been included in concentration area course syllabi.
7. Specific topics mentioned in the survey have been added to the course content of already existing courses (e.g. Career Development) as a lecture, a guest lecture, special topics course, or additional assignment to the course for students who need additional knowledge/skills.
8. All university supervisors will make initial visits to sites and orient students prior to visiting their setting about appropriate professional orientation, professional conduct, and appropriate agency culture. This orientation will take place in Practicum and Internship classes.
9. Based on a recommendation mentioned in the survey, courses in family therapy and substance abuse exist, and are required for the Clinical Mental Health track.
10. An orientation to practicum and internship will be conducted each Spring semester for all students who will be enrolled in field work experiences for the upcoming school year. This orientation will be program area specific.

**Many of these recommendations are already in place.

B. CONCENTRATION AREAS MODIFICATIONS FROM SURVEY DATA

1. All surveys will be continually revised and updated for alignment with concentration area program goals and objectives and to glean information consistent with assessment and evaluation goals.
2. Faculty are concerned about stakeholder feedback. Response rates have been extremely low. Faculty will continue to brainstorm ways to increase stakeholder participation.
3. The School Counseling program has done the following: (a) Added more hands-on school experiences to course syllabi; (b) added content areas in classroom management and professionalism to course syllabi; (c) added a special education elective to the curriculum; (d) included more learning opportunities for exposure to the real roles and duties of a school counselor; (e) added additional assignments in content areas delineated by the survey feedback and students.
4. The Student Affairs program has done the following: (a) The COE 8563: Introduction to Assessment in Student Affairs course is now a part of the main Student Affairs course curriculum. Students who started the program in Fall 2012 are now required to take this course. This directly relates to the alumni concerns of student lack of experience with assessment; (b) partnered with the Vice President of Student Affairs, a Seminar in Student Affairs Course specifically addressing budgeting, crisis management, administrative issues (like running a meeting, etc.), and human resource management including hiring, firing, staffing, and supervision is being created for Summer 2014. These were topics directly mentioned in the survey data. While this course is an elective, the program coordinator will advise students to take this course in order to gain experience in these areas and to learn from seasoned practitioners in the field. (c) To bring in additional diversity in teaching, two new adjunct instructors have been added to the program, Dr. James Orr, MSU Director of the Honor Code Office and Dr. Chris Holland from the University of Alabama, Director of Residential Living-Learning Communities. Each brings a diversity of experiences which will add to student learning. They are both serving as adjunct professors for the spring 2013.
5. The Clinical Mental Health program has done the following: (a) Have included more assignments on assessment, case conceptualization, diagnosis, and treatment planning in several concentration area courses- COE 8703: Principles of Mental Health Counseling; COE 8803: Crisis Response in Counseling; COE 8303: Family Counseling Theory; and COE 8633: Psychosocial Rehabilitation. A similar assignment is included in COE 8073: Cultural Foundations in Counseling; (b) engaged students in assignments that include agency visits, interviews with agency personnel and mental health practitioners in a variety of settings, and shadowing professionals; (c) a focus on the use of evidence based research for developing treatment plans; (d) included a variety of speakers to (d) included a variety of speakers to guest lecture about their on the job experiences; (e) assignments in class which focus on students developing resource lists and referral sources for clientele they will serve.

CACREP RE-ACCREDITATION MODIFICATIONS

These modifications are applicable to both the Masters and Doctoral programs and are as follows:

1. All syllabi have been reviewed and modified to comply with CACREP 2009 standards. A standards matrix has been developed for core and concentration area courses to indicate which standard are met and in which courses. Based on the review all standards are met.
2. Masters and doctoral counseling core, concentration areas, and fieldwork syllabi have signature assignments along with grading rubrics to insure that all students are being evaluated in a consistent manner, and learning outcomes are assessed accurately.
3. Practicum and internship applications have been revised, with the same dates for submission of materials for all programs.
4. A supervision contract has been developed which specifies requirements and expectations of the practicum student, the faculty instructor, the site supervisor and the clinical coordinator.
5. The Departmental Advisory Board has been reinstated. There are four masters and one doctoral student currently serving on the Board.
6. Program admission materials have been reviewed and updated to reflect changes in GRE score reporting, and more stringent program criteria.
7. A faculty member, whose responsibility will be coordination of the departmental ongoing assessment process will be appointed by the Department Head.
8. *The Counseling Programs Graduate Student Handbook and the Practicum and Internship Handbook for Students and Supervisors* were updated and placed on the departmental website for easy student access.
9. All Programs of Study and other relevant forms were updated and placed in a central location on the departmental website for easy access. Based on student and faculty feedback, the departmental website was reorganized, updated, and made easier to navigate.
10. Information on student professional activities, awards, conferences, accomplishments, upcoming events, news, scholarship, and involvement related to the counseling program, will be placed on the departmental website as they occur.
13. A new Retention Policy was instituted as well as a new Graduate Review and Evaluation Form, a Professional Dispositions Form, and a Professional Development Plan form.
14. Dr. Cheryl Justice has been appointed the new Practicum/Internship Coordinator.

COURSE ADDITIONS, MODIFICATIONS, AND SPECIAL TOPICS

Since the counseling program's last self-study, the following course additions and modifications were made:

- COE 8923: Seminar in School Counseling is required for school counselors.
- COE 8013: Counseling Skills and COE 8023: Counseling Theory are now prerequisites for COE 8043: Group Techniques and Procedures.
- COE 8803: Crisis Response in Counseling, a newly created course, is required for all clinical mental health counseling students: The CMHC concentration area hour requirements have been increased from 9-12 credit hours.
- The name of the Community Counseling program has been changed to Clinical Mental Health Counseling.
- The title of the course, COE 8703: Community Counseling has been changed to Principles of Clinical Mental Health Counseling.
- COE8773: Counseling the Chemically Dependent Client OR COE 8783: Counseling the Chemically Dependent Family is now a required course for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling concentration area.
- Clinical Mental Health Counseling electives have been reduced from 15-12 with the requirement of a chemical dependency course (COE 8773 or COE 8783).
- COE 8763: Counseling Sexually Abused Clients is being proposed as a required course for Clinical Mental Health Counseling students.
- COE 8563: Introduction to Assessment in Student Affairs is required for Student Affairs students.

Special Interest Courses

Because of student request for additional training and knowledge, the following special interest courses have been taught during the last two years:

COE 6990: Emerging Issues in Working with Military Families
COE 6990: Developing Community Leadership and Engagement Skills
COE 8183: Utilizing Art in Counseling
COE 8163: Spirituality in Counseling
COE 8623: Advanced Law and Ethics in Counseling
COE 8763: Counseling the Sexually Abused Client
COE 8973: Counseling the Gifted Student
COE 8990: Stress Management for Counselors
COE 8990: Grief Counseling
COE 8990: Advanced Interventions in Sexual Abuse
COE 8990: Suicide and Mood Disorders
COE 8990: Creative Techniques for Counselors

MASTERS COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS

Starkville Campus

Forty-one graduate students on the Starkville Campus enrolled in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, School Counseling, and Student Affairs took the Master's Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) in 2012. Results indicated that 95% of students passed the exam. This indicates that students are achieving the desired CACREP program learning outcomes. No major modifications are necessary.

College Park Campus at Meridian

Eight students enrolled in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling took the Master's Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) in 2012. Results indicate that all eight students passed the exam (100%). This indicates that students are achieving the desired CACREP program learning outcomes. No major modifications are necessary.

DOCTORAL PROGRAMS MODIFICATIONS

In addition to the CACREP and other modifications relevant to all programs, the following modifications are specific to doctoral programs:

Modifications Related to Collecting Survey Data

1. Doctoral alumni, site supervisors, and employers of doctoral graduates will be surveyed once per year instead of once every three years to gather data about the program.
2. Doctoral surveys will be revised and updated for alignment with program goals and objectives and to glean information relevant to assessment and evaluation outcomes.
3. Faculty are concerned about low stakeholder feedback for doctoral surveys. Previous response rates have been extremely low, and there were no responses for the most recent surveys (Alumni, employer, site supervisor, 2010-2012). Faculty has brainstormed ways to increase response rates. Consequently, another survey of doctoral alumni, employers of doctoral graduates, and site supervisors of doctoral students will be conducted in Spring 2013. Results will be made available when the site team visits.

Modifications Related to Practicum/ Internship

1. Faculty will continue to maintain bi-weekly contact with doctoral student's site supervisors. They will continue to provide site supervisors with more information on supervision expectations and requirements. The newly initiated supervision contract (Fall 2012) addresses the clinical responsibilities of the student, university supervisor, and site supervisor.
2. Encourage site supervisors to provide documentation issues that relate to site supervision with doctoral students.

3. An orientation to practicum and internship will be conducted each Spring semester for all doctoral students who will be enrolled in fieldwork experiences for the upcoming school year. This orientation will be program area specific.

4. Faculty will encourage doctoral student supervisors to model appropriate field supervisor experiences and expectations to counseling skills, practicum, and internship Masters students they supervise. This will help to reinforce professional behaviors and expectations from Masters students, a concern that was mentioned by site supervisors of Masters students.

5. Invite conversations from doctoral site supervisors about alternative methods of gleanings assessment information from them about doctoral student clinical practice skills.

6. It was recommended that doctoral practicum and internship sites be listed on the departmental webpage. The clinical coordinator will work on this.

Doctoral Programs Curricular Modifications

1. Modifications in the administration of doctoral comprehensive exams will be discussed at the end of the year Spring faculty meeting.

2. Faculty will develop more detailed scoring rubrics for evaluating doctoral comprehensive examinations. Faculty will provide an informational session once per year to focus on the comprehensive exam process. Doctoral students will be provided with samples of previous comprehensive exam questions and accompanying well written responses to serve as models of faculty expectation of doctoral students responses.

3. All doctoral core courses will have an increased focus on the development of scholarly writing skills to assist with producing quality comprehensive exams responses as well as dissertation writing.

4. COE 9033: Advanced Seminar Research, will focus on doctoral student preparation of the first three chapters of the dissertation.

COLLEGE PARK CAMPUS AT MERIDIAN

Survey of Program Graduates

Surveys were sent to Master's program graduates from 2010-2012. The survey was conducted Fall 2012. The majority of survey questions were developed from the program goals for the core area courses and each program concentration area. Other questions to provide additional assessment information were also included. Graduates responded to each evaluation using a Likert scale of 1-4: 1-strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- agree, and 4-strongly agree.

Out of 41 surveys mailed to masters program alumni, 10 (24.4%) were completed and returned. Of the surveys returned, 9(90 %) were women, 1 (10%) was a man, and ranging in age from 25-54 with a mean age of 37. The respondents consisted of 40% African Americans and 60% Caucasian Americans. Responses ranged from 3.00-3.90, with no response below a 3.00.

Areas of strengths in core knowledge and skills included: social and cultural diversity, counseling skills and techniques, counseling theories, and research. Areas of strengths regarding the counseling program in general included: developed positive working relationships with faculty and other counseling students, had competent instructors and clinicians who enhanced their professional growth, increased counseling skills, and enrollment in a quality counseling program. Areas of strength related to practicum and internship included: quality preparation for the transition to work and quality individual and site supervision.

Areas of strength in Clinical Mental Health Counseling included: history/, philosophy/ trends/ current issues in clinical mental health counseling, principles of mental health, using evidence based research in treatment, advocacy, and preparation for counselor licensure.

Areas of strength in School Counseling included multicultural issues, working with support personnel, ethical issues, needs assessment and program development, parental involvement, and clinical experiences that prepared them to work in the school environment.

Areas not as highly endorsed (3.00-3.2 mean) included: professional orientation to clinical mental health counseling, clinical mental health funding, understanding the components of a comprehensive clinical mental health agency, and crisis intervention.

Employer Survey

Surveys were sent directly to 12 employers in fall 2012. The majority of survey questions were developed from the program goals for the core area courses and each program area. Other questions to provide additional assessment information were also included.

Four employers (33.3%) of alumni completed and returned their surveys. The employer questionnaire contained a 5 point evaluation scale (0 = No opportunity to observe/NA, 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree) to rate the graduate on 25 competencies. Despite the fact that only 4 surveys were completed and returned by employers, the results from employers are also very encouraging as they indicate employers' satisfaction with the graduates' on the job performance.

All areas were rated very strongly by the employers with 22 of 25 items garnering a mean score of 4.00. Two items- crisis intervention skills (3.5) and cultural issues (3.00) had the lowest mean ratings.

Clinical Field Supervisor Survey

This survey will be sent out and completed spring 2013.

COLLEGE PARK CAMPUS AT MERIDIAN PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS

Program modifications specific to the Masters counseling programs on the Starkville campus are the same for the College Park Campus at Meridian programs where applicable. Additionally, as a result of the information from the alumni survey, the following modifications have occurred/will occur:

1. Areas not as highly endorsed in the alumni survey (professional orientation to clinical mental health counseling, clinical mental health funding, understanding the components of a comprehensive clinical mental health agency, and crisis intervention) are already included in the course content of COE 8703: Principles of Clinical Mental Health Counseling. The instructor will add an additional lecture, invite a guest speaker, or include an additional assignment to ensure student comprehension of the material.
2. COE 8803: Crisis Response in Counseling is now a required course. Students will be provided with in depth exposure to crisis intervention techniques.
3. The site supervisor survey will be completed spring 2013.
4. Faculty is concerned about stakeholder feedback. Response rates have been extremely low. Faculty will continue to brainstorm ways to increase stakeholder participation.