

Masters In Counseling Program Annual Report

Date of Report: October 1, 2019

The University of Arizona's Counseling Program is evaluated annually in order to determine whether it is meeting its objectives, to provide information about the students enrolled in the program, and to determine whether changes to the program are needed to ensure that our students are receiving a preparation that is consistent with our program's mission, goals and objectives.

Currently, there are 98 students enrolled in the MA Degree in Counseling across the two specialty tracks: Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling (RMHC) and School Counseling (SC).

Student Outcomes

During the 2018-2019 academic year, 49 students graduated from the program. Based on students' self-report at graduation, all of our graduates are either currently working in their designated field or continuing their education. The high employment trend of our graduates is a reflection of not only our curriculum, but also the need for mental health counselors, rehabilitation counselors, and school counselors within the State of Arizona.

Faculty monitor student performance on a regular basis through coursework and annual reviews, including competency checklists completed by site supervisor evaluations of students during practicum (SERP 594) and internship (SERP 593). An important part of the "gate-keeping" process, students are not allowed to move on to the next level of clinical training without minimal competence documented in the competency checklist, as well as passing grades in their core courses (SERP 525, SERP 546). We are pleased to report that during the 2018-2019 academic year, only one student performance issue occurred, and faculty worked with the student to ensure they acquired and demonstrated the necessary clinical skills and move forward with their clinical training.

We are currently in the process of updating our assessment of students after graduation via a revised exit survey as well as data from employers. In the past, employers reported that our graduates were more prepared than expected in their job role and supervisors were very satisfied with the graduates' level of awareness regarding ethical and legal issues, counseling theory, assessment and evaluation, career and lifestyle counseling, human growth, advocacy, and professionalism. The information we have on student outcomes, as well as our CACREP mid-cycle report, has been sent to Dr. Carl Liaupsin, Department Head and Dr. Bruce Johnson, Dean of the College of Education.

While students are performing well, a climate survey of student experiences in the program indicated that students would like to experience more diversity within the program and course curriculum. In response, the faculty continue to make efforts to ensure an emphasis on diversity and inclusion within the program and curriculum. As an example, the faculty invited the Southern Arizona Aids Foundation to present a training on LGBTQIA+ competency. Faculty

also participated in a university-wide training called Includified: Promoting Equity Through Teaching Practices where faculty learned about inclusive teaching techniques.

Systematic review of student outcomes is a continuous and on-going process, and the counseling program is committed to improving the assessment of student outcomes. During the 2019-2020 academic year, the faculty will continue to review all students in the program annually. In addition, the faculty will disseminate another climate survey in the spring along with the revised exit survey and employer survey.

Student Progress

Evaluations were completed on the programs' current students and all were found to be progressing through the program, in terms of 1) achieving benchmarks in a timely and satisfactory manner; 2) academic performance; and 3) demonstrating dispositions appropriate for a counselor/counselor educator.

Student Demographics

Demographic information of the students in the MA Counseling program was as follows:

- Gender: 82% of our students identify as female while 18% identify as male.
- Age: The average age of our school counseling students is 28, while the average age of our rehabilitation and mental health counseling students is 31.
- Race: We have fair amount of diversity in our student population, with most students reporting that they identify as white, 40% report as Hispanic, 5% as African American, 2% as Native American, and 3% as Asian.
- Disability: We have 7 students who report as having a disability.

While the demographics of our students suggests a fair amount of diversity, we have predominately women in the program and would like to see more students from ethnically diverse backgrounds. The low number of males and persons of color is a concern and one that the counseling faculty is working to address. The University of Arizona has been designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), and one important initiative is to recruit students from diverse backgrounds. With this in mind, the Program Director of the MA Degree program is developing a recruitment plan be devised and implemented immediately for fall 2020 admissions, since applications will be due on January 15, 2020. Our goal remains to recruit a pool of well-qualified and diverse students.

Accomplishments

Our students have been active in their education and clinical skill development, participating at professional conferences and have assumed a number of leadership positions. In addition to 7 of the 9 core faculty attending the 2019 ACA conference in New Orleans, we also had 10 MA students and 3 PhD students at the conference. All of the students either volunteered or presented at the conference. In addition, 4 faculty, 1 PhD student, and 10 MA students attended the 2019 NCRE Conference in San Diego. Within Arizona, the Counseling Program has an

institutional affiliation with the Arizona Counselors Association (AzCA), the Arizona state branch of ACA. The institutional membership means all students and faculty are automatically members, creating opportunities for students to become engaged in advocacy and leadership.

Our faculty continue to engage in service and leadership within the community, program, university, and profession. Dr. Perry was selected as one of the university's Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) fellows where she approached issues of recruitment and educational access to Hispanic and Latinx individuals. Drs. Falco and Tashjian have solidified a partnership with Tucson Unified School District through which UA counseling students are providing free and accessible mental health counseling services to youth and families in the Tucson community. Finally, all of the counseling faculty serve on local and national boards. In addition, it was announced by Newsweek that the Rehabilitation Counseling specialization was ranked number 4 in the country.

Program Changes

This year we are welcoming Dr. Marcela Kepic to our faculty. Dr. Kepic is an Associate Professor of Practice who comes to us from George Washington University. She will be a welcome addition to our core faculty for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Conclusion

The program appears to be achieving its objectives and students are progressing well through the program. Actions to address identified program challenges for the 2019-2020 academic year will be spearheaded by the Program Director to:

- Continue to evolve and improve assessment of student outcomes after graduation, including students' self-perceptions of their preparation as well as their employers.
- Continue to streamline administrative functions across the two specialty tracks of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling (RMHC) and School Counseling (SC).
- Continue to align our systemic assessment of student performance and outcomes with the CACREP standards as well as what is necessary for certification and licensure.