

# Masters In Counseling Program Annual Report

## Date of Report: January, 2024

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.

In fall of 2022, there were 76 students enrolled in the MA Degree in Counseling across the two specialty tracks: Rehabilitation & Mental Health Counseling (RMHC) and School Counseling (SC).

### **Student Outcomes**

During the 2022-2023 academic year, 26 students graduated from the program. The graduation rate from our dually titled and accredited program is at 94%, and the licensure/certification examination pass rate is at 99%. Based on students' self-reports at graduation, the job placement rate is 98%. The high employment trend of our graduates reflects not only our curriculum but also the need for mental health counselors, rehabilitation counselors, and school counselors within the State of Arizona. We expect this rate to come very close to 100% in the upcoming year.

Faculty monitor students' performance on a regular basis throughout coursework and annual reviews. Such includes Form D: competency checklists completed by site supervisor evaluating students during practicum (SERP 594) and internship (SERP 593). Almost 100% of our students receive acceptable, very good, and superior ratings in their clinical performance, which is our pride. Further, Faculty complete Annual Disposition Review for every student and share such evaluation with students. Again, almost all students are scoring "acceptable" in all disposition areas. Also, knowledge and skills are evaluated by the course key performance indicators (KPIs) and our collected data show that all outcomes are rated at 2 or above which means our students are meeting the standard (85%-95%) or exceeding the standard (95%-100%). 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, annual disposition reviews, as well as passing grades in their core courses (SERP 525, SERP 546). We are pleased to report that during the 2022-2023 academic year, only two student performance issues occurred, and faculty worked with the student through incorporating the growth plan to ensure they acquired and demonstrated the necessary clinical skills and move forward with their clinical training.

Beginning in Spring 2024, we have updated our program reporting software to Tevera where we house our practicum and internship evaluations, end of year evaluations, and plan to add our key course assignments (anticipated start Fall 2024). In spring 2023, employers and site supervisors 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.

Further, we have focused on improving our diversity and inclusion within the program and curriculum. For example, the faculty participated in various trainings, we have included more specific pedagogy in coursework to address diversity and inclusion, and we have crafted a new admissions interview process and review for Fall 2024.

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:
  - 88% of our students identify as female
  - 12% identify as male
- Age:
  - The average age of our school counseling students is 26.
  - The average age of our rehabilitation and mental health counseling students is 32.
- Race:
  - Asian 7%
  - Black/African America 3%
  - Hispanic 40%
  - Native American/Pacific Islanders 2%
  - White 44%
  - Two or more races N/A%
  - Unknown race 3%

The demographics of our students suggest a fair amount of diversity and reflect somewhat closely the national demographics representation of our profession. According to the Census Bureau (2018), men represent approximately 26 % of all professional counselors. Similar trends are observed in psychology. Our male representation is slightly below the national average; however, national data do not provide statistics on those counselors who do not ascribe to binary gender and our counselors report 6% as non-binary. Our female representation very closely resembles national data. Further, the Census Bureau (2018) reports that 61% of counselors are White, 11 % Black, 10% are Hispanic. Our Hispanic student body is significantly overrepresented, which is our goal and pride, as The University of Arizona has been designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). We continue to recruit a pool of well-qualified students from diverse backgrounds to ensure a diverse demographic representation of counselors that can meet the population's needs.

## **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.

Our faculty and students continued attend national and regional conference during the 2023-2024 academic year. 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, college, university and at the national level through committee appointments and duties as board members.

Finally, all of the counseling faculty continue to be involved in research and manuscripts writing and serve on local and national boards. Our Rehabilitation Counseling specialization continues to be ranked number 4 in the country by Newsweek.

### **Program Changes**

During the academic year 2023-2024 academic year, the program has been undergoing its re accreditation efforts to ensure that we uphold three accredited counseling specialty areas: School Counseling, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, and Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling. We have also implemented the use of Tevera for our programmatic data collection and reporting.

### **Conclusion**

The program is accomplishing its objectives and students are progressing well through the program. Actions to address identified program challenges for the 2024-2024 academic year will be spearheaded by the Program Director to:

- Continue to evolve and improve assessment of student outcomes prior to and after graduation, including students' self-perceptions of their preparation as well as satisfaction evaluations of their employers.
- Successfully transition our dually accredited specialty Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling (RMHC) into two separate specialties: Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling.
- Hire needed career-track and tenure-track faculty.
- 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