

# Masters In Counseling Program Annual Report

## Date of Report: October 1, 2021

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 111 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 2020-2021 academic year, 35 students graduated from the program. The graduation rate from our dually titled and accredited program is at 100%, and the licensure/certification examination pass rate is at 90%. Based on students' self-reports at graduation, the job placement rate is 94%. 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 2020-2021 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.

We have updated our assessment of students after graduation as well as data collection from employers and site supervisors, now all completed via Qualtrics platform. Currently, 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. The information we have on student outcomes, as well as our CACREP midcycle report, has been sent to Dr. Carl Liaupsin, Department Head and Dr. Bruce Johnson, Dean of the College of Education.

Further, we have focused on improving our diversity and inclusion within the program and curriculum. For example, the faculty participated in various trainings, including The Leader in Classroom Diversity and Inclusion, and Inclusive Collaborate Learning. We are also working on recruiting more diverse body of students and faculty.

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:
  - 77% of our students identify as female
  - 17% identify as male
  - 6% report non-binary gender
- Age:
  - The average age of our school counseling students is 28
  - The average age of our rehabilitation and mental health counseling students is 31.
- Race:
  - Asian 3%
  - Black/African America 5%
  - Hispanic 36%
  - Native American/Pacific Islanders 2%
  - White 46%
  - Two or more races 3%
  - Unknown race 4%
- Disability
  - Disability: 7% of our students report as having a disability.

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. Despite the

COVID-19 Pandemic, our faculty and students continued attend national and regional conference during the 2020-2021 academic year. We had 7 MA students and 4 PhD students presenting at virtual conference, such as ACA, NCRE, and AzCA. 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. Prof. Carla Cheatham received 2021 Educator of the Year Award at Bremen High School, Illinois. Dr. Michael Hartley was awarded the Presidential Award 2020 by the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association. Dr. Marcela Kopic received an Outstanding Journal Article Award Association for Adult Development and Aging in 2020. Finally, Dr. Tashjian received an Outstanding Faculty Mentor for Graduate Students Award Winner by the University of Arizona.

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 2020-21, we have welcomed Dr. Renae Mayes into our program. In this current academic year, 2021-2022, Prof. Carla Cheatham has joined our faculty team. Both Dr. Mayes and Prof. Carla Cheatham bring diversity to our team and their expertise in school counseling. We are anticipating two more hires for the upcoming academic year as two team members will be retiring.

### **Conclusion**

The program is accomplishing its objectives and students are progressing well through the program. Actions to address identified program challenges for the 2021-2022 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