

2018 Counselor-Education Faculty Survey: Observations and Plans for Improvement

The Counselor Education faculty met on September 24th, 2018 and reviewed the implementation of improvement plans outlined for the year 2017. Here is a brief summary.

- In an effort to meet the CACREP requirement for numbers of faculty, the program recruited two core program faculty in summer of 2018. Dr. Hyatt will be primarily working with the career-counseling area and Dr. May will be primarily working with the mental-health counseling area. Dr. Dong serves as the program coordinator of the counselor education program.
- Based upon the site supervisors' suggestion that students need to have more roleplaying opportunities prior to practicum and internship, the program faculty integrated more roleplaying into the counseling courses (such as *Introduction to Counseling Theories and Technique* and *Psychological and Multicultural Aspects of Counseling*) during the fall semester of 2017.
- The program faculty invited site supervisors of local mental-health agencies to talk about diagnosis, treatment plans, and professional development issues over *Internship* course during the spring semester of 2018.
- To better prepare students for the professional expectations of practicum and internship training, the program clinical coordinator held group advising meetings and outlined professional-demeanor expectations prior to the practicum and internship experiences.
- The adjunct faculty who taught the *Introduction to Mental Health* course in the fall semester of 2017 assigned more time to discuss licensure issues in the class.
- The program faculty met with their advisees at least once a semester during the fall semester of 2017 and the spring semester of 2018.

Furthermore, the program faculty discussed the overall results of the survey of students who graduated in May 2018, alumni who graduated from 2016, and employers of the 2018 graduates. The program faculty also reviewed the CPCE Comprehensive Exam results and job-placement statistics for our graduates.

The following strengths were highlighted:

- Our students continue to perform well nationally on the CPCE Comprehensive Exam. The students' mean scores in all CPCE content areas except *Professional Orientation and Ethics* are higher than the national mean scores.
- Our students also have relatively high employment rates in a variety of career and clinical mental-health settings.
- Employers report that our students rank very high on professional behaviors (i.e., relationships with other employees, general work attitude and enthusiasm, and responsiveness to supervision and feedback), and provide all "good" or higher ratings on the majority of knowledge and skills domains rated, with the highest scores in individual counseling skills, career and lifestyle counseling, standardized psychological testing, and theories of counseling.

- Our alumni from 2016 and those who graduated in 2018 all rate the program as “good” or higher on all program elements. The highest ratings are on faculty demonstration of genuine interest in helping students, preparation to work with clients from diverse backgrounds, sufficient training to make ethical decisions, and solid preparation for job after graduation.

The program faculty noticed large standard deviations for many of the items, suggesting that extreme ratings were present. Although the majority of the areas considered by the alumni and current employers were rated “good” or above, the faculty discussed the results from the survey reports. We set goals to increase our ratings in the areas of clarity of paperwork procedures and information dissemination, communication between faculty and students, students’ comfort level in sharing feedback with faculty about the program, and personal challenges, especially with respect to licensure based on these being areas of concern for our 2016 alumni. We also noted room for improvement with student advising and mentoring. Our strategies to improve in these areas include:

- The program faculty have included instructions on paperwork related to CACREP artifact submission procedures in the Student Handbook. In addition, program staff came to classes and explained to students the process and deadlines on artifact submission at the beginning of Fall of 2018.
- To help students have a better understanding of licensure and certification procedures, instructors of the *Introduction to Mental Health Counseling* and *Career Counseling* courses will spend more time specifically on licensure and certification. In addition, guest speaker(s) will be invited to come to class and share their experiences and knowledge related to licensure procedures and processes.
- Program faculty met and advised students in individual and group formats to answer students’ questions related to research opportunities, the thesis option, and practicum/internship placements. We will continue to meet students regularly during the semesters to come.
- The mental health counseling students of 2018 fall cohort will start their practicum in the first spring semester whereas these students, in the past, started their practicum later, in the summer. The program made this change in response to students’ feedback on needing more time to accumulate clinical hours. In addition, the program faculty saw this change as an opportunity for students to begin applying counseling skills earlier and to have greater opportunities to develop skills. This should also better prepare students for employment after graduation.
- To better prepare students for the professional expectations of practicum and internship experience, the clinical coordinator/faculty will send a list of reminders to students in their first fall semester outlining professional-demeanor expectations.
- The program will continue to facilitate the process to allow students to choose their practicum/internship sites and apply for them directly. We have heard that our current interns are very pleased with having more control over this process.
- The program plans to incorporate more experiential learning experiences such as role play into the counseling courses (i.e., *Introduction to Counseling Theories and Technique* and *Psychological and Multicultural Aspects of Counseling*) to help students fully prepare for the practicum and internship. Program faculty have discussed related

strategies during program faculty meetings. Specifically, these possible strategies involve using technologies to assess and engage students' experiential-learning activities.

- We have invited leaders of the Counselor Education Student Association to attend the program faculty meetings to get their feedback on ideas to enhance the Counselor Education program. We plan to work more closely with the student organization to encourage more feedback.
- The program will strengthen training on diagnosis and treatment planning in relevant courses; the program, working in the student organization, will invite a panel of guest speakers to talk about diagnosis, treatment planning, and professional-development issues.
- The program faculty have shared information on professional conferences for students to attend, and invited them to present to enhance their professional development.