

Counselor Education Program Evaluation – 2020-21 Annual Report

What follows is a summary of student learning outcome data that were reviewed in relation to the program objectives along with recommendations and/or specific modifications to be implemented.

1. Students will develop and demonstrate a professional counseling identity

Summary of Data:

Data points we reviewed came from courses in the specializations and from student self-report. The student measures related to this outcome revealed all students demonstrated knowledge at or above the expected level. These scores are similar to last year. There were no students who scored in the unsatisfactory category and only one to score in the progressing category. Almost all students are members of national counseling organizations, but smaller percentages are members of state counseling organizations or CSI. There are currently 23 students in CSI (up from 19 last year).

Summary and Modifications or Recommendations:

Students appear to be obtaining sufficient knowledge about the profession of counseling and almost all are joining professional organizations at the national level. The results were that most students were in the exceptional category (69%) followed by proficient (29%) and zero (0) students were rated as unsatisfactory. This is a continued increase in the exceptional and proficient categories over two years ago. We did notice a decrease in student participation in national and state professional organizations. Most students commented on how the impact of COVID was the main issue in their participation decisions. We continue to discuss ways to increase interest and participation in our chapter of CSI. We may also want to look at other ways to assess professional counseling identity in the future.

2. Students will exhibit self-reflection and self-awareness and demonstrate professional growth

Summary of Data:

Data points gathered from student fitness reviews, the multicultural counseling course, and during practicum and internship courses. Students demonstrated the ability to self-reflect at mostly exceptional levels of self-awareness, with the majority of students exceeding expectations. Emerging and basic ratings for self-awareness were noted during practicum, however these scores increased during internship and at fitness reviews. Additionally, 100% of students were rated as meeting or exceeding criteria for awareness related to their belief system, values, and limitations. 89% of students were rated as exceptional in regards to the impact of their heritage, attitudes, understanding, and acculturative experience on their views of others, while the remaining 11% were rated as proficient in this area. This data demonstrates that they possess high levels of awareness related to cultural factors as they progress throughout the program and that they grow in this awareness as they reach graduation.

Data also demonstrated growth in professional domains during the program. Data was collected from exit surveys, comprehensive examinations, fitness reviews, and internship. Exit surveys indicated that students strongly agreed they were well prepared for professional practice at an average rate of 63% during practicum and at 74% at internship. During comprehensive exams at the end of their programs students were rated at an average of 79% being exceptional at applying a professional counseling orientation and ethical practice and the remaining students were rated as proficient. During fitness reviews, students across the program were rated at 100% for meeting or exceeding criteria overall in the Professional Responsibility category. This data suggests that most students demonstrate high levels of professionalism throughout the program and most students believe that they grow in their professionalism from the beginning to the end of the program.

Summary and Modifications or Recommendations:

As expected, we see slight variation in the level of self-awareness demonstrated by our students. A small number of students were rated at basic or emerging levels in self-awareness and professional growth and these ratings were mostly during the beginning stages of their participation in our program. We expect that this is due to typical developmental factors and learning to gain deeper insight. Although most students were rated as meeting or exceeding expectations areas of self-reflection, self-awareness, and professionalism, the distribution of ratings was a bit more split than last year. This slight change in ratings may have been in part due to COVID impacts over the course of the year. Impacts may have included personal impacts of the virus on their well-being as well as impacts on their ability to fully engage in field experiences and courses. These impacts may also have influenced the ratings of the site supervisors and faculty supervisors for these courses. We will continue to monitor trends as the pandemic continues and impacts ebb and flow. We have also added an additional required course for all students (EDC8240 Ethical Issues in Counseling) in response to our advisory board feedback. In this course students will have additional preparation that may impact their self-reflection, self-awareness, and professional growth.

3. Students will exhibit critical thinking skills

Summary of Data:

One of our continued goals from last year was to examine this objective within the program across both tracks. Data was gathered from the CMH comprehensive exam, two school counseling specific courses, and two courses that are open to all students in the program. All but one student (scored progressing) demonstrated critical thinking skills at expected levels with an overall increase in students scoring in the proficient and exceptional levels as compared to last year.

Summary and Modifications or Recommendations:

We continued to exam more data points to measure this outcome. We will continue to use these classes and exams as this seems to broaden our ability to have a clearer picture of our student's development of critical thinking skills. We will continue to review courses to evaluate where we can better support students with critical thinking over the course of their

development in the program. There were no students that scored in the unsatisfactory category and only one in the progressing category. The majority of our students scored in the proficient and exceptional categories.

4. Students will apply culturally sensitive counseling, career, and human development theories to individual and group counseling practice

Summary of Data:

Numerous data points were examined for this objective and results varied across the different points. Regarding culturally sensitive counseling, the majority of students demonstrated an ability to apply knowledge at or above expected levels across different measures throughout the program. As expected, levels of culturally sensitive counseling data were lower in the introductory courses. All students were rated at meeting or exceeding expectations at the comprehensive exam stage in this area. Based on exit survey data, all students agreed or strongly agreed that they were prepared to implement culturally relevant interventions upon graduation. For application of knowledge related to human development and counseling theories, most students received ratings at or above the expected levels with lower levels occurring earlier in the program. Exit survey data indicate that all students agree or strongly agree that the program prepared them to be grounded in theory. The majority of students also demonstrated application of career counseling knowledge, with a very small percentage performing at a lower progressing level early in the program. Overall, data revealed students are at or above expectations for this outcome showing progress over time with lower ratings being received in the earlier content courses as compared to the practicum experience and comprehensive exam.

Summary and Modifications or Recommendations:

Variation in student performance is expected, and for the most part, students seem to be grasping and applying knowledge in a positive trend throughout the program. Upon graduation, the majority of students report having the knowledge necessary to implement all aspects of this outcome. We may need to examine how to better capture application of these areas to group settings, as this was not clearly communicated in the data that was gathered or look at revising this outcome.

5. Students will identify and use counseling interventions and techniques that are grounded in research

Summary of Data:

The program assesses this objective via assignments and projects that require students to identify and apply research to counseling practice as well as projects that require the collection and analysis of original data. Students demonstrate the ability to understand and apply theories and models of counseling as well as developing a personal approach to counseling and using essential skills that are grounded in theory. Our assessment data indicated that students were demonstrating greater proficiency in applying theories and models of counseling, client

conceptualization skills, the use of developmentally relevant treatment and intervention planning, and in developing personal models of counseling.

Modifications and/or Action Plans:

We continue to see our students move from progressing early in the program to scoring proficient or exceptional in the areas of applying counseling, career, and human development theories, using a systemic approach to conceptualizing clients, and developing measurable counseling outcomes. We can continue to improve in the areas of helping our students develop and implement interventions and counseling skills that are grounded in research and theory. We can continue to explore ways to transfer formative and theoretical learning into applied practice, particularly as it relates to our first field placement (practicum) courses.

6. Students will identify processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination and avenues for advocacy

Summary of Data:

All students demonstrated ability at or above the expected level in relation to awareness of factors that influence how people view others. All students were able to identify processes for advocacy in their varied settings. All students demonstrated awareness on the comprehensive exam stage regarding the effects of power and privilege. All students demonstrated adherence to ethical standards.

Summary and Modifications or Recommendations:

Students appear to be gaining desired knowledge and dispositions related to their role as advocates and in awareness of intentional and unintentional oppression. As this is such an important part of counselors' roles, we will monitor whether it seems we are measuring this accurately and for our students' to achieve high ratings in these areas. With regard to students' adherence to ethical standards, we added a required ethics course to our program of study for all students, beginning in Summer 2021. We hope and expect that we will see improvement in this area in the coming years as a result.

7. Students will acquire the knowledge and skills needed to identify and use culturally relevant assessment strategies

Summary of Data:

Students demonstrated skills to prepare and conduct culturally relevant assessments through assignments that required application of knowledge. All students received ratings at or above proficient in areas of effectively selecting, preparing for, conducting, interpreting, and using assessments for diagnostic and intervention planning, with the majority receiving exceptional ratings in these areas. We saw an increase in students proficient in the area of assessing for risk of danger to self or others, including suicide risk.

Modifications and/or Action Plans:

Our students demonstrate clear knowledge of using culturally competent assessment related skills in counseling. They are proficient in their abilities to demonstrate effective initial assessment meetings, selection and use of assessment tools, and interpretation of assessment results. As we move forward, we can continue to strengthen the training related to assessment strategies related to high-risk clients. We have modified our requirements so that all students take Trauma and Crisis Counseling and will explore ways we can continue to modify our training to help students gain competence with assessing for risk of danger to self or others.

8. Students will identify opportunities and processes for collaborating and consulting

Summary of Data:

School counseling students are assessed at the beginning and end of their program regarding this objective focused on their collaboration and consultation skills implemented with parents, teachers, and administrators. They demonstrated developing knowledge in this area at the start of the program and the highest levels of performance in this area at the end of the program. CMH counseling students demonstrated proficient understanding of collaboration and consultation over the course of their internship experiences as assessed by University and Site Supervisors. In their exit surveys a large percentage of School Counseling and CMH students in the program stated that they strongly agree, with a small percentage stating they agree, that they gained skills to effectively collaborate with others.

Summary and Modifications or Recommendations:

We will continue to examine other places in the program where we can assess this standard for all students to get a better picture of how they are growing developmentally regarding collaboration and consultation.

9. Students will acquire knowledge and skills in their counseling specialty area

Summary of Data:

Data points we reviewed came from courses in the specializations. Overall, students are demonstrating proficiency both in knowledge and skills based on most ratings of proficient or exceptional in their specialty areas in relation to areas like using a systems approach, understanding the impact of crisis and trauma, and using differentiated instruction strategies in classroom lessons.

Summary and Modifications or Recommendations:

We feel mostly satisfied with the knowledge and skills students are developing in their specialty areas and will monitor for additional opportunities to assess knowledge and skill development specific to each specialty. It is recommended that CACREP standard 5.G.3.c be assessed as part of EDC 8510 Leadership in School Counseling to assess knowledge and skill of SC students in the area of: Core curriculum design, lesson plan development, classroom management strategies, and differentiated instructional strategies