

Masters In Counseling Program Annual Report

Date of Report: December 1, 2021

Every year the Counseling Program at the University of Arizona evaluates its objectives. Such assessments provide information about the students enrolled in the program, report on changes to the program, and share how students receive preparation 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 Demographics

We consider our student population a diverse one. Demographic information of the students in the MA Counseling program is 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.

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.

Students' performance is evaluated consistently through coursework and annual reviews, including competency checklists completed by site supervisor evaluations of students during practicum (SERP 594) and internship (SERP 593). An essential 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 (e.g., B or better) in their core courses (SERP 525, SERP 546). We are pleased to report that only one student performance issue occurred during the 2020-2021 academic year, and faculty worked with the student to provide the necessary support.

We have updated our assessment of students after graduation. First, the exit survey and information from employers provide necessary data that are reported annually. Currently, employers share that our graduates are better prepared than expected in their job roles. 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. Second, a climate survey of student experiences indicates that students would like to experience more diversity within the program and course curriculum.

In response, the faculty continues to make efforts to emphasize diversity and inclusion within the program and curriculum. For example, the faculty invited the Southern Arizona Aids Foundation to present training on LGBTQIA+ competency. Faculty also participated in a university-wide training called Inlusified: Promoting Equity Through Teaching Practices, where faculty learned about inclusive teaching techniques. The program is also devoted to efforts in recruiting from a diverse pool of student and faculty applicants for the upcoming academic year. Finally, the counseling program is dedicated to an ongoing assessment of outcomes to ensure not only to meet CACREP standards but also exceed professional counseling expectations. All students are assessed in the following areas:

1. Achieving benchmarks in a timely and satisfactory manner
2. Academic performance
3. Demonstrating dispositions appropriate for a counselor/counselor educator

All students currently progress through the program by meeting objectives and standards and exceeding set expectations.

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

Our counseling program is achieving its objectives, and students are progressing well through the program even though the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges. As challenges arise, program directors and faculty take creative actions to address such challenges now and in the future. The program will continually evolve and improve the assessment of student outcomes after graduation, including students' self-perceptions of their preparation and their employers. The program will work on re-accreditation of the school counseling program, separate accreditations of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling specialty, and the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling specialty. Finally, the program will realign the assessment of student performance and outcomes with the updated CACREP standards and licensure and certification requirements.