**University of Alabama at Birmingham**

School of Education

*Department of Human Studies*

Counseling Program

2019-2020 State of the Program Report

**Affiliated Faculty**

Shannon McCarthy, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor, Interim Assistant Director of the UAB Community Counseling Clinic, CACREP Liaison*

Dayna Watson, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor, Program Coordinator, Clinical Placement Coordinator*

Dwayne White, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor*

Yusen Zhai, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor,* *Director of the UAB Community Counseling Clinic*

**THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANKExecutive Summary**

**Introduction**

The UAB Counseling Program (CP) relies on data from various sources to inform programmatic decisions. These data can be divided into two categories including: enrollment data and learning outcomes. Enrollment data is used to document trends in the characteristics of applicants, current students, and alumni. Learning outcomes are used to assess whether students are indeed acquiring and demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and abilities targeted by the current curriculum. Interested readers may review a detailed outline regarding the CP’s assessment procedures documented in the UAB Program Assessment and Evaluation Manual. The purpose of the current report is to summarize program data in an effort to guide decision making and program development.

*Enrollment Data*

Enrollment data is collected via three data sources: Admission/Application Data, Enrollment or Headcount Data, and Specialty Track Data. This total may include certificate-only students.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Enrollment Data** | |
| **Academic** | **Count** |
| **Fall 2015** | 81 |
| **Spring 2016** | 87 |
| **Summer 2016** | 76 |
| **Fall 2016** | 91 |
| **Spring 2017** | 98 |
| **Summer 2017** | 64 |
| **Fall 2017** | 94 |
| **Spring 2018** | 101 |
| **Summer 2018** | 78 |
| **Fall 2018** | 99 |
| **Spring 2019** | 106 |
| **Summer 2019** | 88 |
| **Fall 2019** | 111 |
| **Spring 2020** | 115 |
| **Summer 2020** | 95 |

Student enrollment is also tracked by each specialty. A review of the data indicates that the School Counseling (SC) track has remained stable, with only slight fluctuations in enrollment numbers since 2015. Substantial declines in summer enrollment can be observed beginning in summer 2017 as a result of the discontinuation of clinical coursework by SC students. This program policy was implemented due to an increasing number of districts transitioning summer school programs to an online format. As such, there were less opportunities for obtaining direct hours. The program also traditionally offers less courses in the summer semester.

Enrollment in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) has steadily increased since Fall 2015, which also reflects increasing application numbers. The MCFC concentration, which began in Fall 2016 has steadily grown, though this must also be examined in the context of the MCFC certificate. As the MCFC concentration was the newest, and did not yet have CACREP-accreditation, we saw a trend of students who were primarily interested in MCFC, but also wanted extra training in CMHC, choosing to simultaneously enroll in the CMHC specialty and the MCFC certification program. This gave them access to the primary courses of both concentrations. Feedback from students appears to indicate that the desire to appear more marketable upon graduation supersedes their primary interest in MCFC. In other words, gauging enrollment in the MCFC specialty program is undermined by the MCFC certificate option. To address this issue, the counseling program faculty introduced a CMHC certificate option that was approved in Spring 2019 and was first offered in Fall 2019. This option allows students, who are primarily interested in MCFC, to still specialize in their desired area, while also allowing them to pursue additional training in clinical mental health. The CP does have some students who are admitted just for completion of the MCFC and CMHC certificates.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **AGYC** | **CMHC** | **SC** | **MCFC** | **MCFC Cert.-Only** |
| Fall 2015 | 4 | 50 | 27 | 0 | 0 |
| Spring 2016 | 1 | 56 | 30 | 0 | 0 |
| Summer 2016 | 0 | 53 | 23 | 0 | 0 |
| Fall 2016 | 0 | 59 | 28 | 1 | 3 |
| Spring 2017 | 0 | 63 | 31 | 2 | 2 |
| Summer 2017 | 0 | 44 | 15 | 1 | 4 |
| Fall 2017 | 0 | 60 | 25 | 5 | 4 |
| Spring 2018 | 0 | 66 | 25 | 6 | 4 |
| Summer 2018 | 0 | 56 | 12 | 8 | 2 |
| Fall 2018 | 0 | 66 | 23 | 8 | 2 |
| Spring 2019 | 0 | 72 | 21 | 11 | 2 |
| Summer 2019 | 0 | 62 | 12 | 10 | 4 |
| Fall 2019 | 0 | 76 | 22 | 12 | 1 |
| Spring 2020 | 0 | 80 | 22 | 12 | 1 |
| Summer 2020 | 0 | 63 | 16 | 9 | 7 |

AGYC: Agency Counseling; CMHC: Clinical Mental Health Counseling; SC: School Counseling; MCFC: Marriage Couples and Family Counseling; MCFC Cert.: MCFC Certificate

NOTE: AGYC was replaced with CMHC. The MCFC and MCFC Cert programs began Fall 2016.

**NCE Examination Results 2015-2019**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date of NCE** | **Number Tested** | **Number Passed** | **Passage Rate** |
| October 17, 2015 | 12 | 12 | 100% |
| April 16, 2016 | 11 | 9 | 82% |
| October 2016 | 11 | 9 | 82% |
| April 22, 2017 | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| October 2017 | 3 | 3 | 100% |
| April 22, 2018 | 3 | 3 | 100% |
| Fall 2018 | 7 | 7 | 100% |
| Spring 2019 | 14 | 13 | 93% |
| Fall 2019 | 4 | 4 | 100% |
| Spring 2020 | 18 | 16 | 88% |

As evidenced by this chart, UAB Counseling student pass rates remain consistently high for the NCE.

**CPCE Examination Results (Non-Exit) 2019-2020**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Exam Section** | **UAB Results**  **(Average Score)** | **National Results**  **(Average Score)** |
| Human Growth & Development | 12.03 | 10.83 |
| Social & Cultural Diversity | 10.76 | 10.08 |
| Counseling & Helping Relationships | 11.7 | 10.43 |
| Group Counseling & Group Work | 12.63 | 10.76 |
| Career Development | 11.2 | 10.07 |
| Assessment & Testing | 10.13 | 9.56 |
| Research & Program Evaluation | 10.56 | 9.07 |
| Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice | 12.96 | 11.34 |
| Total Score | 91.93 | 84.4 |

From this data, it appears that UAB counseling students, on average, score above the national average across all domains. UAB Counseling students appear to consistently demonstrate strong performances in Group Counseling, Professional Orientation & Ethics, and Research & Program Evaluation as compared to the national mean (more than 1.45 points higher on average). Conversely, UAB student scores tend to fall a bit closer to the national means (within 0.75 points, but not less than .57 on average) in Social & Cultural Diversity, and Assessment & Testing.

\*These results reflect scores from Fall 2019, Spring 2020, and Summer 2020 examinations. The national scores reflect the scores of 3,056 students who took the exam during the same time period as a non-exit exam. Overall, 36 UAB students took the exam during this time period. For our internal pass rate, 6 of these students did not pass the exam, resulting in a pass rate of 83.3%. It should be noted that students may take the exam up to three times in an attempt to pass, so these numbers may reflect multiple attempts by some students. The pass rate becomes higher when re-tests/subsequent passes are factored in.

**Key Program Indicator: Counselor Competencies Scale (CCS)**

**Midterm and Final Evaluations for ECG 695, 696, and 697 AY 2019-2020**

The Counselor Competencies Scale (CCS) is a Key Performance Indicator administered to all students in each semester of clinicals in ECG 695, ECG 696, and ECG 697. Clinical site supervisors complete the CCS for each student midway through the semester (the midterm evaluation), and at the end of the semester (the final evaluation). The CCS evaluates 32 clinical skills and professional dispositions and has 4 categories: Unacceptable (score of 1), Near Expectations (score of 2), Meets Expectations (score of 3), and Exceeds Expectations (score of 4). Students are expected to have an average score of at least 3 on the CCS at the conclusion of each clinical semester.

**2019-2020 AY CCS Average Scores**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course** | **Midterm Evaluation**  (Range 1.0-4.0) | **Final Evaluation**  (Range 1.0-4.0) |
| ECG 695: Practicum II | 3.56 | 3.69 |
| ECG 696: Counseling Internship A | 3.61 | 3.74 |
| ECG 697: Counseling Internship B | 3.67 | 3.74 |

As evidenced by the above chart, for academic year 2019-2020, Counseling Program students, on average, scored above the Meets Expectations/Demonstrates Competencies category (3.0), and each semester students increased scores from the midterm to the final evaluation towards the Exceeds Expectations/Demonstrates Competencies category (4.0).

**Non-Academic Program Outcomes:**

All (100%) students who graduated in 2019-2020 presented at a counseling or related conference (the majority of these students presented at the 2019 ALCA annual conference). All students who graduated completed eight counseling sessions prior to starting clinical courses. All students who graduated during this academic period completed 15 hours of professional development training while enrolled in the UAB counseling program.

**Faculty Changes in 2019-2020 academic year:**

The program hired two visiting instructors for the 2019-2020 academic year, Dr. Sara Lappan and Dr. Danielle Pester due to rising application and enrollment numbers and a failed faculty search. The other full-time program faculty in academic year 2019-2020 consisted of Dr. Sean Hall, Assistant Professor and Clinic Director, Dr. Shannon McCarthy, Assistant Professor, Dr. Larry Tyson, Associate Professor, and Dr. Dayna Watson, Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator.

A school counseling faculty search was conducted through the 2019-2020 academic year, but the search was unsuccessful and did not result in a hire.

In Summer 2020, Dr. Larry Tyson retired, and Dr. Sean Hall left the UAB Counseling Program for another professional opportunity. Dr. Shannon McCarthy was named the Interim Executive Director of the Community Counseling Clinic (CCC) as well as the CACREP Liaison, Dr. Sara Lappan was named the Interim Clinical Director of the CCC, and Dr. Dayna Watson took over duties as Chapter Faculty Advisor for Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) Zeta Chapter, UAB’s chapter of the international counseling honor society.

**Curriculum Changes:**

Due to the popularity of the MCF certificate, and feedback from students that offering a CMH certificate may make students more likely to pursue a concentration in Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling (as they could complete the basic course requirements for both), the UAB Counseling Program submitted an application for a Clinical Mental Health certificate. In 2019, the Clinical Mental Health Counseling certificate was approved by the UAB Board of Trustees. The certificate consists of the 5 core CMH courses and is available to current counseling graduate students concentrating in school counseling and marriage, couples, and family counseling, and practitioners with a master’s degree in school counseling or marriage, couples, and family counseling. Current enrolled students were eligible to pursue the certificate beginning in Fall 2019. Graduates or external students could apply for the certificate beginning in spring 2020. The CMH certificate joins the Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling certificate that has been offered since 2017.

In Spring 2020, the entire counseling program curriculum moved online (through the remainder of 2020) due to UAB policies in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Counseling program instructors completed professional development through program-sponsored workshops, university teaching consultants, peer review of online modules, etc. to ensure that course content was being presented according to CACREP and professional standards.

**CACREP Updates:**

The UAB Counseling Program submitted a CACREP Program report for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling at the end of the initial two-year accreditation period with the goal of obtaining the full 8-year accreditation (this accreditation was awarded in the summer of 2020 and will last for the full term through 2026). The MCF Self Study was submitted in Fall2019 with two addenda submitted in Spring and Fall 2020.

**Other Program Changes/Events (based on student and faculty feedback, program outcome data, etc.)**

Based on student and faculty feedback, and due to Covid-19 precautions, the admissions protocol for the UAB CP was amended for Spring 2020. All admissions interviews took place online where applicants were divided into smaller groups of 4-5 and were interviewed by 2-3 faculty members/adjuncts/affiliate faculty. Interview questions/topics were also amended to better align with CACREP standards and professional disposition evaluations. CP faculty also added a brief presentation/overview of the program, including the program’s specific mission, values, and requirements, so that students could be better informed when making their acceptance decisions.

Chi Sigma Iota-Zeta chapter, the UAB Chapter of the international counseling honor society, began offering two additional scholarships to UAB Counseling students in Spring 2020. The first scholarship honors students who perform outstanding service to their local community in the form of volunteerism and leadership. The second scholarship, the Intersection of Personal and Professional Identities Scholarship, honors students who have demonstrated the willingness and ability to reflect on their own self-knowledge and multicultural awareness, particularly involving topics such as privilege, oppression, resilience, and advocacy. These scholarships join the UAB Glenda Elliot Scholarship which is awarded to a UAB Counseling student annually.

In the summer of 2020, the UAB School of Education moved to its new building in the newly renovated Education and Engineering Complex. Counseling Program faculty offices and the UAB Community Counseling Clinic relocated to their new spaces at 1150 10th Ave S. Program faculty had input on aspects of the new clinic and office spaces, including a larger waiting area and office space for the CCC, more session rooms, and closer proximity between CP faculty offices and the CCC.

In Spring/Summer 2020, the UAB Community Counseling Clinic transitioned all services to telehealth for the duration of that academic year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Under the direction of Dr. Sean Hall at the time, all clinic students and counseling program faculty were trained in telehealth service delivery. Clinic policies, processes, and forms were re-evaluated and, in many cases, were re-written to ensure HIPAA-compliance and best practice.