



# Clinical Mental Health Counseling Third Annual Program Assessment Report

October 15, 2015

This report is a brief summary of our on-going program evaluation efforts and is intended for current students, alumni, site supervisors and employers of alumni. Each group provided essential feedback that helped us better understand our successes and areas needing improvement. We thank you for your candid responses and many suggestions. We hope that this report will also be useful to applicants, faculty, staff, administrators, and the general public.

*The CMHC Faculty*

## **The Assessment Process**

Each year we survey New Students, Graduating Students, Alumni, Site Supervisors, and Employers of our graduates. We analyze characteristics of applicants and results of the exit exam (CPCE). We also assess Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that measure essential counseling competencies for entry-level clinical mental health counselors. In the fall, CMHC Faculty review this program assessment data to determine what we are doing well and where there are opportunities for improvement. We identify changes to make with curriculum, staffing, policy, and procedures and establish a timeline for the changes.

## **Important Changes Implemented from 2014-15**

The following actions were taken over the last year in response to survey comments:

- We reached out to current undergraduates at SOU as well as student advisors regionally.
- We updated our program website.
- We continued to work with the Provost's Graduate Office new admissions process, the ESC, and Financial Aid Office to clarify processes, procedures, and timelines.
- We made Lottery Scholarship Awards during the selection process for new students.
- The Program Coordinator began regular email contact with accepted applicants over the 2015 summer. We expanded our communication this year by developing a mentoring system between 2<sup>nd</sup> Year students and 1<sup>st</sup> Year (newly admitted) students.
- During the New Student Orientation we addressed student expectations, communication, tolerance for student diversity, and developing a professional attitude and identity.
- We scheduled cohort meetings for every term with specific topics in the 2014-15 academic year.
- Faculty initiated meeting with their advisees each term.
- We expanded crisis skill development, especially suicide assessment and management, including role-plays and procedures for handling risk management, in the Crisis Intervention class.
- We purchased access to 50 films to expand knowledge and skill development throughout the curriculum.

- Course Process: Student presentations and small group collaboration are part of how we encourage students' professional identities. We will expand our explanation of this pedagogy by incorporating it into student orientation, website, and mission statement.
- We added a CMHC Moodle site to facilitate student access to program resources.

### **Assessment Results 2015**

Applicants: In 2015 our applicant pool decreased slightly to 52 completed applications; however, a full 25% identified as being members of a racial minority, which is a significant increase from last year. Of applicants accepted into the program, 29.1% identify as being of a racial minority. GRE and GPA are, on average, fairly consistent with previous years.

### **Program strengths**

Many program strengths were identified by survey respondents (new, graduating and former students, as well as site supervisors and employers). Some frequently mentioned items include the following:

- Faculty is knowledgeable and helpful
- Course load is manageable, grading is fair, criteria are clear
- Internship and supervision are of high quality and conducive to career goals
- Program prepares students well for internship
- Would recommend program to others

### **Concerns & Opportunities for improvement**

A few useful suggestions for small improvements were made in some survey responses, but no particular suggestion with any frequency. Many of the suggestions made are the subject of action items identified below ("Program Changes 2015-16").

SLO results: We assessed 100% of 128 Student Learning Outcomes. Of those, 88% reached criteria – this means that all students achieved a passing grade on the assignment that measured the particular competency. When students did not meet criteria at the time of assessment, most were due to Incompletes at the end of the class, and were subsequently remedied. The SLOs indicate that we are effectively teaching the counseling competencies we intend to teach.

Exit exam results: Our students continue to score well above the national average in all eight sub-areas and in overall total score of the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE). Thus, our students demonstrate a strong basic fund of knowledge in the counseling field in comparison to a national sample of masters and doctoral level students.

### **Program Changes 2015-16**

Given the identified strengths and opportunities for improvement, we are continuing with or making the following changes:

- We are adapting the Research Methods (COUN 542) content and process to make it more engaging and clinically useful, and we are assigning a permanent faculty member to teach the class.
- We will explore changing the timing of the Psychopharmacology class to bring it forward in the schedule, reducing the workload in the final quarter.

- We will further expand access to films to increase knowledge and skill development throughout the curriculum, with the Alexander Street collection of more than 1,000 hours of counseling-related videos.
- We will make textbook selections for upcoming classes available to students during the previous quarter to allow early purchase.
- We will further streamline and reorganize the paperwork for COUN 502.
- We will further clarify the use of role plays with peers in COUN 502.
- We are returning to using the 050 classroom whenever possible for counseling classes.
- Evening classes will be eliminated wherever possible.
- The written case studies from COUN 510 required for portfolio will be standardized.
- We will finalize the schedule for summer and supervision classes earlier, during the previous quarter.
- Our Office Coordinator will adjust her office schedule in order to be available on Wednesdays as well as Mondays.
- We will balance the loading of COUN 510 sections by capping registration at half the size of the cohort.
- We will provide a graphical guide to the forms used in internship to increase understanding and ease of use.
- We will develop a list of non-tuition related program expenses, including the optional NCE exam, to support students' financial planning.
- We will explore the possibility of simplifying internship forms for 2016-17.

Dominick Robertson holds the position of Assessment Coordinator through Fall 2016. Please address comments about our assessment efforts to him.

**MHC Faculty & Staff 2015 – 2016**

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