

Marywood University
Counselor Education Program
Graduate Program Evaluation Report
Summer 2024 (Revised; Spring 2025)



Clinical Mental Health Counseling
&
School Counseling

Psychology and Counseling Department
McGowan Center for Graduate and Professional Studies
College of Health Sciences
Scranton, Pennsylvania

Accreditations:

Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)

M.A. Clinical Mental Health Counseling
M.S. Counselor Education, Pre-K-12 School Counseling

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)

M.S. Counselor Education, Pre-K-12 School Counseling

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Preface

Marywood program faculty would like to thank Ms. Shelby Yeager, the Dean of the College of Health Sciences (CHS), and university administration for the continued support of the graduate counseling program. We would also like to thank all those alumni, graduating students, site supervisors, and employers of our program graduates. It was quite generous for each who took the time to respond to the surveys used to gather data, which always proves critical in maintaining what we believe is one of the finest counselor education programs in the country. Also, this program evaluation report was facilitated by a series of diligent counseling students that served as graduate assistants. They provided invaluable help in updating our surveys, and working to increase response rates. Finally, we would also like to thank support staff such as Ms. Karen Rossmell and colleagues in the neighboring Psychology program(s). Without all of those mentioned, a report such as this would not be possible.

Executive Summary

Aggregate scores from standardized testing indicates Marywood counseling students compare well overall with national samples in both the CPCE and NCE. This is particularly the case with the NCE, as our students have maintained a 100% pass rate during the period covered by this report. Disaggregate data by content area from the CPCE indicates our students tend to outperform in Research and Program Evaluation and Group Work, as means were consistently above national averages. Career Development, Assessment, and Helping Relationships are, however, areas that may be due for review in terms of instructional approach. Stakeholder surveys indicate overall that students are confident about their capacity to function as professional counselors just prior to and after graduation. Site supervisors and employers rate Marywood interns and graduates as quite well prepared to provide counseling services and are highly desirable employees across diverse settings.

Introduction

This report is drafted to meet CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) standards associated with [Section 4](#) of the 2016 standards. As such, it is arranged in multiple parts. **Part I** references what data will be collected, methods used for data collection, how data will be analyzed, with whom the data will be shared, and how data is used to inform program and curricular improvements. **Part II** contains aggregate data used to assess current (i.e., pre graduation) and recent graduate student knowledge and professional dispositions using standardized assessments and program-constructed surveys. **Part III** describes how this report is shared with administration, current students and alumni, and the public. At the end of this report are **Appendices** with all disaggregated data obtained from each data source, including qualitative comments from students and stakeholders.

PART I

This report contains data from a number of sources, each of which assess the eight core CACREP curricular areas common to all CACREP accredited programs, regardless of specialization (i.e., Clinical Mental Health, School Counseling).

These domains include:

- Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice
- Social and Cultural Diversity
- Human Growth and Development
- Career Development
- Counseling and Helping Relationships
- Group Counseling and Group Work
- Assessment and Testing
- Research and Program Evaluation.

The assessments are as follows:

Standardized Assessments

CPCE

The Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) is a standardized multiple choice test with 160 items published by the [Center for Credentialing and Education](#). It is *“designed to measure a student's level of mastery of the requisite knowledge and skills identified by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and other Educational Professions (CACREP) for the preparation of professional counselors.”* As such, it is widely used across the country as a standardized exit examination for students nearing graduation from a CACREP accredited counseling program.

It is administered via computer at a local commercial testing site, and the national sample is composed of respondents close to finishing their graduate degrees in counseling. In order for students to be eligible to graduate, Marywood program students must achieve a score that is within the standard error of the mean (SEM) taken from the national sample of each version of the CPCE. Program policy encourages students to sit for this exam at least one semester before they intend to apply for graduation. Thus, testing dates are variable, and scores are reported to students and the program on the 15th of every month. This schedule generates data that is analyzed longitudinally using overall and domain specific means from the program, compared to national means provided by the testing company on a monthly schedule.

NCE

Also included in this report are pass rates for the [The National Counselor Examination \(NCE\)](#). This exam is optional and encouraged for students near graduation but is not required and cannot be used as an exit exam. However, since it covers the same CACREP curricular areas, and data is reported to graduate counseling programs, overall means can be used as a validity check of other measures. Similar to the CPCE, it is a 200-item multiple-choice examination designed to assess knowledge, skills and abilities determined to be important for providing effective counseling services.

The NCE is published by the National Board of Certified Counselors ([NBCC](#)) and is a requirement for counselor licensure in many states. It is also one of two examination options for the National Certified Counselor (NCC) certification. The national sample includes counseling students nearing graduation and post-masters clinicians seeking the NCC credential. Like the CPCE data, Marywood scores and pass rates are examined longitudinally.

Stakeholder Surveys

The program uses four related surveys of program stakeholders including 1. graduating students, 2. field placement supervisors, 3. recent program alumni, and 4. employers of our recent graduates. Each survey collects quantitative and qualitative data and takes about 15 minutes to complete using the online platform "Google Forms." Quantitative survey items are set forth from the eight core CACREP domains outlined previously and stated in the survey(s) so they can be assessed, using a 1-5 likert ratings scale. Though not reported here, additional data is collected that is of interest to program faculty such as semesters to complete the program, utility of advisement methods, supervision on campus and at field placements, number of graduates from each program track, etc. At the end of the survey, each stakeholder group is given the opportunity to respond to open-ended questions about their experiences either in the program or with our program graduates. Data is gathered from graduating students each fall and spring semesters. Other stakeholders are surveyed on a biennial schedule. Data is examined biennially and compared to data collected in the previous evaluation cycle. In the case of this report, survey data from the 2021-22 academic year is compared to data gathered in 2023-24.

Program Evaluation Report Distribution

Each program evaluation report is made available to the public via the Counseling Program Webpage. It is also disseminated among the following constituents:

- Marywood Counseling Program Advisory Council
- Prospective students
- Current students
- Counseling program alumni
- University administration
- CACREP board of directors and site visitors

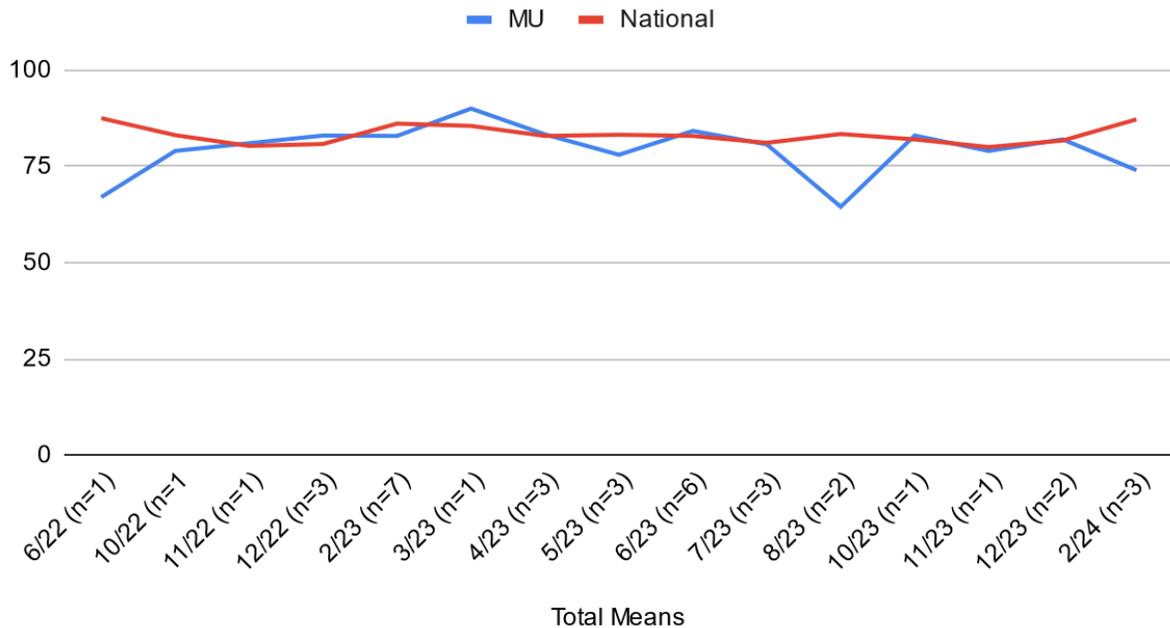
PART II

Standardized Testing

Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE)

Results from the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) are tracked in three year cycles, which in this report covers Summer 2022 to Spring 2024. The following chart tracks overall Marywood student means to that of the national CPCE sample:

MU and National



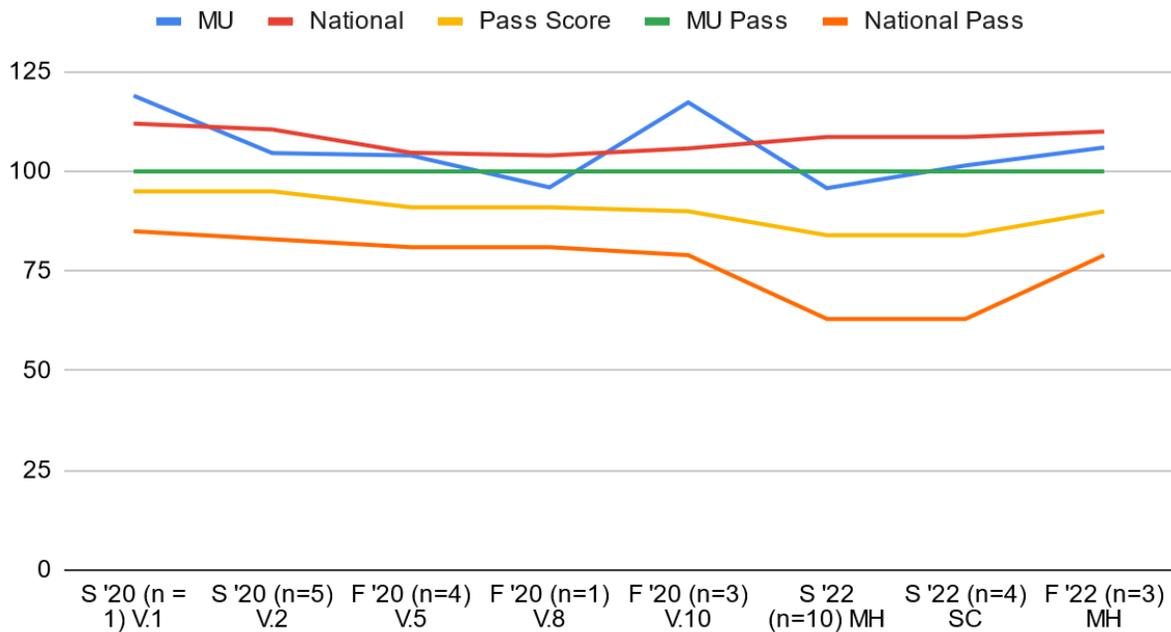
As illustrated in the chart above, scores on the CPCE have tracked reasonably closely to the national mean for the last three years with a few exceptions. Specifically, June 2022 and August 2023. Readers will note that sample sizes for these months were 1-2 students who failed to achieve passing scores on the first administration and were required to take the exam a second time.

Means for disaggregated scores for each of the eight (8) CACREP areas are in [Appendix I](#). Also included is a by-content area raw score of 9, which faculty consider to be a minimum passing score for a given content area.

National Counseling Exam (NCE)

The chart below illustrates mean (average) total scores on the National Counselor Exam for Marywood Counseling students compared to the national mean, in relation to passing scores for each exam version and administration. The time periods covered are Spring 2020 to Fall 2022:

MU, National, Pass Score, MU Pass and National Pass



This chart shows that Marywood students (blue) compare reasonably well to the national average (red) for the NCE, and we are maintaining a 100% pass rate for this examination (yellow) compared to national rates (orange). Readers should note that at the time of this writing, data from Spring 2023 forward, has not yet been compiled by the NBCC.

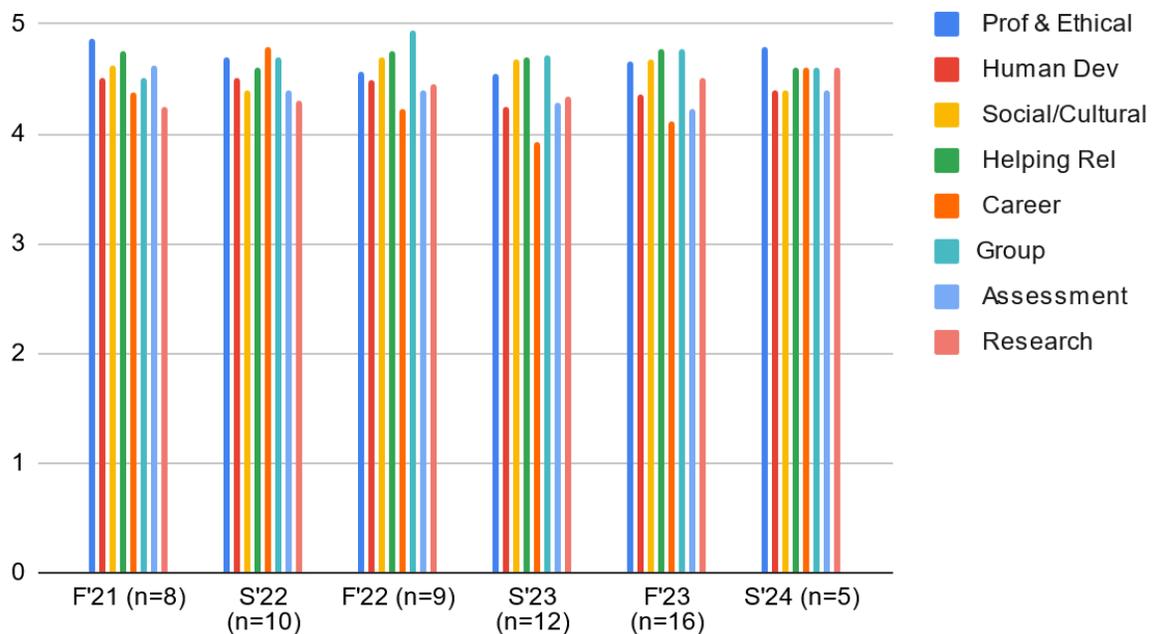
Stakeholder Surveys

For stakeholder surveys, the Marywood program uses an ipsative-longitudinal design in which survey data from a current year is compared to those from previous years. Each survey also includes space for respondents to provide narrative data that is examined for qualitative themes.

Student Exit Survey

Data for the [Student Exit Survey](#) is gathered every fall and spring and is examined using a three year time horizon, which results in data from six (6) consecutive fall/spring semesters. Because full program evaluation reports are compiled biannually, there is an overlap of one academic year between reports. In the case of this report, that year is Fall '21 to Spring '22. The survey asks students how well prepared they think they are according to the eight (8) curricular CACREP domains using a ratings scale from 1 (Not well) to 5 (Exceptionally well). Responses are graphed below:

Student Exit Surveys F'21-Spring '24



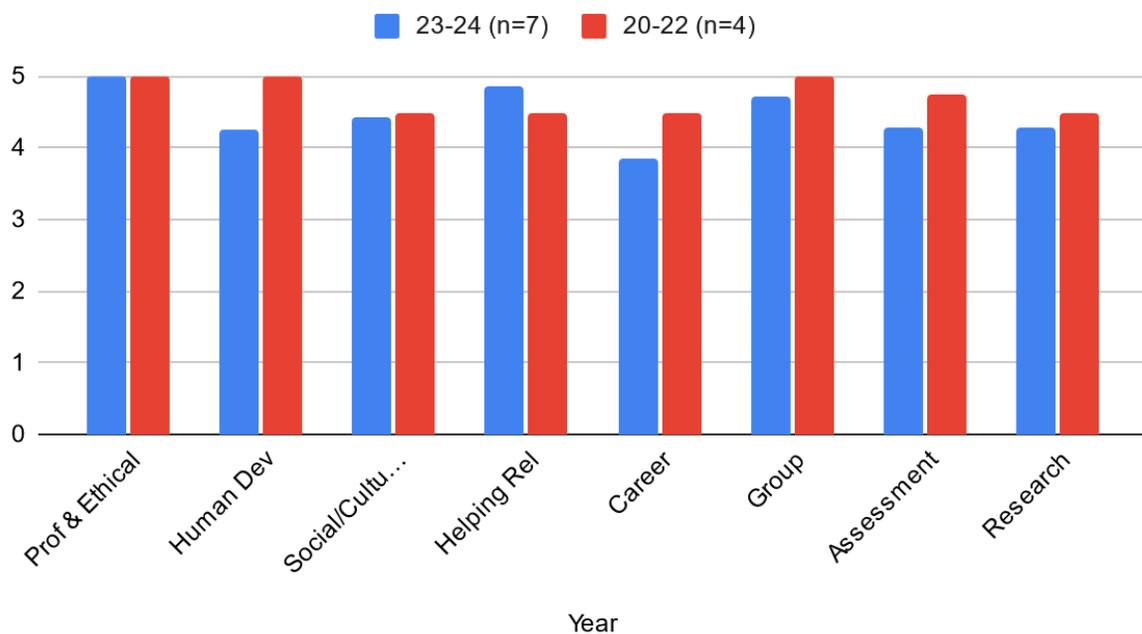
As illustrated above, graduating students rate their preparedness at or near “exceptionally well.” Means ranged from a 3.93 for Career Development in Spring 2023 to 4.95 in Group Work in Fall 2022. A review of qualitative data from open questions asking about “*what contributed the most to your educational experience*” suggests that the counseling program’s greatest strength is its faculty. In response to “*What was the biggest challenge to your learning experience?*” responses were more varied. There were many comments about the departure of two full time faculty members in the spring of 2023. There were also comments about a situation in which an

internship instructor had to be replaced in the middle of the semester. Both situations were atypical and are unlikely to be duplicated. Interested readers may wish to access detailed results for each semester in which survey data was collected in [Appendix II](#).

Alumni Survey

The sample for the Alumni survey includes graduates that have been working in the field for two years after their graduation date. Quantitative data assessing their impressions of their preparedness to work as counselors, according to the eight (8) CACREP curricular areas, is charted below. Response range is the same scale as previously described: 1 (Not well) to 5 (Exceptionally well)

23-24 (n=7) and 20-22 (n=4)



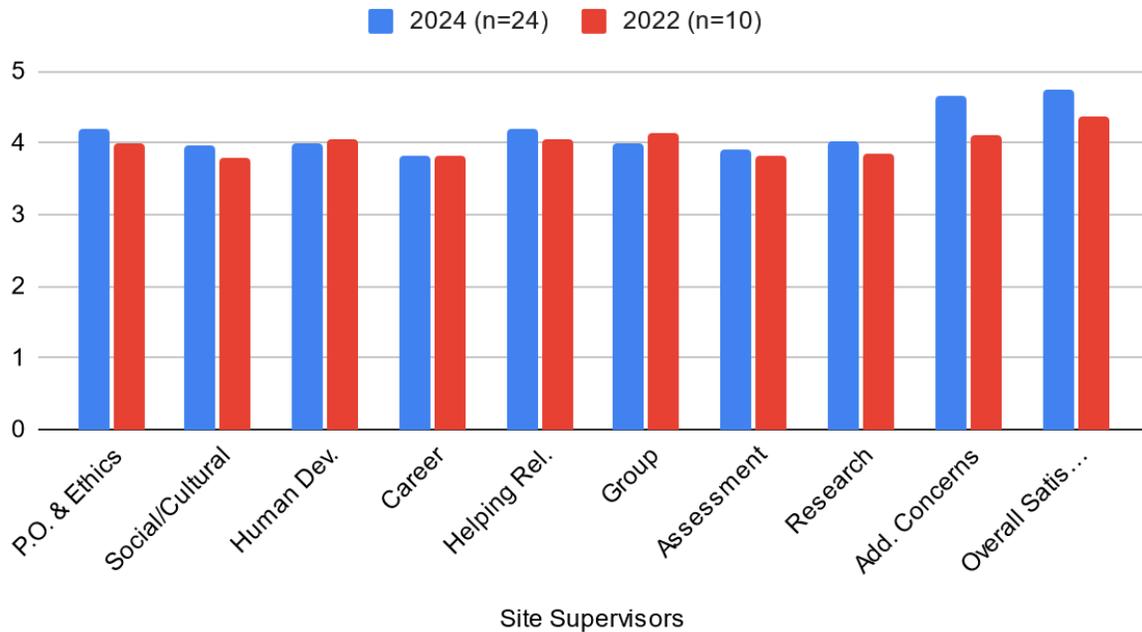
Data for this survey is collected every other year and also includes questions about satisfaction with academic advising, clinical supervision during field placements, and opportunities to socialize with peers. Data for these areas, and qualitative comments are in [Appendix II](#).

Site Supervisor Survey

The survey for site supervisors differs from the alumni survey in that it goes into more detail, using multiple questions that assess each CAREP standard within each domain. Reported

below are aggregate means for each of these areas:

2024 (n=24) and 2022 (n=10)

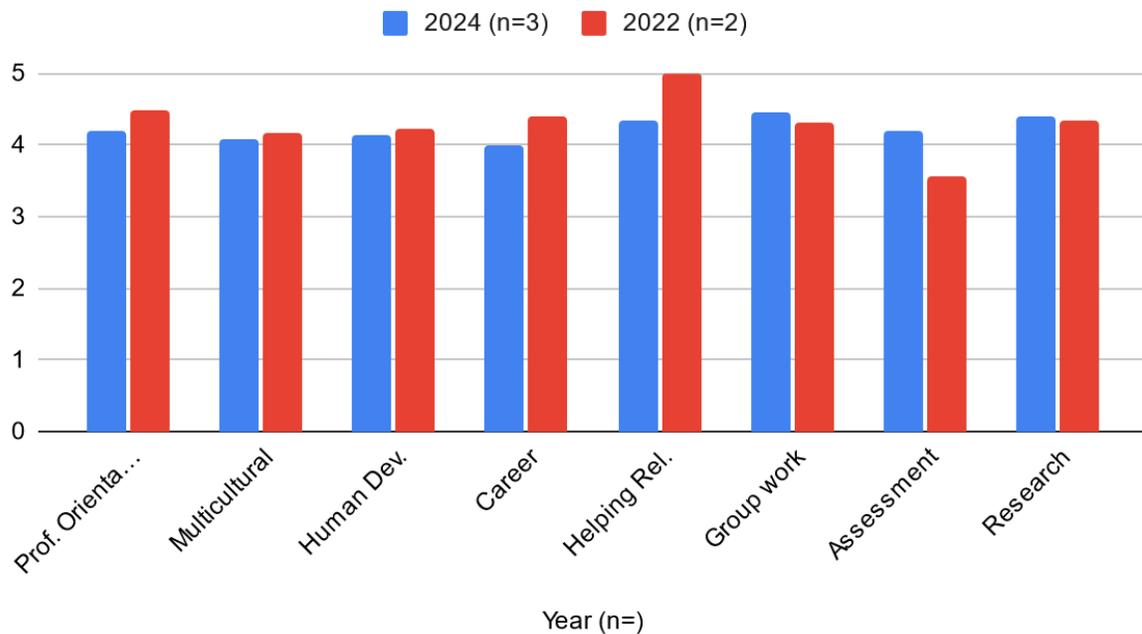


Overall, site supervisors were impressed with the quality and professionalism of students placed with them, as suggested by the overall satisfaction rating. Another particular strength that emerges is how responsive counseling faculty are when a concern arises with a student at field placement sites. Additional data for disaggregated individual items is available in [Appendix II](#), along with qualitative comments.

Employer Survey

The final stakeholder survey solicits responses from organizations that employ Marywood counseling graduates. The response rate for this particular survey is somewhat problematic for two reasons. First, it can sometimes be a challenge to obtain contact data for the places our graduates may be working. This information is requested in student exit and alumni surveys, but students are not always prepared to share it. Second, employers may feel their stake in our graduate program is less than other constituencies since relations are more distant and further removed from program operations. Despite the robust efforts to increase the response rate, sample sizes are smaller than that of other stakeholder surveys.

CACREP Domains: Employers



Despite the small sample sizes for these employer surveys, we were able to obtain some meaningful commentary about the quality of Marywood counseling graduates from the perspective of employers. Overall, employers were very impressed with the quality of training of their new employees. They are viewed as highly professional and able to apply therapeutic approaches across diverse settings. They are able to communicate and connect with clients quickly, and would be willing to hire additional graduates 'in a heartbeat' if they were available.

PART III

Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning and progress through our programs is evaluated in the areas of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Student learning outcomes across knowledge and skill domains are addressed using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). As such, they assess success in meeting program objectives, the eight CACREP content areas, and standards associated with Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling specialties.

The charts below summarize aggregate student KPI data for the 2023-24 academic year. Reviewers will note two conventions adopted by the counseling program for this portion of the report. First is the criterion reference scale used. The range is from

0=Does not meet competency to 3=Exceeds competency. Means at ± 2.0 , fall into the range of Meets/Exceeds competency. Second is the use of *formative* and *summative* assessments, which reflects the assumption of student performance improvements with feedback and instruction over time.

Any KPI that shows both an average below 2.0, and a negative difference between formative and summative assessments, represents an area of concern that will be reviewed by faculty. To increase sensitivity and precision, weighted means are used.

Aggregate KPI/Program Objective Data Summary; CACREP Content Areas

KPI (Program Objective #)	Type	Content Area	Formative	Summative	Average	Difference
1. ACA code of ethics, including moral principles & professional values, & skillfully assess, understand, & apply ethical decision-making to counseling situations. (#1)	Knowledge & Skills	Professional Orientation & Practice	2.57	3.0	2.79	0.43
2. Multicultural competence & identity development for both C/C & div clients... apply to specific cases, to guide interactions (#2)	Knowledge & Skills	Social & Cultural Diversity	1.78	2.54	2.16	0.76
3. Apply human development theories, addressing social, emotional, cognitive, physical, & spiritual development. (#2, 5)	Knowledge & Skills	Human Growth & Development	1.85	2.5	2.17	0.65
4. Facilitating career development/life planning of diverse clients in clinical mental health settings. Includes use of career theories & models, use of assessment, career/life planning, & labor market info. (#2)	Knowledge & Skills	Career Development	1.47	2.58	2.02	1.11
5. Identify & demonstrate basic listening as well as advanced clinical skills, necessary to provide effective counseling to diverse range of clients. (#2)	Knowledge & Skills	Helping Relationships	2.5	2.93	2.71	0.43

6. Develop, implement, lead & evaluate a group counseling experience, which positively impacts outcomes for group members. (#2)	Knowledge & Skills	Group Work	2.75	2.33	2.54	-0.43
7. Conduct an initial assessment meeting, including test administration, interpretation, & evaluation of testing materials, and describe how results can be implemented to facilitate treatment planning. (#2)	Knowledge & Skills	Assessment & Testing	1.91	2.47	2.19	0.56
8. Critically evaluate & apply empirical research to the development of a research proposal, including review of counseling literature, a rationale, hypotheses, and assess outcomes of intervention. (#4)	Knowledge & Skills	Research & Program Evaluation	0.83	1.42	1.13	0.59
Weighted means across CACREP domains			1.93	2.47	2.20	0.54

Clinical Mental Health Counseling

KPI	Type	Content Area	Formative	Summative	Average	Difference
1. Develop, implement, and evaluate a Clinical Mental Health Counseling setting and program.	Knowledge & Skills	-Helping Relationships -Professional Orientation & Practice -Group Work	2.18	1.86	2.02	-0.32
2. Students will address all aspects of the counseling relationship through their coursework; establish the	Knowledge & Skills	-Helping Relationships -Professional Orientation &	2.6	2.9	2.75	0.3

proper skills and techniques needed to establish competencies within the counseling relationship.		Practice				
3. Students will identify the roles they will take on in the counseling field, & be proficient their understanding of those roles.	Knowledge & Skills	-Helping Relationships -CMHC Contextual Dimensions	2.57	3.0	2.78	0.43
4. Gain understanding of diagnosis & treatment planning. Understand client's situation, symptoms/needs & match with a diagnosis & treatment plan.	Knowledge & Skills	-Professional Orientation & Practice -Human Development	2.52	2.5	2.51	-0.02
5. Examine moral implications of clinical practice & become familiar with history & development of professional ethics/standards and legal implications in counseling. Students will be introduced to privileged communication, confidentiality, right of clients, civil commitment, licensure, and mental health laws.	Knowledge & Skills	-Professional Orientation & Practice -Helping Relationships -CMHC Contextual Dimensions	1.62	2.93	2.27	1.31
Weighted means across domains	–	–	2.21	2.6	2.40	0.39

School Counseling

KPI	Type	Content Area	Formative	Summative	Average	Difference
1. Students will possess the knowledge and skills to develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive	Knowledge & Skills	-School Counseling; Foundations -Practice	3.0	1.56	2.28	-1.44

school counseling program that positively impacts outcomes for all students.						
2. Students will possess knowledge of how to promote college and career readiness for all students PK-12 including (1) expanding awareness of post secondary options, (2) understanding the relationship between academic development, graduation rates, and college/career opportunities and (3) demonstrating competency in developing and facilitating interventions to increase academic and career development.	Knowledge & Skills	-School Counseling; Contextual Dimensions -Practice	2.87	1.0	1.94	-0.87
3. Students will be able to understand the school counselor's roles and responsibilities in relation to crisis response and trauma informed practice, including identification of students' at risk for mental health and behavioral disorders. Students will appropriately apply social and emotional techniques and interventions within the school setting.	Knowledge & Skills	-School Counseling; Contextual Dimensions -Practice	3.0	2.33	2.66	-0.67
4. Students will possess competency in understanding the roles and responsibilities of school counselor leadership and advocacy including using data to advocate for programs and students.	Knowledge & Skills	-School Counseling; Contextual Dimensions -Practice	3.0	3.0	3.0	0.0
5. Students will develop knowledge of the role of school counselors as collaborative members of interdisciplinary teams and techniques to facilitate consultation among educational partners to reduce behavioral issues and promote academic success.	Knowledge & Skills	-School Counseling; Contextual Dimensions -Foundations -Practice	3.0	3.0	3.0	0.0

Weighted means across domains			2.97	2.20	2.58	-0.77
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Professional Dispositions

The Counseling Program uses two (2) assessments of professional dispositions that are tailored to fit the program and professional demands of the role of counselor both in school and clinical mental health settings. The first is completed during the probationary period before candidacy, usually in the first two semesters. The [Candidacy Performance Evaluation](#) is used by each full-time faculty course instructor, who rates each counseling student in their classes. It is scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale, and it covers domains that are broadly didactic and interpersonal: (a) academic performance, (b) peer interactions, (c) professional behavior, and (d) overall potential.

Once students start field placements, they are assessed by site supervisors at the end of practicum and internship, using the [Student Evaluation Form](#). This assessment is based on clinical skills and professional demeanor in the field using a 5-point Likert scale. Domains covered are (a) counseling skills, (b) personal/professional characteristics, (c) communication skills, and (d) overall potential as a counselor. Aggregate scores for both of these disposition assessments are as follows:

Candidacy Dispositions

Domains/Semester	F'21 (n=60)	S'22 (n=58)	SII'22 (n=56)	F'22 (n=40)	S'23 (n=26)	SII'23 (n=63)	F'23 (n=37)	S'24 (n=70)
Academic Performance	5.51	5.06	5.37	5.65	4.65	5.32	4.83	5.27
Peer Interactions	5.53	5.22	5.17	5.72	4.88	5.36	4.91	5.17
Professional Behavior	5.69	5.36	5.17	5.79	5.09	5.35	4.94	5.33
Overall Potential	5.58	5.05	5.13	5.71	4.56	5.39	4.9	5.11

Fieldwork Dispositions

Domains	2021 (n=124)	2022 (n=105)	2023 (n=103)	2024 (n=20)
Personal/Professional Characteristics	3.72	3.73	3.8	3.63
Communication Skills	3.66	3.61	3.7	3.59

Counseling Skills	3.63	3.51	3.74	3.55
Potential for the Profession	3.7	3.74	3.73	3.53

A review of the means for these assessments indicates some stability over time. The range for the candidacy ratings is rather narrow, with the lowest being 4.56 in the domain of Overall Potential in Spring 2023 and the highest rating of 5.79 in Professional Behavior in Fall 2022. Fieldwork disposition assessments are similar in terms of stability. The lowest rating is 3.51 in the Counseling Skills domain in 2022, and the highest rating is 3.8 in the Personal/Professional Characteristics domain in 2023. At the time of this writing, faculty are not able to pinpoint any areas that need improvement.

Applicant/Student Demographics

The Office of Graduate Admissions actively recruits a diverse student population. Graduate Admissions staff regularly travel to local and regional colleges to share information about the Counseling Program to a wide variety of prospective students. Additionally, an Admissions Counselor is assigned to attract international students through recruitment trips to a wide variety of destinations in Africa, South America, and Asia.

Enrolled Student Demographics

	Total # Students	M/F	Asian	Black	Hispanic	International	Multi Racial	Unknown	White
Fall 2020	58	9/49	1	1	3	1	4	4	45
Fall 2021	59	7/52	0	4	0	0	4	0	51
Fall 2022	50	6/44	0	3	0	0	6	1	55
Fall 2023	68	11/57	0	3	0	4	4	5	56
Totals	235	33/202	1	11	3	5	18	10	207

The above table illustrates the most common demographic data points the university collects from matriculated graduate counseling students in fall semesters. Viewed as outcome data, it suggests the combined efforts of graduate admissions and program faculty to recruit diverse candidates is having an effect. Enrollment numbers for these groups are either holding steady or trending toward modest increases. One notable area of growth is enrollment of international students. This may be a result of university efforts to attract students from outside the tri-state area from which the university has historically drawn.

Another source of data that is used to evaluate our recruitment of diverse students is the conversion rate of applicants that eventually enroll in classes. Using spreadsheets generated by Graduate Admissions for [School Counseling](#) and [Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#), we find our cumulative, overall percentage since Fall 2020 for students who apply and eventually register is 51%. When broken down by students identifying as white and those of color, this statistic

becomes 53% and 42%, respectively. It is unclear to faculty if this difference is significant, since the sample from students of color is such that individual cases can have a substantial impact on cumulative totals.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Counseling faculty believe Marywood graduate counseling students and alumni have been, and continue to be, highly competent, skilled professional counselors. They are able to work across many different school and clinical mental health settings, making them attractive prospective employees. They compare very well to national samples on standardized credential tests and show some unique knowledge-base strengths. There are also some content areas mentioned earlier in this report that may be in need of attention and/or changes in terms of instructional approaches. These areas were discussed at the most recent faculty retreat, and scores in these areas will be monitored closely for signs of improvement.

Submitted by Counseling Program Faculty. 6/7/24

History:

2/17/25 - Revised; Additional sections added to report on aggregate key performance indicators, CACREP content areas, with applicant and student demographic data.