

Academic Program Evaluation Report

Clinical Mental Health Counseling & School Counseling

Unit Mission

The faculty of the Counseling Degree Program is dedicated to educating and training counseling professionals to function in culturally diverse settings. We recognize the need to address the economic, educational, and social inequalities that prevail in our communities. The program acknowledges a commitment both to the students who will pursue preparation as professional counselors and to the larger public served by our graduates, for whom we all share a responsibility. It is due to this commitment that the faculty members hold high standards in the process of training professional counselors in school and community settings. The programs are designed to provide a challenging, yet supportive environment that promotes professional orientation, development of a counseling identity, ethical practice, commitment to inquiry, and self-awareness. As a result, we expect our students to develop a commitment of service to others, and to the pursuit of excellence in the counseling profession.

Purpose

The Master of Arts degree in counseling is designed to prepare individuals for positions as professional counselors in agencies and/or school settings. The counseling program places primary emphasis on the development of strong ethical clinical skills. Upon receiving the Master of Arts degree in counseling, students will meet course work requirements for eligibility to take the examination to become a National Certified Counselor (NCC) and apply to become a Licensed Professional Clinical Mental Health Counselor Associate (LCMHC-A) in the state of North Carolina and a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate (LPC-A) in the state of South Carolina. Students satisfactorily completing the School Counseling program requirements and receiving a passing score on the PRAXIS specialty examination will be eligible for licensure as a school counselor in North Carolina.

Diversity Statement

The Counseling faculty of Lenoir-Rhyne University is committed to diversity in all areas of the program. The goal of the Counseling program is to recruit students from diverse backgrounds and those from traditionally under-represented groups in the counseling profession. As such, in policy and practice, the Counseling faculty seek to recruit, admit, and retain a diverse student body. The Counseling faculty is dedicated to educating and training counseling professionals to function in culturally diverse settings and embody the Multicultural Counseling Competencies of the American Counseling Association. The curriculum is designed to challenge students to reflect on the ways in which personal bias, privilege, and culture impact the therapeutic relationship and process. The faculty have made a commitment to integrate issues related to multicultural counseling (awareness, knowledge, and skills) and diversity throughout the curriculum, and syllabi are reviewed routinely to ensure that this commitment is being met.

As a faculty, we are committed to an inclusive and anti-racist learning environment. The coursework in this program includes materials and discussions that will challenge personal ideas on oppressive and unjust forces that exist in our communities. As an anti-racist

community, we will strive to identify, discuss, and challenge issues of race, color, ethnicity, and the impacts they have on students, faculty, and staff members. It is expected that all students engage in these difficult and sometimes uncomfortable conversations with respect, courage, and compassion. It is expected that we treat each other with kindness and respect when differences of belief, values, or experiences arise within classroom discussions, group work, or learning materials. As we navigate difficult and uncomfortable topics, disrespect for others' background and their experiences will not be tolerated within the Counseling Program.

LRU Counseling Program Objectives

- Students will develop strong professional identities as counselors. Students will gain foundational knowledge related to legal and ethical principles, codes, and decision-making processes.
- Students will gain awareness of their own cultural identity, including privilege, oppression, and biases, and how it influences counseling relationships. Students will gain knowledge of multicultural theories and counseling practices in order to be culturally competent counselors.
- Students will learn various theories of human development in order to integrate a developmentally and culturally appropriate approach to working with a wide range of diverse clients.
- Students will understand various career counseling theories in order to conceptualize career development across the lifespan, including how career concerns influence mental health concerns. Students will integrate knowledge related to cultural and ethical competencies to provide effective career counseling strategies.
- Students will learn the foundational elements of counseling theories and techniques that are needed to foster movement towards clients' goals through effective use of helping skills, theoretical conceptualizations, and related interventions.
- Students will attain the foundational knowledge and skills required for effective facilitation of group counseling.
- Students will learn to utilize assessment and testing throughout the counseling relationship. Students will gain an understanding of the assessment process in order to integrate assessment results into client conceptualization and treatment.
- Students will gain knowledge related to the principles of ethical and effective research methods for counselors; in particular, an understanding of how to use counseling research to inform counseling practice and direct future research for the field at large.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling:

- Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of clinical mental health counseling practices, including advocacy, prevention, and treatment for a broad range of mental health concerns.

School Counseling:

- Students will gain an understanding of the various roles and responsibilities of school counselors, including leadership, advocacy, and consultation necessary to develop and implement a comprehensive school counseling program.

2021- 2022 Counseling Program Updates

Across the previous academic year, faculty of the counseling program have facilitated a number of changes to the academic unit based upon feedback from students, alumni, site supervisors, and other important stakeholders.

Counseling Program Faculty Updates

Dr. Jordan Austin and **Dr. Keleigh Blount** joined our Asheville-based faculty. Dr. Austin has been with LR as an Adjunct Professor (2020-21) and a Visiting Professor (2021-22), and she began a full-time, tenure-track assistant professor position in Fall 2022. Dr. Blount joined our faculty in a full-time, tenure-track assistant professor position also starting in Fall 2022. In Hickory, we also welcomed **Patty Hickham** as a Visiting Assistant Professor.

Dr. Nikki Vasilas submitted her resignation and left Lenoir-Rhyne University in Summer 2022. Dr. Vasilas was at LR for 12 years, and she has served in numerous leadership roles during that time – including program coordinator, clinical coordinator, and CACREP liaison.

As part of our growth and reorganization, a number of faculty members have assumed new roles – see below for the complete list of current Counseling faculty.

Dr. Kerrie Fuenfhausen – School Chair and Lead Clinical Coordinator, AVL based

Dr. Myra Jordan – Asheville Program Coordinator, AVL based

Dr. Jordan Austin – CACREP Liaison, AVL based

Dr. Keleigh Blount – Assistant Professor, AVL based

Dr. Janelle Robinson – Columbia Program and Clinical Coordinator, COL based

Dr. Paula Swindle – Hickory Program Coordinator, HKY based

Dr. Astra Czerny – Hickory Clinical Coordinator, HKY based

Dr. Neal Gray – School Counseling Track Coordinator, HKY based

Patty Hickham – Visiting Assistant Professor, HKY based

Dr. Amy Wood – Assistant Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

Curriculum Updates

The Counseling Program has developed a Trauma Concentration in response to the need and desire for increased training in counseling survivors of trauma. In addition to the Trauma elective course that has been offered at least once a year, students will have the option of adding a Trauma Concentration, which consists of four courses (two of which can serve as the electives in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree program).

Program faculty are finalizing steps to develop certificate programs for the Trauma Concentration and the two Add-On Licensure Tracks (Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling). This will provide a more structured process for application and completion of these concentrations, as well as allow for both current students and post-master's students to earn a certificate in the selected area.

Enrollment and Completion Data

	CMHC			SC			Total
	Hickory	Asheville	Columbia	Hickory	Asheville	Columbia	
Applications Received	85	74	21	25	4	N/A	209
Total Students Enrolled in Counseling Program	85	106	12	22	8	N/A	233
Pre-Candidacy	34	38	4	7	0	N/A	83
Post-Candidacy	51	68	8	15	8	N/A	150
Graduates in 2021-2022	18	26	4	4	1	N/A	53
Completion Rate	88%	97%	91%	100%	100%	N/A	92%
CPCE Pass Rate <i>*Students who fail the first attempt are given an opportunity to retake in the following semester.</i>	94.1%	100%	66.7%	100%	100%	N/A	SC Overall: 100% CMHC Overall: 93.75%
NCE Pass Rate	91%	100%	100%	100%	N/A	N/A	CMHC Overall: 97%
Praxis II	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	100%	N/A	SC Overall: 100%

Employment and Licensure Rates	93% of alumni respondents were employed as a licensed counselor within 6 months of graduation. Over 95% of alumni respondents were licensed as either a school counselor or clinical mental health counselor.
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Demographic Data

Campus Specific Student Demographic Data for Summer 2021-Spring 2022

Students (n = 228)	Hickory (n = 109, 47.8%)			Asheville (n = 107, 46.9%)			Columbia (n = 12, 5.3%)		
	Males = 28 (25.7%)	Females = 81 (74.3%)	Non-Binary = 0	Males = 15 (14.0%)	Females = 91 (85.0%)	Non-Binary = 1 (.93%)	Males = 1 (8.3%)	Females = 11 (91.7%)	Non-Binary = 0
American Indian or Native Alaskan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	0	2 (1.8%)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
African American	4 (3.7%)	13 (11.9%)	0	0	2 (1.9%)	0	0	2 (16.7%)	0
Caucasian	20 (18.3%)	57 (52.3%)	0	10 (9.6%)	77 (72.1%)	1 (.7%)	1 (8.3%)	7 (58.3%)	0
Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic or Latino	0	3 (2.7%)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multiracial	3 (2.8%)	5 (4.6%)	0	3 (1.9%)	6 (5.8%)	0	0	2 (16.7%)	0
Undisclosed Race	1 (.9%)	1 (.9%)	0	2 (1.9%)	6 (5.8%)	0	0	0	0
Veterans	2 (1.8%)	0	0	1 (.7%)	2 (1.9%)	0	0	0	0

Core & Non-Core Faculty Demographic Data for Summer 2021-Spring 2022

Faculty (n = 25)	Males	Females	Non-Binary	Total
American Indian or Native Alaskan	0	0	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	0
African American	0	5 (20%)	0	5 (20%)
Caucasian	5 (20%)	15 (60%)	0	20 (80%)
Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
Hispanic or Latino	0	0	0	0
Multiracial	0	0	0	0

Program Goals and Outcomes

Goal 1 (Student Learning Outcome)

Students will develop strong professional identities as counselors. Students will gain foundational knowledge related to legal and ethical principles, codes, and decision-making processes.

Outcome 1.1 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will demonstrate a clear counselor professional identity, as evidenced by embodiment of essential counseling characteristics and underlying philosophies of the counseling profession.

Outcome 1.2 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will demonstrate a clear counselor professional identity, as evidenced by embodiment of essential counseling characteristics and underlying philosophies of the counseling profession.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Course assignment (COU 505 Personal Theory of Counseling), CCS-R rating scales in practicum and internship courses, and CPCE results.

RESULTS

Overall, from both the dispositional and skills-based portion of the CCS-R, students demonstrated an increase in rating scores across the program. Furthermore, the aggregate ratings were proficient. Out of the students who sat for the CPCE exam, 95% of students (54 out of 57) passed the Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice section.

Goal 2 (Student Learning Outcome)

Students will gain awareness of their own cultural identity, including privilege, oppression, and biases, and how it influences counseling relationships. Students will gain knowledge of multicultural theories and counseling practices in order to be culturally competent counselors.

Outcome 2.1 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will demonstrate knowledge about diverse populations and theories of multicultural counseling in order to effectively conceptualize and treat clients through a lens of intersectionality.

Outcome 2.2 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will demonstrate self-awareness and cultural humility in their therapeutic relationships and clinical skills.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Course assignments (COU 535 midterm and final exams, COU 535 Final Paper), CCS-R rating scales in practicum and internship courses, and CPCE results.

RESULTS

For in-class assignments, students demonstrated sufficient knowledge of key learning elements via grades on exams and projects. Out of the students who sat for the CPCE exam, 93% of students (53 out of 57) passed the Social and Cultural Diversity section. Aggregate ratings on diversity and cultural competence items taken from the CCS-R demonstrated overall student proficiency in the ability to demonstrate self-awareness, cultural humility, and the ability to conceptualize clients through a lens of intersectionality.

Goal 3 (Student Learning Outcome)

Students will learn various theories of human development in order to integrate a developmentally and culturally appropriate approach to working with a wide range of diverse clients.

Outcome 3.1 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will demonstrate an understanding of theories of human development and how developmental levels and cultural contexts inform client presenting concerns.

Outcome 3.2 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will demonstrate an ability to conceptualize the impact of crisis and trauma responses on human growth and development

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Course assignments (EDU 506 Literature Review, COU 555 Crisis Project), CCS-R rating scales in practicum and internship courses, and CPCE results.

RESULTS

For in-class assignments, students demonstrated sufficient knowledge of key learning elements via grades on exams and projects. Out of the students who sat for the CPCE exam, 95% of students (54 out of 57) passed the Human Growth and Development section. Aggregate ratings on items measuring crisis counseling skills from the CCS-R demonstrated overall student proficiency by completion of internship courses.

Goal 4 (Student Learning Outcome)

Students will understand various career counseling theories in order to conceptualize career development across the lifespan, including how career concerns influence mental health concerns. Students will integrate knowledge related to cultural and ethical competencies to provide effective career counseling strategies.

Outcome 4.1 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will demonstrate understanding of the theories, life factors, career resources that impact career development and other mental health concerns.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Course assignments (COU 545 Final Exam), CCS-R rating scales across the counseling program, and CPCE results.

RESULTS

With regard to the final exam in COU 545, 60 out of the 96 students enrolled in the course throughout the academic year scored an 85 or above on the final exam. Out of the students who sat for the CPCE exam, 96% of students (55 out of 57) passed the Career Development section.

Goal 5 (Student Learning Outcome)

Students will learn the foundational elements of counseling theories and techniques that are needed to foster movement towards clients' goals through effective use of helping skills, theoretical conceptualizations, and related interventions.

Outcome 5.1 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will demonstrate knowledge of counseling theories and skills needed to effectively conceptualize and treat clients in a counseling context.

Outcome 5.2 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will effectively utilize the essential helping skills encompassed in the overarching therapeutic process, including relationship building, session management, goal setting, treatment planning, and theoretically based treatment interventions.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Course assignments (COU 505 Final Exam), CCS-R rating scales across the counseling program, and CPCE results.

RESULTS

Overall, from both the dispositional and skills-based portion of the CCS-R, students demonstrated an increase in rating scores across the program. Furthermore, the aggregate ratings were proficient. With regard to the final exam in COU 505, 31 out of the 40 students enrolled in the course throughout the academic year scored an 85 or above on the final exam.. Out of the students who sat for the CPCE exam, 96% of students (55 out of 57) passed the Helping Relationships section.

Goal 6 (Student Learning Outcome)

Students will attain the foundational knowledge and skills required for effective facilitation of group counseling

Outcome 6.1 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will demonstrate abilities to conceptualize and facilitate groups with consideration of group theories, group counseling skills, group counseling interventions, therapeutic factors of groups, and ethical and professional considerations for group work.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Course assignments (COU 540 Structured Group Manual & Presentation) and CPCE results.

RESULTS

95% of students (54 out of 57) who took the CPCE demonstrated a passing score for the Group Counseling and Group Work section. Furthermore, grades from course assignments suggest proficient abilities to provide ethical and competent group work in clinical settings.

Goal 7 (Student Learning Outcome)

Students will learn to utilize assessment and testing throughout the counseling relationship. Students will gain an understanding of the assessment process in order to integrate assessment results into client conceptualization and treatment

Outcome 7.1 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will demonstrate an understanding of and ability to conduct testing and assessment methods, including selection, administration, interpretation, and application of informal and standardized assessment approaches.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Course assignments (COU 524 Comprehensive Assessment Proposal) and CPCE results.

RESULTS

98% of students (56 out of 57) who took the CPCE demonstrated a passing score for the Assessment and Testing section. Furthermore, grades from course assignments suggest proficient abilities to conduct testing and assessment in clinical settings.

Goal 8 (Student Learning Outcome)

Students will gain knowledge related to the principles of ethical and effective research methods for counselors; in particular, an understanding of how to use counseling research to inform counseling practice and direct future research for the field at large.

Outcome 8.1 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research methodologies and approaches to inform their clinical practice.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Course assignments (EDU 505 Final Research Paper) and CPCE results.

RESULTS

96% of students (55 out of 57) who took the CPCE demonstrated a passing score for the Research and Program Evaluation section. Furthermore, grades from course assignments suggest proficient abilities to conduct testing and assessment in clinical settings.

Goal 9 (Student Learning Outcome – Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program)

Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of clinical mental health counseling practices, including advocacy, prevention, and treatment for a broad range of mental health concerns

Outcome 8.1 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary for effective mental health counseling services, including assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, therapeutic interventions, and ethical best practices to support clients along the continuum of care.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Overall pass rate on CPCE and CCS-R rating scales results across the program.

RESULTS

From students enrolled in the CMHC program, 94% of students (45 out of 48) who took the CPCE demonstrated an overall passing score on the exam. Across the course of the program, ranging from pre-candidacy to internship courses, students enrolled in the CMHC program demonstrated a significant overall improvement across CCS-R for both dispositional and skills-based portions. Furthermore, 92% of students expected to graduate during the 2021-2022 academic year successfully completed the program.

Goal 10 (Student Learning Outcome – School Counseling Program)

Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of clinical mental health counseling practices, including advocacy, prevention, and treatment for a broad range of mental health concerns

Outcome 8.1 (Key Performance Indicator)

Students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary for effective mental health counseling services, including assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, therapeutic interventions, and ethical best practices to support clients along the continuum of care.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Overall pass rate on CPCE and CCS-R rating scales results across the program.

RESULTS

From students enrolled in the SC program, all 9 school counseling students who took the CPCE demonstrated an overall passing score on the exam. Across the course of the program, ranging from pre-candidacy to internship courses, students enrolled in the SC program demonstrated a significant overall improvement across CCS-R for both dispositional and skills-based portions. Furthermore, 100% of students expected to graduate during the 2021-2022 academic year successfully completed the program.

Summary of Action Steps for 2022-2023

Based upon the results from the 2021-2022 Counseling Program Evaluation Summary, counseling faculty members have identified a variety of action steps in order to address areas of growth while simultaneously maintaining strengths of the program at large. Please see below for a summary overview for how the program evaluation data will be utilized in the current academic year.

- Alumni, supervisor, and alumni employer feedback extracted from recent surveys was generally positive and demonstrates overall program effectiveness and strengths as defined by our program objectives. For example, 100% of supervisors surveyed said they would consider hiring an LRU counseling graduate if positions were available, and 100% of alumni employers surveyed responded that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the LRU graduates they hired. From 2021-2022 alumni, 100% identified feeling “very prepared” or “prepared” to work as a professional counselor as a result of the program, and 97% of alumni reported being “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their experiences in the counseling program. Alumni respondents consistently identified discussions, small class sizes, support, and caring professors as primary strengths of the program. This is important to strong professional identity development, cultural awareness, and conceptualization skills as described in our program objectives. University administration demonstrates support in this area with number of faculty employed, specifically the addition of two new faculty member roles during the previous year. Counseling faculty have noted the effectiveness of a relational focused approach to working with students, and are prioritizing both in-class engagement and out-of-class availability (advising, student mentorship, etc.).

- Several stakeholders expressed the desire for increased diversity among staff and faculty, as well as increased support for minority students and students of color, in particular. This is important feedback to help students in two objective categories: “. . . become more effective multicultural counselors” and “. . . develop strong professional identities as counselors.” Constructive feedback in this area decreased in the 2022 data, suggesting some effectiveness of actions taken to better meet the program objectives in this area. Regardless, counseling faculty are committed to a multifaceted approach to facilitate vital improvement in this area. With regard to student and new faculty recruitment, intentional efforts will be added to better circulate adjunct faculty and core faculty member job postings more broadly, and faculty members will attend graduate and/or careers fairs at HBCU’s and other universities to increase connections with a diverse body of potential students. Within the learning environment of the program, efforts to support an inclusive and supportive environment include: creating a Student of Color Caucus, increasing diversity in guest speakers and panel members, and facilitating workshops sponsored by the department. The Counseling Program additionally prioritizes faculty member’s engagement in their own multicultural sensitivity and development. Counseling faculty members will attend and present at conferences that emphasize diversity and support for minoritized populations, such as the Black Mental Health Symposium, and will increase networking within local practitioner groups.
- Overall, assessment data collected and analyzed suggests effectiveness in facilitating the development of requisite knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions of professional counselors. Strategic and systematic completion of rating scales, specifically the Counselor Competencies Scale-Revised (CCS-R), throughout the program demonstrates positive development of trainee’s skills and professional competencies. The Counseling Program has also introduced the use of two new internally developed competency rating scales to better assess student knowledge and skills in areas such as crisis assessment and intervention, group counseling skills, clinical assessment, diagnosis and treatment planning, and career counseling.
- In addition to sufficient training with the core CACREP curriculum, students and alumni expressed an interest in having a stronger emphasis in certain specialty areas of clinical practice, including addictions, grief, counseling children and adolescent, and trauma counseling throughout the program. Counseling faculty members are committed to consistently offering elective courses within these areas, along with providing learning opportunities, such as workshops or guest presentations, to students, alumni, and other stakeholders in these areas. Each semester, currently enrolled students are provided with surveys to express their interest in specific electives, and counseling faculty use this input to determine course offerings for the following semester. For example, electives offered in the past academic year include Grief and Loss, Play Therapy, Trauma Counseling, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Sexuality. Electives scheduled for 2023 include Expressive Arts, Private Practice Preparation, and Counseling Children and Adolescents.