Clinical Counseling Program
Program Assessment Report

**Master of Arts in Counseling
Indirect Program Assessment
2017–2018**

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Date of Report: August 27, 2018

Systematic Program Assessment in CIU's Clinical Counseling Program

The mission of CIU's Clinical Counseling Program is *to offer professional training in clinical mental health counseling within a biblical worldview in order to provide Christ-like therapeutic relationships for healing and growth.* The overall educational philosophy at CIU consists of three educational components that provide a wholistic model of education. The first component is academic excellence with a focus on <u>content</u> and may be characterized as educating one's "head." The second component focuses on <u>character</u> and may be characterized as educating one's "heart," the component by which students grow in personal and spiritual maturity. The third component is skill development in which students systematically practice skills related to professional and vocational goals. This component focuses on <u>competence</u> and may be characterized as educating one's "hands."

In accordance with university policy and accreditation standards, CIU's Clinical Counseling Program engages in systematic program assessment of the programs it offers. Over the course of a three-year cycle, we review the Master of Arts in Counseling program from three perspectives: Professional Identity, Professional Competence and Program Area, and Overall Program Balance.

- Assessment Cycle Year #1: **Professional Identity** reviews the common core domains set out in CACREP Standard II.G.1-8 (professional identity).
- Assessment Cycle Year #2: **Professional Competence and Program Area** reviews the domains set out in CACREP Standard III.F-G (professional practice) and CACREP Standard IV.A-L (program area: Clinical Mental Health Counseling).
- Assessment Cycle Year #3: Overall **Program Balance** reviews the overall program from the perspectives of Academic Excellence ("Head"), Spiritual Life Formation/Religious Development ("Heart"), and Professional Skills Development ("Hands"). These perspectives reflect our corporate educational triad as well as our commitment to developing the whole person.

We have correlated each domain (outcome) in the CACREP Standards under Professional Identity, Professional Competence, and Program Area (Clinical Mental Health Counseling) with a data source (e.g., II.G.1 Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice is correlated with CNS 5330). Each time we offer a course, we collect a signature assignment (data) and store it in an electronic databank. At the appropriate time in the assessment cycle, we draw a random sample of 5-8 assignments for each course from the databank and evaluate them against the pertinent rubric. At least one faculty member who is not responsible for teaching the course reviews and evaluates the sample assignments.

The primary means we use in the process is direct assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs) based on course work collected each year and evaluated using rubrics designed according to a four-level scale: Unsatisfactory (0), Marginal (1), Satisfactory (2), and Exceptional (3). We consider an outcome as met successfully when the student work evaluated achieves an average score of 2.25 or better. In reviewing Overall Program Balance, we supplement direct assessment of student assignments by other sources of data such as the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE), the Supervisor Survey, the Spiritual Transformation Inventory (STI), the Partners for Change Outcome Management System (PCOMS), and the Professional Performance Review (PPR).

In addition to direct assessment of student learning outcomes, we conduct indirect assessment of the program. Our advisory council meets annually to provide input, and we administer our graduating student and field supervisor surveys annually. We administer our alumni and employer surveys every third year (during Assessment Cycle Year #3). We add the information collected through these indirect means to the results of our direct assessment as we conduct our analysis during a two-day workshop in May or early June.

At the workshop, the entire resident faculty team serves as the assessment committee to review the area designated for that year of the assessment cycle. In addition to reviewing sample assignments and

other data identified above, we also consider other input (e.g., feedback from our Advisory Council, information from our graduating student and field supervisor surveys). We analyze the information we have collected, make specific recommendations based on that analysis, and develop plans for implementation and/or remediation. We then draft and distribute an annual report that documents the finding of that year's assessment and describes any modifications to the program. As part of the report, we assign follow-up steps to specific program faculty members for implementation. These faculty members are responsible to document any changes made and report on them to the faculty. Their follow-up reports close the loop on the assessment cycle year.

The Focus of the Assessment Year

In preparation for an interim report in which CACREP asked us to relate the results of surveys of graduates, supervisors, and employers, we delayed the scheduled first year of the assessment cycle to focus on indirect assessment results from the three surveys. This action allowed us to take a comprehensive look at the program from four perspectives: (1) Professional Identity, (2) Professional Practice, (3) Personal and Professional Growth, and (4) Overall Program Evaluation. The graduate and employer surveys used this four-fold structure, while the supervisor survey focused on professional practice. The results of our analysis appear in the next section. The surveys and the raw data resulting from the surveys are included in an appendix.

Assessment Findings

Professional Identity:
> This area was, comparatively speaking, the weakest of the four. Respondents to both graduate and employer surveys suggested that the program could be strengthened in preparing students for engagement in professional memberships (33% somewhat or not prepared), engagement in professional training activities (17% somewhat prepared), engagement in leadership activities in professional organizations (28% somewhat or not prepared), and engagement in advocacy activities (33% somewhat or not prepared).

Professional Practice:
> This area was particularly strong overall. One aspect that could use attention is the degree to which students demonstrate effective skills, techniques, and interventions. That aspect was slightly lower in all three surveys but not so low as to suggest that it reflects a major weakness. The supervisor survey suggests that students are well prepared to understand and respect clients' unique cultural and/or spiritual beliefs and practices. This evaluation is encouraging when considered in light of the program's faith-based nature.

Personal and Professional Growth:
> This area was also consistently strong in all areas addressed in the surveys. Graduates and employers alike were nearly unanimous in reporting that the program prepares students well or very well in cultural sensitivity, openness to feedback, awareness of compliance with best practices, and remaining current with professional trends.

Overall Program Evaluation:
> This area was comparatively strong. One aspect that could use attention is the degree to which the program prepares students for responsibilities within the employment setting. Again, that aspect was slightly lower but not so low as to suggest that it reflects a major weakness. The fact that the graduates rated as somewhat weaker the preparation for pursuing advanced studies reflects the professional/practical focus of the program.

Priority Areas and Implementation Steps

The results of the three surveys suggest that the program could profitably give attention to the area of helping students develop their sense of professional identity. For the 2018-2019 academic year, program faculty identified four priority areas to address:

1. **Professional memberships** – Students in the course CNS 5306 Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling will join a professional organization of their choice. Prof. Glenda Nanna will incorporate this requirement into CNS 5306 for the Fall 2019 semester.

2. **Professional training** – Students in the course CNS 5306 Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling will visit and report on two professional meetings or training sessions of their choice. Prof. Glenda Nanna will incorporate this requirement into CNS 5306 for the Fall 2019 semester.

3. **Leadership activities** – Students in the course CNS 5313 Personal and Spiritual Development will develop a plan for a leadership path in a professional organization. Dr. Mark Bolte will incorporate this requirement into CNS 5313 for the Fall 2019 semester.

4. **Advocacy activities** – Students in the course CNS 5306 Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling will choose a specific advocacy area and will develop a plan for engaging in that area throughout their three years of study. Prof. Glenda Nanna will incorporate this requirement into CNS 5306 for the Fall 2019 semester.

Beyond 2018-2019, program faculty will work to identify and implement ways to strengthen professional orientation and identity throughout the three years of the program. In terms of assessment practice, the program faculty will administer all three surveys each year in order to have the benefit of indirect findings as part of the assessment focus for each year of the cycle.

Graduate Survey

Professional Identity: How well did the program prepare you to…	Very Well Prepared	Well Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Not Prepared
Engage in professional memberships such as SCALPC and ACA?	22.2%	44.4%	27.8%	5.6%
Engage in professional training activities such as local, state, and national conferences and CEU trainings?	44.4%	38.9%	16.7%	0
Engage in leadership activities in professional organizations?	27.8%	44.4%	22.2%	5.6%
Engage in advocacy activities in the area of Clinical Mental Health?	44.4%	44.4%	11.1%	0
Professional Practice: How well did the program prepare you to…	**Very Well Prepared**	**Well Prepared**	**Somewhat Prepared**	**Not Prepared**
Practice client engagement skills that foster rapport and maintain healthy working alliances with clients?	94.4%	5.6%	0	0
Conduct client assessments that utilize appropriate evaluation and diagnostic skills?	88.9%	5.6%	5.6%	0
Conduct case conceptualizations that demonstrate an awareness of the many therapeutic variables at play while working with clients?	100%	0	0	0
Offer clinical Interventions that utilize effective skills, techniques, and interventions?	61.1%	38.9%	0	0
Commitment to Personal and Professional Growth: How well did the program develop your…	**Very Well Prepared**	**Well Prepared**	**Somewhat Prepared**	**Not Prepared**
Cultural sensitivity that demonstrates understanding and respect for the client in light of their unique cultural and/or spiritual beliefs and practices?	77.8%	22.2%	0	0
Openness to seek feedback from supervisors, peers, and clients?	88.9%	11.1%	0	0
Awareness of and compliance with ethical standards and best practices?	83.3%	16.7%	0	0
Behavior as a life-long learner who is current with professional trends and changing practice guidelines?	83.3%	11.1%	5.6%	0
Overall Program Evaluation: How well did the program prepare you for…	**Very Well Prepared**	**Well Prepared**	**Somewhat Prepared**	**Not Prepared**
the national licensing examination(s)?	88.9%	5.6%	5.6%	0
professional practice as compared with other entry-level mental health professionals?	77.8%	22.2%	0	0
your responsibilities within the employment setting?	55.6%	38.9%	5.6%	0
the pursuit of advanced studies?	50%	22.2%	27.8%	0

Employer Survey

Professional Identity: How well did the program prepare the employee(s) to…	Very Well Prepared	Well Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Not Prepared	Unknown
Engage in professional memberships such as SCALPC and ACA?	0	66.7%	16.7%	0	16.7%
Engage in professional training activities such as local, state, and national conferences and CEU trainings?	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%	0	0
Engage in leadership activities in professional organizations?	16.7%	50.0%	0	16.7%	16.7%
Engage in advocacy activities in the area of Clinical Mental Health?	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%
Professional Practice: How well did the program prepare the employee(s) to…	**Very Well Prepared**	**Well Prepared**	**Somewhat Prepared**	**Not Prepared**	**Unknown**
Practice client engagement skills that foster rapport and maintain healthy working alliances with clients?	83.3%	16.7%	0	0	0
Conduct client assessments that utilize appropriate evaluation and diagnostic skills?	66.7%	33.3%	0	0	0
Conduct case conceptualizations that demonstrate an awareness of the many therapeutic variables at play while working with clients?	83.3%	16.7%	0	0	0
Offer clinical Interventions that utilize effective skills, techniques, and interventions?	33.3%	66.7%	0	0	0
Commitment to Personal and Professional Growth: How well did the program develop the employee's…	**Very Well Prepared**	**Well Prepared**	**Somewhat Prepared**	**Not Prepared**	**Unknown**
Cultural sensitivity that demonstrates understanding and respect for clients in light of their unique cultural and/or spiritual beliefs and practices?	83.3%	16.7%	0	0	0
Openness to seek feedback from supervisors, peers, and clients?	100%	0	0	0	0
Awareness of and compliance with ethical standards and best practices?	83.3%	16.7%	0	0	0
Behavior as a life-long learner who is current with professional trends and changing practice guidelines?	66.7%	33.3%	0	0	0
Overall Program Evaluation: How well did the program prepare employee(s) for…	**Very Well Prepared**	**Well Prepared**	**Somewhat Prepared**	**Not Prepared**	**n/a**
professional practice as compared with other entry-level mental health professionals?	66.7%	33.3%	0	0	0
responsibilities within the employment setting?	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%	0	0
collaboration with other professionals?	66.7%	16.7%	16.7%	0	0

Supervisor Survey

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
1. Has a foundational knowledge of counseling theories, skills, and techniques	26.3%	57.9%	15.8%	0	0	0
2. Able to conceptualize clinical cases using a bio/psycho/social/spiritual framework	47.4%	42.1%	10.5%	0	0	0
3. Understands and respects the client in light of their unique cultural and/or spiritual beliefs and practices	63.2%	26.3%	10.5%	0	0	0
4. Has empathy and appropriately responds to client issues	52.6%	42.1%	5.3%	0	0	0
5. Demonstrates an openness to learn	73.7%	15.8%	10.5%	0	0	0
6. Engages in self-exploration	42.1%	33.8%	10.5%	5.3%	0	5.3%
7. Shows respect and sensitivity to client diversity	63.2%	31.6%	5.3%	0	0	0
8. Acknowledges limitations and willing to seek external support	57.9%	21.1%	15.8%	5.3%	0	0
9. Responds appropriately to feedback, critique and suggestions	57.9%	26.3%	5.3%	10.5%	0	0
10. Ability to foster rapport and maintain healthy working alliances with clients	36.8%	63.2%	0	0	0	0
11. Demonstrates effective skills, techniques, and interventions	31.5%	42.1%	21.1%	0	0	5.3%
12. Instills hope towards client goal achievement	57.9%	36.8%	0	0	0	5.3%
13. Demonstrates appropriate interviewing and assessment skills	31.6%	42.1%	21.1%	0	0	5.3%
14. Demonstrates the ability to lead or co-lead a group	15.8%	26.3%	10.5%	0	0	47.4%
15. Establishes a working relationship with staff and co-workers	42.1%	42.1%	10.5%	5.3%	0	0
16. Written and oral communication is timely and clear	368%	47.4%	15.8%	0	0	0
17. Is punctual and dependable	57.9%	31.6%	5.3%	5.3%	0	0
18. Demonstrates appropriate assertiveness and conflict resolution skills	36.3%	31.6%	36.8%	5.3%	0	0
19. Overall performance	42.1%	52.6%	5.3%	0	0	0