

The 2021-2022 Annual Report for the Counseling Program at West Virginia University

The counseling program, during academic year 2021-2022, required some continued adjustment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the counseling program overall had a successful year. The program graduated 11 students in the school counseling track, 11 students in the clinical mental health counseling track, and 19 students in the clinical mental health and rehabilitation counseling program. The program had a 100% pass rate for those who took the Praxis II for school counselors. The program had a 100% pass rate for those who took the National Counselor Examination, much higher than the national pass rate of 81%. Fifty-nine students are currently enrolled in the on-campus program; this includes first year students, second year students, and a few part-time students in WVU's full-time sport psychology doctoral program. Sixty-eight students are currently enrolled in the on-line program.

During the past year, the College of Education and Human Services, which housed the counseling programs, merged with the College of Physical Activity and Sport Sciences into our new college: The College of Applied Human Sciences. The counseling programs are now housed in the School of Counseling and Wellbeing within the new college.

Due to these changes, planning of the new doctoral program in Counselor Education & Supervision had to be put on hold but should start up again this coming year. However, we are in the process of merging our on-campus M.A. in Counseling Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling tracks with the on-line M.S. in Clinical Mental Health and Rehabilitation Counseling program into one degree program. In the spirit of our college and department mergers, beginning next year, we will have one M.S. in Counseling with three tracks: Clinical Mental Health Counseling (on-campus), School Counseling (on-campus), and Clinical Mental Health Counseling with an area of emphasis in Rehabilitation Counseling (on-line).

Current faculty members include:

Dr. Ed Jacobs—Associate Professor, Admissions Coordinator
Dr. Christine Schimmel—Associate Professor, Counseling Program Coordinator
Dr. Monica Leppma—Associate Professor, CACREP Liaison
Dr. Rawn Boulden—Assistant Professor of School Counseling
Heidi O'Toole – Teaching Instructor
Dr. Jeff Daniels—Professor
Dr. Margaret Glenn—Professor
Regina Burgess—Teaching Instructor
Dr. George Mamboleo—Associate Professor
Dr. Elisabeth Simpson—Field Placement Coordinator
The program also has outstanding adjunct teachers and supervisors.

Counseling Program/Student Outcomes

Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Number of graduates this past year: 11

Complete rate: 85%
Licensure pass rate: 100%
Job placement rate of graduates: 100%

School Counseling

Number of graduates this past year: 11
Complete rate: 92%
Certification pass rate: 100%
Job placement rate of graduates: 100%

Clinical Mental Health and Rehabilitation Counseling

Number of graduates this past year: 19
Complete rate: 84%
Licensure pass rate: 100%
Job placement rate of graduates: 100%

Summary of Program Evaluations

Each year recent graduates, their employers, field supervisors, and current students are surveyed to assess their perceptions of training experiences and preparedness to work in the field. These surveys help us to determine our strengths as well as potential areas of improvement. For example, a suggestion for improvement on a previous survey was to increase focus on school counseling in some of the combined courses. In response, we re-designed the career counseling and the assessment courses to better address topics relevant to school counselors and added a new faculty member specializing in school counseling. In our most recent review, the evaluations continued to be positive overall. The program and its faculty remain committed to maintaining a program where students enjoy their learning experiences while becoming competent, skilled practitioners. Below are a sample of responses.

Strengths

Across the board, all groups of respondents identified *supportive and caring faculty* as a strength of the program. First-year students, second-year students, and site supervisors also identified *opportunities to practice counseling skills* as a strength. The first-year students included *cohort model* and *meeting leaders in the counseling profession* as additional strengths of the program. The second-year students also indicated *personal growth* as a strength.

Of the responding counseling professionals providing supervision to our practicum and internship students, 100% *agreed or strongly agreed* that they would recommend the WVU counselor preparation program to others.

Site supervisors identified *supportive faculty; students' ability to apply theory into practice; students' knowledge of counseling theories and techniques; students were well-prepared for practicum/internship; and students' professionalism* as strengths of the program.

Areas for Improvement suggested by students:

Lighten workload

More support for students to navigate and prepare for NCE and licensure

Teach greater variety of counseling theoretical orientations

Site Supervisors - Areas for Improvement

Add direct observation of students by faculty supervisors at practicum/internship sites

Program Modifications

We integrated more in the curriculum on social justice and racism and are discussing more ways to include trauma and neuroscience information in various courses. We revised the career counseling course. In the crisis class we are adding the latest information on suicide assessments. In the diagnosis class we added increased information on working with suicidal ideation and trauma. We added a new clinical site working with veterans, and more of our students are getting placements at the University counseling center.

Closing Comments:

The faculty thanks all who are a part of this program in some way. The faculty continue to work hard to make the WVU counseling program one of the best in the country. We are committed to training outstanding school and clinical mental health counselors. We remain optimistic about the future of the program and believe that 2022-2023 will be a productive academic year.