

Montclair State University
College of Education and Human Services
Department of Counseling
Annual Report
2021-2022

In this report, we detail the assessment outcomes and data collection in accordance with the program's assessment plan (See [Appendix A](#)) and Counseling Program objectives ([Appendix B](#)). The plan is organized in four major categories:

- a. Student Assessment Data
- b. Demographic Data
- c. Follow-Up Data
- d. Data-Driven Program Modifications

Summary of Program Evaluation Results

Student Assessment Data

Student Learning Outcomes: Key Performance Indicators

Program Objectives: 1, 4, 6, 8, 9

The faculty identified key performance indicators to measure student learning outcomes with multiple measures and at multiple points of time across the program. The key performance indicators are available in [Appendix C](#) of this document. The purpose of the assessment of student learning outcomes is to determine how, in aggregate form, students are demonstrating the knowledge and skills identified as indicators of students' preparedness for the counseling profession. The faculty identified key performance indicators for each of the CACREP core area curricular standards (CAS) as well as overarching program specialty area standards and doctoral program standards with a minimum of two assessment points each. Assessments were primarily related to course assignments (rated on a 1-3 scale, with 1=does not meet the performance indicator, 2=meets indicator, and 3=exceeds indicator) or a score on specific sections of the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) that the program uses as a capstone assessment for all students each semester. [Appendix D](#) provides a summary of the key performance indicator assessments for the 21-22 academic year.

Across the assessments, students are primarily meeting the key performance indicators. There were two assessments in two areas at the master's level in Fall 2021 where students were not meeting expectations: Human Growth and Development and Addictions Counseling. There are several possible explanations for these ratings, including new instructors and students' return to fully in-person learning following the pandemic, however the fact remains that the faculty will review the course content. Students performed more strongly and above the threshold for meeting expectations in these assessments in Spring 2022. At the doctoral level, course-linked assessments were not reported. Performance on assessments that are not course-linked (comprehensive exam) remained high in students meeting expectations.

As part of the faculty's continuing efforts to enhance our assessment process, the faculty will be reviewing the key performance indicators and the assessments used to measure them. In addition,

greater attention will be paid to encouraging submission of scores so that the faculty can get a fuller picture of student performance and needs for program modifications.

Dispositions

Program Objectives: 2, 7

A key component of our assessment plan is to review the dispositions of students each semester. The dispositions reflect our expectations for student behavior and development that is fitting for the counseling program and profession. The faculty chose three courses in which we assess dispositions: COUN 588: Counseling Techniques, COUN 595: Multicultural Counseling, and COUN 624: Practicum. These courses were selected given the five dispositions that we assess for all students regarding (1) professionalism, (2) interpersonal behavior, (3) intrapersonal behavior, (4) respect for diversity, and (5) professional code of ethics. A description of the dispositions can be found in [Appendix E](#).

Instructors rate dispositions for each student on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1=failed to meet to 5=exceeds expectations. A score of 3 indicates that the student is meeting expectations for the noted disposition. The faculty then meet at our annual assessment meeting to review the ratings on individual students, discuss plans for advising, remediation, and continuation in the program, and enact plans to address proposed modifications to the curriculum or other program functions (e.g., admissions) to help students meet dispositions.

The review of dispositions over the past year suggests that most students are suited to the program and are engaging in appropriate and developmentally sound ways relative to the dispositions. In Fall 2021, 88 students were assessed for dispositions across the three courses, and all students were rated as meeting expectations or higher. In Spring 2022, of the 95 students assessed three (3) received ratings below 3, two in COUN 588: Counseling Techniques and one in COUN 595: Multicultural Counseling. The students whose ratings were below the level of expectations were referred to their advisors and/or names discussed during the MA program student review and retention meeting to intervene with students to help them succeed in the program. The program maintains its practice to review all students in the program formally each semester in addition to disposition assessments and to refer to advisors individual students for whom there are concerns. The dispositions ratings for all students are maintained in the program files and will continue to be reviewed to ensure student success and fit for the program and profession.

Comprehensive Exam Results

Program Objectives: 1,4

As stated relative to the key performance indicators, students in the master's counseling programs consistently perform well on the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE), which is used as the capstone exam for all students. See [Appendix F](#) for exam results for Fall 2021 and Spring 2022.

The faculty continue to examine the appropriate cut score for our students relative to the national average and passing score. Although we aim for 100% passing and meeting or exceeding expectations in all core areas, our students continue to perform well on the exam. Students who

do not pass the exam meet with their advisors and develop plans for remediation so that they can pass the comprehensive exam on their second attempt.

There was a difference from the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic year overall performance relative percentages of students in the exceeds, meets, does not meet expectations categories, in part due to the return to the CPCE only. In the previous year as a response to the pandemic students took a different examination that was administered online and may have contributed to higher results (although not statistically significant). Consistently more than 85% of students passed each section of the exam, and the overall pass rate for the exam remains high. However, the faculty would like to achieve a higher passing rate overall and in each category and will reflect upon curricular experiences to continue to strengthen student performance on the CPCE.

Demographic Data

Demographic Data for Applicants

Program Objectives: 9

The Counseling program maintains a commitment to diversity, and as such we are committed to attracting a diverse applicant pool for our program. With increased and intentional recruitment efforts, we hope to enhance the diversity of applicants who are attracted to our program.

Demographic data of applicants to the Counseling master's programs Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 is provided in [Appendix G](#). Please note that applicants are not required to offer this information.

A noted deficit in the data is that applicants do not have the option of choosing a non-binary gender identity. This is an area of advocacy that the program faculty will undertake with the Graduate School Admissions Office. Upon review of the racial/ethnic data provided, it is noteworthy that nearly half (45.7%) of our applicants are White. Nearly 29% identify as Hispanic/Latino, and smaller percentages are of other racially diverse identities. Although this is reflective of the broader community in which the university is situated, and indeed the student population of the university, the program would like to recruit a more diverse applicant pool. We may undertake recruitment efforts that celebrate our diversity, including internal recruitment efforts, targeted admissions recruitment at HBCUs and area colleges that boast greater student racial diversity, and highlighting Montclair State University's designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution and our ranking as an LGBTQ-Friendly Campus by Campus Pride.

Demographic Data for Current Students

Program Objectives: 9

The demographic data for students currently enrolled in the Counseling master's programs is provided in [Appendix H](#). The classifications are provided by the Office of Institutional Research. Data for the three accredited programs, Addictions, Clinical Mental Health, and School Counseling, were gathered for this year.

The diversity of our enrolled students remains a priority for continued exploration and recruitment and retention efforts. The faculty are not satisfied that the largest percentage of students in each concentration is primarily White. At a Hispanic Serving Institution and a program that prides itself on diversity, an approximately 25% Hispanic/Latino student enrollment is below that of the University as a whole. Students who identify as Asian, Black, or

of two or more races each comprise less than 10% of enrollment. The percentages of enrolled students is consistent with the applicant demographic data. Diversity remains an area for consideration. The racial demographics of our current enrollment do not align with our program's commitment to diversity. Our recruitment efforts to a more diverse body will assist with our student census data.

Demographic Data for Graduates

Program Objectives: 9

[Appendix I](#) provides demographic data for students who graduated from our program in the last year. The data reflects graduates from May 2021 through January 2022, as available from the Office of Institutional Research at the time of this report.

Follow-up Data

Surveys: Graduates, Employers, Supervisors, Graduating Students

Program Objectives: 5, 6, 7, 8

The program engages in a rotation of surveys to graduates of the program, employers of our graduates, and internship site supervisors. Annually the program surveys students in their final semester of the program (during COUN 674: Counseling Internship II). The purpose of these assessments is to ascertain aspects of the program that are effective in preparing students for their work experience, evaluating our program objectives, and determining needed adjustments to the curriculum to meet constituent needs and to best serve the consumers our graduates will work with at their internship and employment sites. Below are summaries of the surveys. Data on individual survey items may be made available upon request.

Graduating Students Survey

Students rate their experiences with the program using an A-F scale similar to grading. Consistently students primarily report their experiences in the A-B range, suggesting that overall they are satisfied with the program. Items where students have rated C or lower, although few, are worthy of exploration by the faculty for improved efforts. Of particular note are advising and convenience of course scheduling. In the 2021-2022 academic year, faculty on average were responsible for advising nearly 50 master's students. The addition of a new tenure-track faculty member and a one-year Instructional Specialist may alleviate some of the advising load for faculty, thus providing more opportunities for students and faculty to engage in advising and mentoring relationships. The program was approved to search for two additional tenure-track faculty members, and we hope that this will further enable faculty and students to more readily and meaningfully engage. In Fall 2021 a new President began their tenure at the University, creating opportunities for growth, expansion, and reconfiguration of academic offerings. We hope that under this new leadership there will be exploration of flexibility in course scheduling to best meet the needs of Counseling students.

Students also rate the program objectives relative to preparation for their fieldwork. As with the program experiences, students primarily graded the objectives in the A-B range. The faculty continue to explore students' perceptions alongside those of site supervisors and employers to ensure that students are prepared to enter the field and eventually the profession.

Graduates' Survey

Montclair State University's Alumni Relations Office manages an annual survey of graduates. [Appendix J](#) provides the results of the survey in 2021 (please note: Appendix J contains a large amount of data; readers will need to increase the size of the document to view the results). The program continues to explore continued contact with graduates of the program so that we can reach them for surveys as well as other updates. Our efforts include a new Facebook page for current students and alumni and asking students upon graduation for contact information.

Thirty four graduates responded to the survey in 2021. Graduates indicate elements that were most important to them in earning their degrees, graded (on a traditional scale of A-F) aspects of the program, and shared perceptions of changes they experienced as a result of the program. Most alumni rate the program strongly with respect to preparation and readiness to enter the profession. The faculty continue to work with Alumni Relations to adjust survey items to gather meaningful data to assist with program development efforts.

Employers Survey

The survey we send to employers of our graduates is sent every other year. As the response rate is typically low, the faculty continue to discuss strategies to increase response rates and communication with employers so that we have an accurate read of how well prepared our graduates are for work as professional counselors. Our coordination with Alumni Services will hopefully assist with the tracking of graduates and their employers.

Site Supervisor Survey

We are able to access internship site supervisors annually through students who are completing their placements at the time of survey administration. We similarly ask supervisors to grade (using the traditional A-F scale) the objectives of the program relative to interns' work at their sites. All of the objectives received A and B ratings, with an occasional single grade of C on an item. The survey administration in Fall 2021 yielded no responses from site supervisors. The faculty and department administration are reviewing our dissemination of the site supervisors survey to increase connections with supervisors and responses to the surveys.

Program Modifications

Based on a review of the 2021-2022 data, the faculty created a plan for the 2022-2023 academic year to make program modifications. The table below summarizes the program or curricular modification planned for 2020-2021 and their connection to specific assessment areas.

Program or Curricular Modification	Linked Assessment Outcome or Discussion	Proposed Action
Collect skills assessments	Missing data collection for Skills Assessments	Develop new skills assessment data collection point to replace process used for Middle States evaluation several years ago.
Modify MA program admissions review	Admissions and retention data Demographic data for applicants and current students	Revise the admissions essay prompt and formalize the review and scoring of the essays.
Modify Key Performance Indicators	Key Performance Indicator Assessments	Review KPIs for MA and PhD programs for alignment with program missions regarding social justice and diversity work. In addition, review KPI assessments for applicability to practice.
Professional Development Workshops for Students	Key Performance Indicator Assessments Site Supervisor Surveys	Develop professional development workshop series for students to supplement classroom and fieldwork learning.
Modify Doctoral Program Curriculum	Key Performance Indicator Assessments Admissions and Retention	Modify the doctoral program curriculum to more accurately reflect students' development and entry into faculty and advanced practitioner or administrative roles. Curricular modifications will be submitted during the 2022-2023 academic year.
Modify Doctoral Comprehensive Exam	Comprehensive Exam Results	Revise program structure and administration and evaluation of comprehensive exam.
Increase use of social media	Low diversity in demographic data, low response to alumni surveys	Use newly developed Facebook page for recruitment, marketing, and engagement with current students and alumni.
Engage CSI alumni and advisory board	Low response on alumni, supervisor,	Engage CSI alumni and advisory board members to encourage participation in follow-up surveys.

	and employer surveys	
Change dissemination strategy for site supervisor surveys	No responses on supervisor surveys	Establish ongoing communication between the Clinical Coordinator and field site supervisors throughout the academic year to strengthen relationships. The Clinical Coordinator will now send surveys directly to site supervisors rather than through students and instructors.

Substantial Program Changes

The following changes were implemented in response to assessment data and larger program and college issues.

Modification of MA Admissions Essay and Evaluation

The program began modification of the MA essay prompt in Fall 2021 and implemented a new system for review and evaluation of admissions decisions in Spring 2022. The program responded to the demographic profile of applicants and current students, as well as a desire to tailor admissions to attract and enroll students who exemplify the program's mission and objectives. The faculty piloted the new admissions process in Spring 2022 and will continue to revise as needed in the Fall 2022 admissions process (for students incoming Spring 2023).

Modification of School Counseling Program

The shift in specialty area programs in the CACREP standards offers another opportunity relative to the School Counseling program. This remains our largest specialty area in the program, competitive with several other similar programs across New Jersey. The program faculty remain steadfast that we must increase to the new 60 credit hour program required by the current CACREP standards by July 2023 to continue to prepare quality school counselors. The proposed curriculum will have a value-added component for students, including additional certification or specialization opportunities. We believe the movement to 60 credits will also allow room for students to learn more about school counseling-specific issues and increase the opportunity for elective offerings as we did for our 60 credit hour programs in Addictions Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling. The faculty submit the program modification for curricular action in Fall 2022.

Modification of Doctoral Program

The doctoral program entered its 13th year in Fall 2021. The faculty engaged in several conversations about modifying the curriculum to more accurately reflect students' entry into faculty, advanced practitioner, and administrative roles. Review of data indicated that students were not performing successfully in some courses and perhaps the offerings and sequencing of courses was not consistent with the program's mission and goals. In addition, admissions and retention numbers declined over the last two years. The faculty began review of the new curriculum in late Spring 2022 and will submit the program modification for curricular action during the 2022-2023 academic year.

Modification of Doctoral Comprehensive Exam

Along with review of the doctoral curriculum, faculty reviewed the comprehensive exam format and process. The faculty determined that the current format did not accurately reflect students' comprehensive knowledge nor did it prepare students for dissertation work. The faculty will formally prepare a revision to the comprehensive exam during the 2022-2023 academic year and phase in the new format upon approval.