

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

REHABILITATION AND COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS
ACCREDITATION REPORT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Action Requested: Receive the accreditation report from the Rehabilitation and Counselor Education Programs in the College of Education at the University of Iowa.

Executive Summary: The Department of Rehabilitation and Counselor Education offers three programs that underwent the accreditation process – Master of Arts Program in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling; Master of Arts Program in School Counseling; and Ph.D. Program in Counselor Education and Supervision. These are subtracks within the Rehabilitation and Counselor Education Program.

The three programs (1) underwent a self-study that addressed the standards defined by the accrediting body; and (2) had an on-site visit by peer evaluators. In July 2011, the College of Education was informed that the three Rehabilitation and Counselor Education Subtrack Programs were accredited for the maximum period of eight years. All of the required standards were met and no further reports are required to be submitted. This report, which addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to provide “educational excellence and impact” as well as Goal #8 – “Iowa’s public universities and special schools shall be increasingly efficient and productive,” was submitted to the Board of Regents in June 2012. This review is to discuss the program improvements that resulted from the accreditation visit.

Background:

◇ **Description of Programs.**

- ⇒ The **Master of Arts Program in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling** is considered a Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program by the accrediting agency; it requires 60 credit hours. The curriculum blends academic coursework in such areas as the nature of psychiatric disorders, diagnosis, treatment planning, intervention, and outcome evaluation, with a supervised clinical experience. The accredited program meets the educational requirements for licensure as a mental health counselor in community mental health settings in Iowa. The program prepares professional counselors to coordinate resources and provide assistance in employment, independent living, and personal or economic development to persons with disabilities. In Spring 2011, there were 27 students enrolled in the program.
- ⇒ The **Master of Arts Program in School Counseling** requires 54 credit hours, including a counseling practicum and an internship. The program prepares students to provide individual and small group counseling, classroom guidance, and consulting services to teachers, parents, families, and other professionals and leads to K-8 and 5-12 school counselor licensure in Iowa. In Spring 2011, there were 22 students enrolled in the program.

- ⇒ The **Ph.D. Program in Counselor Education and Supervision** requires completion of a master's degree in counseling or a related field and at least one year of professional counseling or related work experience prior to admission. The program requires 96 credit hours, including required courses and courses in an area outside the department; an empirical research experience project; and a dissertation. The program's objectives address the professional leadership roles of counselor education, supervision, advanced counseling practice, and research competencies expected of doctoral graduates. Students are prepared to be counselor educators, counselor supervisors, advanced counseling practitioners, researchers, and/or evaluators and leaders in academic and clinical settings. In Spring 2011, there were 24 students enrolled in the program.

- ◇ Purpose of Accreditation. An accredited educational program is recognized by its peers as having met national standards for its development and evaluation. To employers, graduate schools, and licensure, certification, and registration boards, graduation from an accredited program signifies adequate preparation for entry into the profession. In fact, many of these groups require graduation from an accredited program as a minimum qualification. Accreditation is also intended to protect the interests of students, benefit the public, and improve the quality of teaching, learning, research, and professional practice. Accreditation is also critical for recruitment of new students.

- ◇ Accrediting Agency. The accrediting body is the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

- ◇ Review Process. The self-study prepared by the three subtrack programs contained the responses to the standards required by the accrediting body.¹
 - ⇒ The Learning Environment – Structure and Evaluation.
 - ☑ The Institution. Standards A-H list the expectations of the institution to support the programs under review, by accurately describing the academic unit and each program offered in institutional media, providing the programs with sufficient financial support; providing encouragement and support for program faculty; providing access to learning resources, and providing technical support to ensure access to information systems for learning, teaching and research.
 - ☑ The Academic Unit. Standards I-T list minimum credit hours required of entry level degree programs; requirements for attracting, enrolling and retaining a diverse group of students; admission decision recommendations; activities such as a student orientation that should occur for all new students, the issues that must be addressed in the student handbook; maximum credit hours delivered by noncore faculty; limit to the student to faculty ratio (10:1); students must have an assigned advisor who will help develop a planned program of study with the first year; a systematic developmental assessment is conducted for each student throughout the program and what should be considered; limit six students to one faculty member for individual and/or triadic supervision in practicum and internship experiences and 12 to 1 for group supervision; required professional liability insurance for students in practicum, internship, or other field experience.

¹ The standards can be found at <http://www.cacrep.org/doc/2009%20Standards%20with%20dover.pdf>.

- Faculty and staff. Standards U-Z list requirement that the unit has made efforts to recruit, employ and retain a diverse faculty; teaching loads are consistent with other similar graduate units at the institutions; list the required number of faculty; the faculty's minimum academic qualifications and relevant preparation/experience; faculty identification with the counseling profession through membership in professional organizations and licensing; faculty engagement in activities of the counseling profession (development/renewal, research/scholarly activity, service/advocacy); faculty have authority to determine program curricula; the unit has clearly defined administrative and curricular leadership sufficient for effective operation; minimum requirements of noncore faculty are listed; clerical assistance to support faculty/program activities is available and commensurate with that at similar graduate programs.
 - Evaluation. Standards AA – DD list the requirement of continuous systematic program evaluation indicating how the mission, objectives and student learning outcomes are measured and met; that students have regular and systematic opportunities to formally evaluate faculty; that annual results of student course evaluations are provided to faculty; and that written evaluation procedures are provided to faculty and supervisors at beginning of each evaluation period and whenever procedures change.
- ⇒ Professional Identity.
- Foundation. Standards A-C list the requirement that a comprehensive mission statement has been developed, is publicly available, and systematically reviewed; list the requirements for the program area objectives; and requires that students actively identify with the counseling profession by participating in professional organizations.
 - Knowledge. Standards D-G require that a syllabus be distributed at the beginning of each curricular experience and specify what it should include; require evidence of the use and infusion of current counseling-related research in teaching practice among faculty and students and use and infusion of technology in program delivery and technology's impact on the counseling profession; and that all students are required to have common core curricular experiences and demonstrate knowledge in each of the 8 common core curricular areas (Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice; Social and Cultural Diversity; Human Growth and Development; Career Development; Helping Relationships; Group Work; Assessment, and Research and Program Evaluation).
- ⇒ Professional Practice. Professional practice, including practicum and internship, provides for the application of theory and the development of counseling skills under supervision. Standards A-G address the supervisor qualifications and support requirements of all supervisors at the faculty, student, and site supervisory level; and that an orientation, assistance, etc. are provided. They also list the requirements for the practicum and internship experiences including the required number of hours, minimum number of individual and group interactions with onsite supervisor; the opportunity for recorded or live supervision of the student's interactions with clients, and the provision of evaluation throughout the practicum and internship, with formal evaluation at the end.

- ⇒ Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Standards A-I indicate that students who are preparing to work as clinical mental health counselors must demonstrate the professional knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the clinical mental health counseling context. In addition to the eight common core curricular experiences, program must provide evidence that student learning (their knowledge, skills, and practice) has occurred in each of the following domains specific to clinical mental health counseling – Foundations; Counseling, Prevention, and Intervention; Diversity and Advocacy; Assessment; Research and Evaluation; and Diagnosis.
- ⇒ School Counseling. Standards A-P indicate that students who are preparing to work as school counselors will demonstrate the professional knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to promote the academic, career, and personal/social development of all K-12 students. In addition to the common core curricular experiences, programs must provide evidence that student learning (knowledge, skills, and practice) has occurred in each of the following domains specific to school counseling – Foundations; Counseling, Prevention, and Intervention; Diversity and Advocacy; Assessment, Research and Evaluation; Academic Development; Collaboration and Consultation; and Leadership.
- ⇒ Counselor Education and Supervision – Doctoral Standards. Doctoral degree programs in Counselor Education and Supervision are intended to prepare graduates to work as counselor educators, supervisors, researchers, and practitioners in academic and clinical settings. The doctoral program standards are intended to accommodate the unique strengths of different programs. Doctoral programs for which accreditation is sought must encompass all the entry-level program standards. Therefore, when programs admit doctoral students who have not graduated from a CACREP entry-level program, the program must demonstrate that the student has completed curricular experience the equivalent of the CACREP entry-level standards and curricular requirements of a specific program area before beginning doctoral level counselor education coursework. The doctoral standards include the following sections.
 - ☑ The Learning Environment: Structure and Evaluation
 - ☞ The Institution. Standard A requires that access is provided to library and other learning resources appropriate for doctoral level scholarly inquiry, study and research.
 - ☞ The Program. Standards B-F list the requirements the program must meet as far as length of graduate level preparation; the primary obligations of the program; the admission criteria; the establishment of an approved doctoral committee and completion of a planned program of study for each student; and the requirement that students attend planned meetings with their doctoral committee.
 - ☞ Faculty and Staff. Standards G-K address the required teaching, scholarship and service expectations of the faculty, the minimum number of faculty positions; faculty participation in professional counseling organizations; dissertation advising loads and expectations; and that faculty are engaged in ongoing research, writing, publication and presentations in the profession.

- ☞ Evaluation. The criteria are the same as under the entry-level standards.
 - ☑ Professional Identity.
 - ☞ Foundations. Standards A-B require that the program objectives address the professional leadership roles of counselor education, supervision, counseling practice and research competencies expected of the students and what experiences the students will have.
 - ☞ Knowledge. Standard C lists the learning experiences beyond the entry level that the students are required to have in seven content areas.
 - ☑ Professional Practice.
 - ☞ Clinical Experience. Standards A-B address the minimum number of hours doctoral students are required to participate in a supervised doctoral level practicum (100 hours) and in doctoral level counseling internships (600 hours) and how those experiences should be set up. Standard C requires that students receive weekly individual and/or triadic supervision during the internships and that group supervision must also be provided on a regular schedule with other students throughout the internship.
 - ☑ Doctoral Learning Outcomes. Standards A-I indicate that program must provide evidence that doctoral students will demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices beyond the entry-level program requirements in all of the following areas – supervision, teaching, research and scholarship, counseling, and leadership and advocacy. Programs may choose to emphasize one or more of these areas congruent with program mission.
- ◆ On-Site Team Report. In February 2011, the visiting team identified strengths of the programs. The team also noted that all of the standards had been met and that no required changes were identified. Suggestions were made for program enhancement or improvement; however, these do not require an institutional response.
- ◆ Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.
- ⇒ The rehabilitation counseling program is ranked #4 by *U.S. News and World Report*.
 - ⇒ There are exceptionally productive faculty members as scholars and leaders in the counseling profession.
 - ⇒ There is strong support from the University in the form of technical equipment and advisory personnel, reference librarian services, space, and number of faculty.
 - ⇒ Students are pleased with the preparation they are receiving in the Master of Arts Program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and with the special emphasis on rehabilitation and feel well prepared to work as counselors in both mental health and rehabilitation settings.
 - ⇒ Students in the Master of Arts Program in School Counseling are being prepared in a comprehensive school counseling model and trained to become leaders in the school counseling profession.
 - ⇒ The approach to professional practice in the Ph.D. Program in Counselor Education and Supervision is unique by offering students an opportunity to experience the scope of practice from disciplines other than their own.

- ◇ Sample Suggestions for Program Enhancement/Improvement. (Institutional changes are in italics.)
 - ⇒ “The two master’s degree programs and two doctoral degree programs currently operate independently and could benefit by more interaction among program faculty and program graduate students.

Students from all programs are being encouraged to interact more through the Chi Sigma Iota professional honor society which has increased its efforts to provide all students in the department with increased professional development and support experiences.
 - ⇒ Consider merging the rehabilitation counselor education and counselor education doctoral programs into one with two specializations to achieve a united professional identity as counselors and to give doctoral graduates in rehabilitation counselor education programs the opportunity to become faculty members in CACREP accredited counseling programs.

The department has been meeting to review these issues and to discuss options for the future of both doctoral programs through merging.
 - ⇒ Some core courses in the clinical mental health counseling and school counseling master’s programs could be taught in classes in which students from both specializations are present to foster a united identity.

The department is planning to combine master’s core curriculum courses more often over the next few years as faculty retire and lines are prioritized in the couple and family therapy program.
 - ⇒ Site supervisors in the school counseling program reported that they would like to have access to the supervision training, perhaps through distance education, taped sessions or uploading training modules on You Tube, for example. They also would like consultation time with faculty members on some of their projects, although they had not expressed that to the faculty.

The program is working on additional avenues and opportunities to provide site supervisor training at different times of the year and to make these experiences more accessible and flexible.
 - ⇒ Add a clearer differentiation in the doctoral program between the activities expected/conducted during practicum versus internship in the student handbook.

The internship syllabi have been revised to specifically address differential training experiences and requirements by site.
 - ⇒ Separate the doctoral program objectives from the master’s program objectives.”

Doctoral program objectives are distinct from the master’s program and will be more clearly noted in future self-studies.
- ◇ Accreditation Status. In July 2011, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs awarded accreditation to the three subtracks of the Rehabilitation and Counselor Education Program – Master of Arts Program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling; Master of Arts Program in School Counseling; and Ph.D. Program in Counselor Education and Supervision - in the College of Education at the University of Iowa for the maximum period of eight years to 2019.

The programs were commended for receiving accreditation for the eight-year period. There are no required changes for the programs. However, the faculty members have discussed the suggestions made by the site team for program enhancement and are following through with many of the suggestions. Others are being reviewed further.