

# M.Ed. in Counseling: School & Community Agency

## 2006 NCA Progress Report #9

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### Introduction/Context:

It is critical to understand that the school and agency counseling programs are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The programs must meet the state criteria for licensure set up by the Ohio Department of Education (for school counseling) and The Ohio Counselor and Social Worker Board (for community agency counseling). In addition, school counseling is reviewed by NCATE as well (which does not align itself with CACREP). Given that context there is an ever evolving matrix of goals, the formats of which would stagger a mathematical savant. This is partly because the licensure of counselors is done state by state (as a states' rights issue) but NCATE and CACREP are national accrediting bodies.

### School Counseling

#### Standards & Goals

As noted in our 2000 CACREP Report (we are CACREP accredited through 2010), the school counseling program aims to produce counselors who meet all state standards for licensing and provide effective direct K-12 services with a demonstrated understanding of diversity issues and urban communities.

To that end, program faculty established four program goals which have not changed since initially conceived. These goals are as follows:

1. Students will demonstrate skill in delivering counseling services by completing projects/assignments in field settings.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of program coursework in meeting exit requirement.
3. Students will demonstrate application of coursework knowledge to licensure requirements.
4. Students will demonstrate aptitude for understanding and using counseling skills with diverse populations in urban communities.

### Outcomes

Related outcomes as also noted in our 2000 CACREP Report follow. These have not changed since initially developed by program faculty.

- ODE standards for school counselors are reflected in the Praxis II specialty exam on school guidance and counseling. Our students' passage rate on this exam has ranged from 94% to 100% since 1999.

- Our students are assessed in laboratory (EDE 684) and internship (EDE 685) in their ability to deliver effective K-12 services. Since 1999, the pass rate in these courses has been above 95% each year.
- Students must complete courses on diversity as part of the program. Their practical training occurs in urban or first ring sites with diverse clientele. Practical assessment occurs in lab, practicum, and internship. The assessment in practicum and internship is done by the university instructor and on-site supervisor.
- Through satisfactory completion of an exit requirement (comprehensive exam, project or thesis), students must demonstrate mastery of skills in the eight core areas of counseling defined by CACREP:
  - Human Growth and Development
  - Counseling Theory
  - Counseling Technique
  - Group Counseling
  - Lifespan Development
  - Research
  - Service Delivery
  - Cultural Foundations and Ethics

## **Community Agency Counseling**

### **Standards & Goals**

The community agency counseling program serves to prepare counselors who meet all state standards for licensing, provide effective services in agencies and private practice, and are skilled in clinical assessment, diagnosis and treatment.

To that end, program faculty established four program goals which have not changed since initially conceived. These goals are as follows:

5. Students will demonstrate skill in delivering counseling services by completing projects/assignments in field settings.
6. Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of program coursework in meeting exit requirement.
7. Students will demonstrate application of coursework knowledge to licensure requirements.
8. Students will demonstrate aptitude for understanding and using counseling skills with diverse populations in urban communities.

### **Outcomes**

Related outcomes as noted in our 2000 CACREP Report follow; these have not changed since initially derived by program faculty:

- The state standards for agency counselors changed this year when the state dropped the Professional Counselor Licensure Exam (PCLE) and adopted the National Certified Counselor Exam (NCC). We are coaching students in the NCC using informal seminars and will review the data after a year.
- Our students are assessed in laboratory (EDE 684) and internship (EDE 686 & EDE 687) in their ability to deliver effective agency services. Since 1999 the pass rate in these courses has been above 95% each year.
- Students' practical training occurs in urban or first ring sites with diverse clientele. Practical assessment occurs in lab, practicum, and internship. The assessment in practicum and internship is done by the university instructor and on-site supervisor.
- Through successful completion of an exit requirement, students must demonstrate mastery of skills in the eight core areas of counseling defined by CACREP:
  - Human Growth and Development
  - Counseling Theory
  - Counseling Technique
  - Group Counseling
  - Lifespan Development
  - Research
  - Service Delivery
  - Cultural Foundations and Ethics
- In addition, students must demonstrate competence in the clinical counseling areas defined by state law as psychopathology, testing, diagnosis, assessment of mental and emotional disorders, and treatment of mental and emotional disorders. Toward this end we have one of the most comprehensive clinical course sequences in the state including 3 advanced testing courses, a psychopharmacology course, a course in personality theories and two courses in diagnosis.

### **General Issues Regarding both the School and Agency Counseling Programs**

While it is not popular with many accrediting bodies, the way we assess students in core and clinical areas is by actually grading work students produce in courses that cover the areas and then assigning grades for each assignment and at the end of the course. NCATE seems to think this quaint and unimportant but CACREP still emphasizes grades. If we can reach agreement across accrediting bodies that course work and grades are meaningless and dated rituals we will happily do away with such atavistic practices. We also look to the pass rate on comprehensive exams as well as the licensing exams for further evaluation of the students understanding of the core areas.

The design of courses is almost totally dictated by CACREP. For example, in our last visit CACREP said we could not have separate human development courses for child, adolescent and adult development but that we had to have a lifespan course. To get accredited we designed and implemented ALD 603 (*Lifespan Development*). The same holds true with practicum. CACREP said we had to add a Practicum course and it had to be three hours. Thus was CNS 680 born, our new counseling practicum course. While NCATE is concerned with assessment, CACREP is more demanding in actually specifying a certain course structure and sequence.

## **Research**

What indirect and direct evidence have you gathered to determine if goals and outcomes are being met?

Well the direct evidence is:

- Student grades and progress in courses. Once a semester all faculty report on each student in each of their courses in program meetings.
- Student pass rates on comprehensive exams. These are reviewed in program meetings.
- Student pass rates on State Licensure Test for School Counseling. These are annually compiled by Education Student Services, sent to the Department Chair who then sends them on to program faculty for review.
- Student evaluations of courses. Reviewed each semester by individual faculty and Department Chair.
- We also have a proud history of publishing and presenting with our students. Students were involved in 4 faculty publications last year.

Indirect measures include:

- Exit surveys completed by students at the end of the program.
- Follow-up or alumni surveys completed by students one year after leaving the program.
- A yearly focus group meeting with students was also instituted in Fall 2004.

The instruments we use for end-of-program and follow up surveying of graduates were developed by faculty and Education Student Services in response to CACREP's and NCATE's demands that we have such surveys.

Beyond these surveys, we get calls and cards from students saying they are gainfully employed and think fondly of their time with us. We have had very few lawsuits threatened and none carried forward to the litigation phase. Site supervisors report being happy with our students in practicum and internship. Most faculty seem to be able to sleep at night.

## **Findings**

Findings for identified goals as they relate to specific outcomes are tabled in Status Report #9 which can be found at the conclusion of this narrative. The findings are annually reviewed by faculty, the program coordinator and the department chair. The biggest problem is low "n" on the year-out follow up survey. We have gradually increased this number by emphasizing the importance of the follow-up through our national counseling society Chi Sigma Iota.

## **Review**

Faculty review student progress twice a year and once a year an open meeting with students is held to update them on changes in the program. The annual meeting with students also serves as a focus group for getting their feedback on program issues. The first of these student meetings was held in 2004 and we are continuing fall semester 2005.

## **Actions**

The biggest actions taken in the past year was the introduction of the practicum course (CNS 680) in response to CACREP requirements for community agency counseling and the open student meeting with focus groups. We began an initiative to raise the pass rate on the PCLE but the state then opted to change its requirement of the PCLE for licensure in community agency counseling to the NBCC exam (National Board for Certified Counselors) so we must wait until a crop of students take the new exam to see how prepared they are.

NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION STUDENT ASSESSMENT PLAN  
 2005 College of Education and Human Services Status Report #8

Program: M.Ed. in Counseling (School & Community Agency)

PROGRAM GOALS	RELATED OUTCOMES & MEASURES	N	RESULTS	REVIEW, ACTIONS & IMPROVEMENTS
#1 - Students will demonstrate skills in delivering counseling services by completing projects/assignments in field settings.	At least 90% of students will complete activities identified in counseling program practicum/ internship course (EDE 685/686/687) with a grade of "S".	76	100% passed with grade of "S" although 4 dropped the course.	No action required
#2 - Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of program coursework in meeting exit requirement.	Pass rate should be 90% or better on comprehensive exams. Theses and projects will be completed in less than one year.	10 CAC 33 CNS	83% passed 94% passed 3 projects/thesis completed on schedule	The state changed the Agency Counseling exam this year moving to the NCC exam so we will coach students in preparing for the NCC now and reassess next year after reviewing the pass rates.
#3 - Students will demonstrate application of coursework knowledge to licensure requirements.	Pass rate on PRAXIS Specialty Area examination should be at least 90%.	41	100% passed.	No action required
#5 - Students will demonstrate aptitude for understanding and using counseling skills.	At least 90% of students will receive "S" grade in introductory laboratory course, EDE 684.	58	100% received "S" grades	No action required