



GRADUATE PROGRAM
IN COUNSELING

Program Outcomes Report for 2021-2022 Academic Year

I. Program Updates

The Graduate Program in Counseling is grateful to have a strong faculty and staff, as well as students who are making an impact during their times as students and after. Among the faculty there were some changes in program leadership roles. Dr. Carol McGinnis moved from Track Coordinator of Clinical Mental Health to the Chair of Admissions and Retention. Dr. Maya Georgieva became Track Coordinator for CMH along with retaining her role as co-advisor for the honor society. Dr. Stephanie DePalmer is the other co-advisor and will also chair the Advisory Council. Dr. Kristi Mouttet continues as Marriage, Couple and Family track coordinator and as Chair of the Remediation Committee. Dr. Andrea' Burden, Dr. Tracey Duncan, Dr. Sarah Brant-Rajahn support her on that committee, with Dr. Brant-Rajahn also serving as Track Coordinator for School Counseling. Dr. Leah Clarke has taken on the role of program Director, with gratefulness to long time director Dr. Heather Barto who remains as a core faculty member in the School Counseling track. The counseling program has been honored to have one of our own, Dr. Marcelle Giovannetti, serve as the University's Chair of the Ranked Faculty for 22-23. The staff, Rebecca Grodkiewicz, Amy Cook, and Rebecca Yohe, were happy to welcome Linda Gemberling as the new School Counseling Placement Coordinator.

In July 2022, faculty, staff, and students were excited to be back on campus for our first intensive course since the pandemic. We will continue to offer the July intensive as an in person experience, and our January intensive courses will continue as an online option.

Also new this year was the addition of the Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy course to our offerings. The curriculum for this course is a step towards certification as a Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapist when licensed and we are the first university to offer it as a course.

Select faculty presentations and publications:

Publications:

Edirmanasinghe, N.A., Attia, M., **Brant-Rajahn, S.**, & Staton, R.A. (2022, June). Working with immigrant children in schools: Applying a multi-tiered approach. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Counseling*. doi: 10.1080/23727810.2022.2074771

Brant-Rajahn, S.N., Gibson, E.M., Cook Sandifer, M.I. (Ed.) (2022, May). *Developing, delivering, and sustaining school counseling practices through a culturally affirming lens*. IGI Global, with a chapter by **Dr. Stephanie DePalmer** and **Arwa Nye (now Livick)** entitled *Restorative Practice: Moving from Harm to Healing*

Giovannetti, M. (2022) Preventing counselor burnout in an unjust world. *Counseling Today*, 65 (3), www.counseling.org

McGinnis C. (2022). Religious and spiritual implications in functional anger. *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling : JPCC*, 15423050221117765. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15423050221117765>

Presentations:

Georgieva, M. & Savova-Grigороva, N. (2022). Healing and community building through Bread Therapy. An education session presented at the ACA 2022 Virtual Conference. October 2022.

II. Mission

Our mission, as a Christ-centered program, is to educate invested and caring individuals who will serve in a variety of settings as counselors characterized by integrity, humility, skillfulness, and understanding. We desire that these professionals will be leaders who facilitate healing, growth, reconciliation and spiritual well-being for diverse people.

III. Student Data/Vital Statistics

CMHC = Clinical Mental Health Counseling (MA)

SCH = School Counseling (MA)

MCFC = Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling (MA)

CAGS = Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (not CACREP accredited)

A. Enrollment (End of Academic Year 21-22 Snapshot)

CMHC	SCH	MCFC	TOTAL
164	47	45	256

B. Graduates (December 2021 to August 2022)

CMHC	SCH	MCFC	TOTAL
32	15	23	70

C. Completion Rate* (Master's students who completed the program)

CMHC	SCH	MCFC
62.9%	72.2%	73.2%

* 3-year average of completion rates for students who began in 2013, 2014, and 2015 fiscal years

D. National Counselor Exam (NCE) 2020-2021 Academic Year

Historically, students in all three tracks of the Counseling program have taken the National Counselor Exam before graduation.

	Tested	Passed	Pass Rate
Fall 21	24	22	92%
Spring 22	36	35	97%

Pass rates by track: School Counseling 6 of 6 (100 %), Marriage Couple and Family Counseling 19 of 21 (90%), and Clinical Mental Health Counseling 32 of 33 (97%)

E. Praxis II

Professional School Counselor exam required of School Counseling students in order to become certified school counselors in Pennsylvania.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, 100% of the students who took the Praxis II exam passed.

F. Job Placement Rate for graduates of Master’s programs 6 or more months after degree completion in counseling positions (based on 2021 Alumni Survey). Excludes those not seeking counseling positions.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling N= 31	School Counseling N=17	Marriage Couple and Family Counseling N=5
100%	100%	100%

IV. Demographics

A. Counseling Student by Gender and Ethnicity, snapshot at the end of 2022 academic year (Master’s only):

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS	
GENDER	
Female	151
Male	36
ETHNIC BACKGROUND	

Asian / Asian-American	7
Black / African-American	30
Hispanic, Latino/a, inc. Spain	19
Multi-Ethnic / 2 or more races	10
White / Non-Hispanic	187

- B. Geography:** The Counseling Program has students in 31 U.S. states and two additional countries. Pennsylvania has the most students with 194. Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, Colorado, Washington, North Carolina, Texas, New York and Florida have the next most students.

V. Program Learning Outcomes

Every year the program evaluates student learning outcomes in the areas outlined in our Program Objectives. Each of these objectives is aligned with a Graduate Learning Outcomes (GLO) defined by Messiah University.

Program Objective 1. To provide students with the specific knowledge and skills required of clinical mental health counselors, school counselors, or marriage, couple and family counselors as delineated by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

This year we assessed learning in the core curriculum areas of Human Growth and Development Helping Relationships. COUN 510: Lifespan Development is the main course where the former area is covered. Ninety percent of students met the target (grade B or above) on the Developmental Issues in Counseling paper, with some noted discrepancies in grading trends across faculty. The guidelines for the paper have changed over the last few years and it may no longer be capturing learning of developmental theories as it once was. **Action steps: The program director spent part of a department meeting reviewing grading philosophy, practices, and logistics and discussing faculty experiences with grading. It is hoped this will aid in increasing grading consistency across the program. The director will also meet with the course steward of the COUN 510 course to review the paper and re-align it with the learning objectives. This paper could be an opportunity to incorporate more content related to counseling children and adolescents which is something that students expressed they wanted on the exit survey.** Another area of learning about human growth is promoting wellness. This objective is assessed in three different courses across 4 different assignments. It appears in this area too, the assignments have drifted somewhat and may not reflect a focus on wellness as in the past. **Action steps: The director will meet with the stewards of the three courses impacted to determine better ways to assess this objective and incorporate content on wellness.** The final objective in this core area relates to the effect of disasters and crises. On the discussion board in 510 on this topic most students met the target and 100% of students got a B or better on the Crisis Quiz in 501. **Action Steps:** The crisis quiz was modified in the fall of 2022 to make it more challenging and ensure students are using course materials to complete it.

For the core area of Helping Relationships, student learning is assessed in the three skills courses (501, 520, and 540) as well as Internship II/Secondary Internship. For the objective related to knowledge of theories, 98% of students rated themselves at least moderately knowledgeable about counseling theories and 97% met the targets for the quizzes and discussions related to counseling theories in 520. This appears to be an area of strength. In terms of choosing theory-based interventions which is evaluated in 520, the rubric for the Mock Counseling Video #2 does reflect knowledge of theories but not as much theory based treatment planning. **Action steps: Director will meet with stewards of 520 and 540 to determine which courses meet which objectives related to use of the theory in counseling.** In terms of building relationships with clients, 100% of students met the “demonstrating empathy” target on their 501 mock counseling videos. 100% of students also rated themselves as moderately knowledgeable or above on building rapport with clients. 97% of students received an overall grade of B or better on their demonstration of counseling skills in 501- students that do not receive a B or better on their video assignments must work on these competencies in the remediation process. Site supervisors’ evaluations of students in internship II/Secondary Internship were positive in the skills section of the final evaluations.

Data related to learning in the three tracks was also collected and will be reviewed in Spring 2023.

Program Objective #2: To prepare students to understand, evaluate and engage in scholarship related to the field of counseling.

The first objective in this area relates to understanding different types of research. 89% of students met the targets in these areas. 100% of students met the target related to evaluating counseling research. Our newest faculty member, Tracey Duncan, has taken over the oversight of this course and has been providing extra supports for students on the major assignments that relate to these objectives. For the objective related to program evaluation, 94% of students met the target but only 73% of students rated themselves “Moderately Knowledgeable” or above in regard to program evaluation on the exit survey. Because program evaluation is largely covered in one course and not spread throughout the curriculum this is perhaps not surprising. Faculty will review the new CACREP Standards for 2024 to see which relate to program evaluation and reshape the curriculum as needed. Ninety-three percent of students met target for the ethics in research objective and 100% met the target for the multiculturalism in research objective. All students continue to attend a professional conference before they graduate as a part of meeting this objective. We have continued to allow students to attend online conferences, a change that was began in 2020, to meet this requirement as long as the conference is put on by a counseling organization or academic counseling department. Overall students are demonstrating competency in the area of research engagement in a way that is meaningful for professional counselors.

Program Objective #3: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the process and requirements for the credentials (licensure and/or certification) they wish to pursue.

All students met the target related to understanding the licensure or certification process and 92% of students rated themselves “moderately knowledgeable” or above on the exit survey for knowledge in this area. As noted above our students have high rates of employment and exam pass rates which are important pathways for the licensure and certification process. From the 2022 Alumni Survey we see that all but one alumnus who participated was pursuing or had achieved licensure or certification. Most students were pursuing professional counselor licensure or school counseling certification and five were pursuing a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist credential. A majority of participating alumni had become Nationally Certified Counselors. 100% of students were given an overall rating of satisfactory or above by their site supervisors in Internship II/Secondary Internship. Many students on the alumni survey

reported being hired by a field experience site. It is satisfying to see students' progress in the profession from field experiences, to exams, employment, and licensure.

Program Objective #4 was not evaluated in 21-22.

Program Objective #5: To guide students toward an ethical practice of counseling that is grounded in professional and spiritual values.

100% of students rated themselves as “moderately knowledgeable” or above on the exit survey related to ethics. In Internship II/Secondary Internship, site supervisors rated students positively on the 5 questions related to ethical behavior and knowledge. For assignments related to knowledge of ethics and ethical decision making, students met the targets in a range from 88-100%. For the objectives related to students understanding the intersection between personal values and ethics, they met the targets at a rate between 93-96%. Our assessment measures for the ethics of self-care were not able to be utilized this year. **Action Steps: We will re-implement assessment of self-care/ethics objectives. There is a new ethics textbook being used in the Professional Orientation and Ethics course starting in July 2023 and this will be a good opportunity to ensure our instructional design in that area is aligned with our objectives.**

Program Objective #6: To help a diverse student body become self-reflective leaders who understand and address how issues of discrimination, privilege and oppression impact the practice and policies of counseling in a multicultural society.

One of our objectives in this area is to recruit a diverse student body. In terms of racial diversity, as noted above, our students who identify as a race other than white has reached 35%. On our exit survey, we ask two questions related to a sense of belonging and respect for cultural identity. 93% of students reported satisfactory or above on these two questions. In our January Professional Orientation course (501) only 70% of students met the target on the objective related to the counseling profession's commitment to multiculturalism. **Action Step: Examine how the content related to this objective is being delivered in 501, and make revisions for July 2023. We will reassess students' performance on that objective.** For the ethics portion of the Multicultural course (COUN 511), 100% of students met the targets on both objectives. Site supervisors rated Internship II/Secondary students positively on the questions related to cultural competence. 100% of students rated themselves as moderately knowledgeable or above on the exit survey related to cultural issues on counseling. In terms of the objectives related to advocacy, 95% met the target on their advocacy projects and 98% reported themselves “moderately knowledgeable” or above on the exit survey in regard to advocacy.