

Annual Report Academic Year 2016-2017

Summary

The Counseling Department at WFU continues our mission of preparing helpers so needed in our world. Our courses are current and well received by our student audiences. Our faculty members excel both in teaching and in contributing to our department, university and larger communities. Our students graduate and have been very successful at finding employment, often before they complete their programs. For example in our August and December online cohorts fifty percent had jobs when they finished. We will maintain our efforts to continue these successes and also want to continue our momentum.

For now, we want to increase our online offerings, both in the undergraduate summer school arena and as elective courses for our students and professional development opportunities for practitioners. We would like to add more undergraduate courses and prepare another proposal for moving to a major in Health and Human Services. Those conversations continue.

We are a presence in the world. We have students residing in 43 different states, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and one in South Korea. Our position as the first fully online program at Wake for the past 5 years has resulted in most of us becoming excellent problem solvers. Our past and future successes emerge from the spectacular staff, faculty and students who comprise the Department of Counseling and the support we have been given.

Program Goals and Achievements

a) Learning Outcomes Assessment.

Our learning outcomes assessment supports the belief that our programs are fulfilling our mission. Our students master content and apply it to real-life settings. Additionally the self-report we are writing for our accrediting body has solidified that conclusion. We are in the process of implementing software packages that will allow us to track and analyze that data more thoroughly.

Our annual program evaluation is based on our mission statement and program objectives. As such, we assessed the following student learning outcomes:

- 1) Students will acquire knowledge and skills to practice ethically
- 2) Students will develop self-awareness and understanding of impact on others.
- 3) Students will develop skills that are reflective of effective practitioners

Results of our assessment of these three student learning outcomes showed that our students are meeting and exceeding the benchmarks that we set. This means that, on average, our students are learning to practice ethically, develop self-awareness and cultural competence, and demonstrate effective counseling skills. Our goals based on these findings are to a) sustain the progress that we have made, as we continue to grow throughout the country and with the addition of new faculty, and b) to broaden the scope of our program evaluation, including new measures and indicators of progress, using software programs, such as a student portfolio system and a clinical training management system. A third goal is to stay on top of current trends in the field, particularly in reference to integrated care, and devise ways to teach ethical practice, cultural competence, and skills development in interdisciplinary settings.

Program Modifications/Changes

We continue to refine the delivery of our graduate degree programs and our undergraduate minor. Last year we added 3 elective courses to the graduate programs. This year all of those were revised and have been better subscribed this summer – from 6 students in one course to 18 and 13 students in 2 of the courses. As part of the online delivery each of the 24 courses is revised each time it is offered and refreshed every third time it is offered. The committee that oversees the undergraduate minor has designed a timeline and content for hopefully moving that to a major within the next two years. One or two new undergraduate courses will be proposed in the coming academic year. Another important change to our program was the review and revision of new program objectives. These new program objectives can be viewed on our webpage.

b) Student and graduate accomplishments.

Our students are awesome. Fourteen of them have presented at professional conferences this past academic year. Two have received Richter Scholarships to study abroad and one was chosen for a prestigious, competitive national award. She wrote us saying "Just wanted to thank you again for all of your help and let you know that I got a call last week letting me know that I was chosen as one of the NBCC Minority Fellowship Master's Addiction Counseling Fellows!!! Couldn't have done it without all that I've gained from Wake's Counseling Program, the supportive staff and my terrific cohort!! Thanks so much!!"

c) Research, scholarship, and/or creative productivity in the department.

Counseling Department faculty members are active professionals. They had 19 articles published in refereed journals, 5 book chapters and 4 books. One person had two photography exhibits. Faculty members also had 72 professional presentations across the year. Some did media interviews with NPR as well as local outlets and one produced a training video marketed across the counselor education field.

The strengths of this amount of productivity are the production and refinement of knowledge for counselors and practitioners. Our faculty member are curious and always investigating big ideas as well as disseminating their knowledge. Our faculty members respond to Wake's high standard for research and scholarship involvement and senior faculty model balancing those expectations with strong teaching and community engagement. Two faculty members, Nate Ivers and Phil Clarke, were awarded tenure and promotion in May, demonstrating their expertise in their specialty areas. Our faculty members are being invited to collaborate and are working across universities on various research projects related to topics such as addictions counseling, supervision, integrated care and others.

d) Community engagement and outreach efforts

Again the department engages significantly in several ways. Each residency our online students spend a Saturday morning volunteering at a local community agency. Some of those locations include the Salvation Army, The Children's Home, SECU Family House, the Shepherd Center, Open Arms, Goler Gardens, SCAN and Campus Kitchen. Our students may prepare food, participate in a Christmas party, set up a pharmacy facility, deliver food, paint or plant a garden among many other activities the sites need. This effort has become so popular that we cannot meet the requests we receive. Dr. Cashwell invited students in her life span development class to work in some of the subsidized housing communities during fall semester. Dr Clarke has worked with students who become supports for residents of senior living facilities. Other students have volunteered in schools as tutors.

Faculty members also contribute. Some examples of those activities include outreach groups for ex-offenders who need help with job searches, work with cancer survivors, with church groups, with the Department of Public Instruction and with Care Net bilingual counselors. Two faculty have been interviewed by media on current topics such as election results and military families and many have been invited by local providers to share their expertise. Most do that without compensation.

e) Diversity Action Plan

We have created, modified and ratified a Diversity Action Plan for our department. As with other matters highlighted in this report, next year we will create a process for monitoring these efforts across time.

The immediate impact of the DAP was our hiring two new faculty from underrepresented groups, African American and Latino.

f) Connections to Graduate School's mission to "train and mentor future leaders in research, teaching, and innovation for serving humanity."

Indubitably our graduates serve humanity through the profession of counseling. Our sixty-hour program is based on international accreditation standards and after successful completion of it, students are eligible to sit for the national examination required to start their license application. So far, all have passed that exam. The master's degree is the entry level for counselors across the United States but about 20% of our students eventually seek a doctoral degree which we believe is another indication of their leadership and innovation. They are being hired in schools, hospitals, community mental health agencies, prisons, the Veteran's Administration and many other counseling settings. Many receive job offers before they finish.

g) Graduate program's yearly student exit surveys

The student exit surveys indicate we have delivered programs and courses students overwhelmingly rate as satisfactory or very satisfactory. Graduates rated faculty highly and noted expertise and accessibility as strengths of our department members. Students said they would take the programs again and that they would recommend the programs to others seeking a graduate degree.

While some of the comments about courses being better aligned and helping military receive federal benefits deserve further consideration, I believe it is fair to say we have been successful with the great majority of graduates in the 2015-2016 year.

Strategic Plan

Our foremost strategy for the coming year must focus on all efforts needed to be awarded a favorable accreditation decision. While the self-report is due in July, we will need to respond to the written assessment of our program before we will be considered for an on-site visit. After the site visit, we will have to address the report findings. Thus this process will not be completed until July 2018.

Our other excitement next year will be welcoming 3 new faculty. Two of them have some experience in higher education institutions and one does not. We are excited about these additions to our department and the contributions they will bring.

We would also like to add some courses next year and hope with new faculty our capacity will allow that. We would like to develop two new graduate courses as electives – if we do get grant money, we would want to move to a certificate program in integrated care. If not, we will consider a slower move toward that goal. We would also like to add two more undergraduate courses, particularly a course in addictions.

