

IBHE Review Summary

- 1. Reporting Institution:** Eastern Illinois University
- 2. Program Reviewed:** M.S. in Counseling
- 3. Date:** January 4, 2012
- 4. Contact Person:** Richard Roberts, Ph.D., Chair; 217-581-2400; rroberts@eiu.edu; 217-581-7800 (fax).

5. Overview

The M.S. in Counseling provides dynamic graduate level curricula for students interested in obtaining certification as School Counselors or licensure as Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) and Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors (LCPC). Students currently choose a concentration either in Clinical or School Counseling, both fully accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). These concentrations lead to a terminal graduate degree and prepare students for employment either as School Counselors within K-12 school systems or as Clinical Counselors within mental health agencies. Students who complete the program are eligible to pursue a Ph.D./Ed.D. in Counselor Education, Counseling Psychology and other related fields.

Like other CACREP accredited counseling programs throughout the nation, we have increased our M.S. in Counseling from 48 to a 60 hour master's degree with a concentration in Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling. This is a mandated requirement by CACREP to maintain accreditation.

The Counseling program utilizes the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Department's learning goals, the Graduate School Student Learning requirements, and the College of Education and Professional Studies (CEPS) Advanced Program Unit Objectives to guide its curriculum.

The department has seen significant changes to the program since the last IBHE review. We have increased faculty and student research output, increased the number of hours for the degree, received two assessment awards, and secured First Choice Status from EIU's Graduate School. Graduate programs achieving First Choice have applied for and been subjected to rigorous review from EIU's Council on Graduate Studies – with oversight from the Graduate School to ensure they meet the highest stands of scholarly excellence as evidenced through sustained achievement of criteria developed and adopted by the council in 2006" (2011-2013 Graduate Catalog).

6. Major Findings and Recommendations

6.1 Description and assessment of any major changes in the program

The field of counseling continues to evolve reflecting changes in managed care, statutory law, school policy, and ethical guidelines. Although the department has been graduating students from its program since the 1950's, it too has been evolving to meet the current demands of clients/students. The mission of the Department of Counseling and Student Development is to provide a dynamic curriculum for students interested in obtaining certification as a School Counselor or License Professional Counselor (LPC) and

License Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC). To that end, in 1996 the department (formally the Department of Educational Psychology and Guidance) began the formal process to become accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) which was conferred in 1998. Since that time, we have moved from a 32 hour non-accredited program to a 48 hour CACREP accredited program. Recently, we have been awarded First Choice status by EIU and are preparing for reaccreditation under the new 60 hour program requirements. This will necessitate another name change as our clinical counseling program will be named Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Students continue to receive training in counseling skills and competencies commensurate with this accreditation. Depending on the concentration, the curriculum prepares students for either work as a school counselor within the K-12 school system or work in mental health agencies. Some students also decide to pursue additional studies in Ph.D. programs.

Since our last IBHE report, the program has achieved enormous progress toward our mission resulting in a name change, new mission, goals and objectives, a complete curriculum revision, a new sixty hour degree (M.S. in Counseling), new assessment measures, enhanced admission and retention policies, and a greater focus on achieving high standards for the program and its students. This commitment to excellence resulted in our being awarded First Choice status by EIU's Graduate School and requires sustaining excellence to ensure that future counseling students are highly prepared for professional practice.

The counseling field continues to be a growth oriented occupation. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that the counseling field is expected to "grow faster than the average for all occupations". Specifically, "job opportunities should be favorable because job openings are expected to exceed the number of graduates from counseling programs, especially in rural areas". Employment change is projected to increase by 18% through 2018. Employment for school counselors is expected to grow by 14%, which again is faster than the average of all occupations. According to the National Employment Matrix, projected employment for Mental Health Counselors should increase by 24% and employment for School Counselors by 14% through 2018. Median salaries for School Counselors in 2008 were \$51,000 and \$35,810 for Mental Health Counselors. In 2011 the State of Illinois had 21 school counseling positions unfilled.

Our department works very hard to maintain a productive and efficient program. In reviewing state data comparing similar programs in the state of Illinois, our department was lowest in costs per credit hour at \$333.35 compared to the highest at \$600.43. In 2010 our fall enrollment was lowest at 80 students compared to enrollments in other programs ranging from 104-117. However, our degrees conferred compared favorably at 54 degrees compared to the larger programs that conferred degrees ranging from 24-61. The data indicate we have a targeted number of students who we manage at a lower cost per unit while maintaining high graduation rates.

6.2. Description of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement;

The Counseling program utilizes the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Department's learning goals, the Graduate School Student Learning requirements, and the College of Education and Professional Studies (CEPS) Advanced Program Unit Objectives to guide its curriculum. Specifically, the program measures its success using the following six

objectives: 1) Candidates will display the required academic preparation and professional dispositions necessary to succeed in the graduate program in Counseling and Student Development; 2) Candidates will display evidence of skills in the areas of written, verbal, interpersonal and technological communication; 3) Candidates will display evidence of critical thinking and problem solving skills by demonstrating the application of theory to practice; 4) Candidates will display evidence of maintaining professional dispositions, academic rigor, and legal and ethical practice while in the program; 5) Candidates will display evidence of advanced scholarship through research and/or creative activity; and 6) Candidates will display evidence of content knowledge that meets or exceeds the criteria set forth by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP).

Learning Objective one is focused on **recruiting and training the very best graduate students**. As mentioned earlier, our admission process follows a comprehensive process that exemplifies best practices. As a result, the quality and diversity of our student population has increased. The data from 2006 to 2011 indicate an average of 98 applicants a year applied with 46 being accepted or a 48% acceptance rate.

Our second learning goal is that **Candidates will display evidence of skills in the areas of written, verbal, interpersonal and technological communication**. We measure this goal in the student's first semester during CSD 5500 (Research in Counseling), CSD 5510 (Professional Orientation) and CSD 5530 (Pre-Practicum). The data indicate that from 2006 to 2011 100% of our students have met our expectation in technology, 97% have met our expectation in written proficiency and 98% have met our expectation in verbal/interpersonal expression.

Our third learning goal is that **Candidates will display evidence of critical thinking and problem solving skills by demonstrating the application of theory to practice**. We measure this goal in the student's second semester during CSD 5630 (Practicum). The data indicate that over the last six years 97% of our students have met this expectation in critical thinking. Our extended practicum supervision has most likely led to high achievement in this area.

Our fourth learning goal is that **Candidates will display evidence of maintaining professional dispositions, academic rigor, and legal and ethical practice while in the program**. The CSD faculty meet once in fall and spring to review each student in the program to determine if students maintain departmental expectations on the Student Review Rubric (Motivational Appropriateness, Personal Maturity, Flexibility, Emotional Stability, Engagement in the Learning Process, Academic Rigor, and Legal and Ethical Behavior). Faculty rate their advisees based on personal observation and feedback from instructors and supervisors. Students who fall below expectations for the first time receive a warning and participate in an informal discussion with their advisor. Students identified a second time enter a formalized retention process to target needed change. The data indicate that over the last six years an average of 83 students per semester were reviewed with an average of 4 being warned and 0 being formally placed in retention.

Our fifth learning goal is that **Candidates will display evidence of advanced scholarship through research and/or creative activity**. We measure this goal in the student's first semester during CSD 5500 (Research). The data indicate that over the last six years 97% have met this expectation in advanced scholarship. Taking a sample from 2007-2009, students were involved in 25 presentations or publications, 33 clinical presentations (non-refereed), 4 projects, and were awarded 28 grants and/or awards to present their research.

Our sixth learning goal is that **Candidates will display evidence of content knowledge that meets or exceeds the criteria set forth by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP)**. We measure this goal using a variety of input measures including a comprehensive exam, exit, alumni, supervisor and employer surveys. See attachment “A” for a summary of the data.

A review of the latest comparative test data from the National Certification Exam which is used for state licensure shows our students had a 100% pass rate and had mean scores higher than the national mean scores on all core CACREP areas. Likewise, our mean scores were higher than other CACREP and non-CACREP mean scores. In addition, our school counselors have a 100% pass rate on the Certification exam for the last 10 years with the exception of one student.

| CACREP Areas | CSD Results | Nat'l Results |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Human Growth/Dev | 8.67 | 7.08 |
| Social/Cultural Foun | 6.78 | 6.31 |
| Helping Relationships | 26.28 | 20.95 |
| Group Work | 13.94 | 11.85 |
| Career & Lifestyle Dev | 12.17 | 10.33 |
| Appraisal | 14.28 | 11.27 |
| Research/Program Eval | 11.11 | 7.74 |
| Prof Orientation/Ethics | 23.06 | 20.18 |

As attachment “A” indicates, our students, alumni, supervisors and employers are mostly satisfied with our program. We are happy with the trend in our curriculum development and overall direction of the program. As a result of the data, we have made the following changes: 1) continue to improve our data collection resulting in 2nd and 1st place finishes in the Provost’s assessment award; 2) become more intentional in improving Research, Assessment and Career Counseling. Research Methods now includes a lab component for more data analysis and clinical and school students will now take separate assessment and career classes; 3) faculty have developed two new school classes (CSD 5941, 5942) to cover material requested by alumni and employers including PSAT/SAT, Plan, RTI, PBIS and College Career Counseling; and 4) we will continue to focus efforts on assisting students with their first position. Lastly, we increase our clinical internship class from 6 to 9 hours resulting in 900 hours of supervised experience.

6.3 Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices and curricular changes

Since our last IBHE review, the department has increased efforts to strengthen the quality, diversity, and internationalization of the department’s student body by attracting candidates who have the potential for academic and professional achievement and who complete degrees and succeed as alumni.

The department utilizes a well-focused series of annual recruitment tools that include web based video and print material distributed via multiple platforms. As a result, the department attracts a broad range of students characterized by diversity and high quality. For example, the program has achieved an average of 103 applications over the last three years and made admission offers on average of 44% of those applicants. On average, 88% accepted those offers. The average diversity rate of 10% exceeds the average rate of 8% for all graduate programs at EIU and 6% diversity rate of the College of Education and Professional Studies.

Due to the excellence of our recruitment class, assistantships/scholarships/awards have increased since the last IBHE report. We award 6-8 graduate assistantships yearly and 16-17 assistantships have been issued to our students from other departments including several off-campus (external assistantships). In addition, the program hosts two internal awards given annually, and secured competitive awards outside the department including the Presidential Graduate Assistantship and the Betty Wright Downing Scholarship.

The graduation rate averages 37 students per year with most completing the degree in the scheduled two year time. The program attempts to track graduate placements and has documented evidence of placements in multiple states and several doctoral programs.

The actions taken since our last review have been summarized as follows:

- Received 8 year accreditation from CACREP.
- Chair of the department was awarded 2004 Chair Leadership Award by EIU.
- Awarded 2nd place in Provost's Assessment Award.
- Awarded Graduate Leadership Award.
- Awarded 1st place in Provost's Assessment Award.
- Awarded Frist Choice status by EIU's Graduate School
- Completed Mt. Vernon Off-Campus cohort and recently initiated a new School Counseling cohort at Parkland College in Champaign.
- Secured Presidential Graduate Assistantships which are competitive assistantships focusing on support for the teaching mission of the university.
- Completed three National Searches and one internal search resulting in three new tenure-track faculty hired and one new annually contracted faculty member hired.
- Changed program requirements to 60 semester hours for Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling, aligning curriculum with CACREP standards.
- Developed new course entitled CSD 5941 (Emerging Issues in School Counseling) and CSD 5942 (School Counseling: Consultation and Collaboration).
- Maintained Counseling Workshop for area alumni and professionals.
- Added a one hour lab component to Research Methods class.
- Increased internship experience from 600 to 900 hours of supervised experience.
- Increased student research production.

6.4 Description of actions taken as a result of this review, including instructional resource and practices, and curricular changes.

In anticipation of our upcoming accreditation visit and the IBHE program review, we revised the following course syllabi to meet CACREP and the new Illinois State standards.

- CSD 5500 – Research Methods
- CSD 5510 – Professional Orientation
- CSD 5520 – Theories of Counseling
- CSD 5530 – Pre-Practicum
- CSD 5600 – Cross-Cultural Counseling
- CSD 5610 – Human Development for Counselors
- CSD 5620 – Group Counseling
- CSD 5630 – Practicum
- CSD 5900 – Appraisal
- CSD 5920 – Career Counseling
- CSD 5930 – Foundations of Clinical Counseling
- CSD 5940 – Foundations of School Counseling
- CSD 5941 – Emerging Issues in School Counseling (NEW)
- CSD 5942 – School Counseling, Collaboration and Consultation (NEW)
- CSD 5945 – Management of School Counseling Programs (new number)
- CSD 5960 – Family Counseling
- CSD 5970 – Counseling the Chemically Dependent
- CSD 5980 – Clinical Diagnosis and Treatment Planning
- CSD 6900 – Supervised Experience (new name)
- CSD 6920 – Supervised Experience (new names)

Attachment A

Average Percentage of Student Exit Interviews and Alumni, Supervisor and

Employer Surveys for Clinical Counseling 2007-2011

| School Counseling: Program Objectives | Required Courses | % Objective Was Met |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Professional Identity | CSD 5510 | 96% |
| 2. Social and Cultural Diversity | CSD 5600 | 90% |
| 3. Human Growth and Development | CSD 5610 | 94% |
| 4. Career Development | CSD 5920 | 86% |
| 5. Helping Relationships | CSD 5530 | 98% |
| 6. Group Counseling | CSD 5620 | 97% |
| 7. Appraisal | CSD 5900 | 82% |
| 8. Research | CSD 5500 | 82% |
| 9. Overall Knowledge and Skills | | 93% |
| 10. Assistance seeking first position | | 52% |
| 11. Overall Evaluation of the Program | | 97% |

| Clinical Counseling: Program Objectives | Required Courses | % Objective Was Met |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Professional Identity | CSD 5510 | 97% |
| 2. Social and Cultural Diversity | CSD 5600 | 96% |
| 3. Human Growth and Development | CSD 5610 | 91% |
| 4. Career Development | CSD 5920 | 74% |
| 5. Helping Relationships | CSD 5530 | 91% |
| 6. Group Counseling | CSD 5620 | 70% |
| 7. Appraisal | CSD 5900 | 72% |
| 8. Research | CSD 5500 | 67% |
| 9. Overall Knowledge and Skills | | 85% |
| 10. Assistance seeking first position | | 62% |
| 11. Overall Evaluation of the Program | | 91% |