

# **Pastoral Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program**

## **Neumann University**

### **2019-20 Annual Report**

The Pastoral Clinical Mental Health Counseling (PCMHC) Program at Neumann University is a 60-credit, CACREP accredited master's program. The program is evaluated in a variety of ways, including a program assessment plan, demographic data on applicants, students, and graduates, and data from follow-up studies of key stakeholders. Program outcomes are evaluated through a Program Assessment Plan, created in conjunction with the Office of Institutional Research. The Program Assessment Plan systematically evaluates program objectives with related CACREP standards over the course of three years. Key performance indicators are assessed for each course in the PCHMC program as well as aggregate data on student knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions. This report outlines the findings of the different evaluation measures from Summer 2019-Spring 2020, as well as program modifications and substantial program changes.

#### **Evaluation of Program**

##### **Program Assessment Plan Results**

The Program Assessment Plan is available on the program's website. Over the course of three years, each course in the program is assessed based on relevant learning outcomes. The plan measures student growth and learning using formative and summative assessments, while faculty are assessed based on IDEA course evaluations.

For Academic Year (AY) 2019-2020, 12 courses corresponding to eight key performance indicators were to be assessed. PCC 555: Perspectives on the Human Person was scheduled to be evaluated; however, due to scheduling changes, it was not offered during the last AY and will be evaluated during the subsequent academic year. The 11 courses that were assessed are as follows:

- PCC 505: Theology for Pastoral Identity
- PCC 720: Personality
- PCC 740: Pre-Clinical Preparation and Orientation
- PCC 750: Practicum
- PCC 770: Internship I
- PCC 771: Internship II
- PCC 781: Career Counseling
- PCC 785: Addictions
- PCC 786: Multicultural Counseling
- PCC 789: Trauma and Crisis
- PCC 799: Interdisciplinary Seminar

The results of the assessment were favorable. Eight of the courses met the criteria for all formative, summative, and indirect evidence measures. The formative assessment criteria for Pre-Clinical Orientation and Practicum were not met, but the indirect evidence measures were met. The formative assessment criteria for these courses involved students scoring a 2.5 or better on specific indices of a clinical skills matrix related to skills and professional dispositions. The scoring on the clinical matrix ranges from 1-3 or missing (1), developing (2), and proficient (3);

score of 2 or above is considered meeting expectations and passing. Despite not scoring 2.5 or better, 100% of students received a score of 2 on the relevant clinical matrix items.

Career Counseling met all the summative evidence measures but did not meet the formative measures or the indirect evidence measures. Only 50% of students scored at or above standards for the formative measurement. For the indirect evidence based on student evaluations, less than 70% of students who completed the evaluation evaluated themselves as obtaining moderate progress or better on essential and important objectives.

Faculty reviewed and discussed the assessment results. While the overall data was favorable, modifications were made in areas where the assessment measure was not met. Details on the changes are outlined in the section below on program modifications and changes.

### **Demographics and Other Characteristics**

Applicants to the PCMHC program represented diversity in regard to age, gender, citizenship, and racial/ethnic identity. The applicant pool from Summer 2019-Spring 2020 was comprised of 33 different individuals, including those who had partial applications and those who began their application but withdrew from the process. Of the 33 applicants, 11 individuals ultimately became enrolled in the program.

The average age of applicants was 36 years old. Around 73% of applicants (24) identified as female, whereas around 24% (8) identified as male, and 1 declined to answer. The majority of applicants (25) identified as U.S. citizens, and 8 applicants identified as permanent resident or foreign national. Of those that identified a race/ethnicity as based on the Department of Education classifications, 46% identified as White, 45% identified as Black or African American, 7% identified as Asian, and 3% identified as more than one race.

Demographic data on students enrolled is also collected. Of the 48 students in the program in AY 2019-2020, the majority (56%) were 35 years or older. Similar to the applicants to the program, 75% of students identified as female and 25% identified as male. Students reside in four different states, with 73% living in Pennsylvania, 17% living in Delaware, 6% living in New Jersey, and 4% living in Maryland. Using the categories provided by the Department of Education, 56% of students identified as White, 23% identified as Black or African American, 6% identified as Hispanic, 2% identified as two or more races, 2% identified as non-resident alien, and 5% did not identify their race/ethnicity.

### **Follow-Up Studies**

Neumann seeks feedback from graduates, employers, and supervisors of the program. Often, this feedback is restricted to recent graduates and their employers. In the past academic year, a longitudinal approach was taken and graduates within the last 15 years and their employers were surveyed. In addition, supervisors from the past academic year were also invited to partake in the study.

**Alumni responses.** An invitation to participate in a survey was sent to 198 email address for graduates of the program. A total of 54 individuals responded to the survey, and the majority (59%) graduated more than 5 years ago. A total of 5 (9%) of respondents graduated within the last year, 2 (4%) graduated 1 year ago, 3 (6%) graduated 2 years ago, 9 (17%) graduated 3 years ago, and 3 (6%) graduated 4 years ago.

Respondents were asked a variety of questions related to their current employment and licensure status. Regarding employment, 85% of respondents are currently employed. It is possible that some of the unemployed alumni are retired or were impacted by COVID-19. Of the 10 respondents who graduated within the last two years, all but one are currently employed. The majority of those who are employed (40 out of 46) reported they are either working in the mental

health field or a profession that utilizes their training from the program. Licensure status and intention was also a question for respondents; 45% are already licensed, 25% intend to pursue licensure, 21% do not intend to pursue licensure, and 9% are unsure.

Respondents were also asked to rate themselves on a 1-5 Likert-style scale on their accomplishment or ability related to 19 key program outcomes. The overwhelming majority of responses were positive, and the following outlines alumni rating:

<b>Professional Identity and Growth Outcomes</b> I am able to....	<b>Agree or Strongly Agree</b>
Understand the field of professional counseling.	96%
Recognize key ethical principles and use an ethical decision making model.	95%
Apply a theological reflection process to personal integration and therapeutic relationships.	96%
Provide skills and service in areas that entail advocacy, outreach and consultation.	85%
Recognize critical points of development and maturation in self and others.	96%
Demonstrate an openness to feedback that allows for self-examination, theologically-based reflection and articulation of pastoral/spiritual character.	94%
<b>Theoretical and Skills Outcomes</b> I am able to....	<b>Agree or Strongly Agree</b>
Work with diverse populations and support ongoing efforts to promote cultural awareness.	91%
Evidence knowledge of state and stage theories of lifespan development.	96%
Recognize the etiology, symptomology, progression of pathologies; understand effective treatment modalities.	91%
Apply knowledge of career assessment protocols and theories of career development.	75%
Identify a therapeutic orientation for engaging in assessments, interaction, and positive outcomes with clients.	92%
Apply, interpret, and/or analyze research writing, needs assessments, statistical results, and program evaluations.	79%
Employ strategies and interventions within group counseling settings.	85%
<b>Clinical Counseling Skills Outcomes</b> I am able to....	<b>Agree or Strongly Agree</b>
Formulate working diagnosis and treatment goals.	87%
Use therapeutic interventions within clear multicultural and ethical guidelines.	92%
Integrate spirituality and psychology in the assessment of various cases and therapeutic interactions.	96%
Demonstrate knowledge and use of theoretical approaches consistent with client issues.	94%
Attend to clients in empathic and non-judgmental way.	98%

Reflect theologically in counseling relationships that facilitate understanding their roles as pastoral counselor.	90%
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In addition to program outcomes, alumni were invited to rate their overall experience on a 1-5 Likert-style scale. The results were overall positive and detailed in the chart below.

<b>Experiences in Program</b>	<b>Good or Extremely Good</b>
Education	92%
Clinical experiences	92%
Process and preparation of becoming a counselor	88%
Faculty interaction	86%
Overall Experience	92%

**Employer responses.** Alumni were invited to provide contact information of an employer who could speak to their clinical skills or training. Of the 54 alumni who completed the survey, 22 email addresses were provided. A total of 6 individuals responded to the survey. The survey asked questions related to alumni's supervisory, interpersonal skills, professional behavior, and clinical skills. All employers reported they found as prepared or well prepared as compared to other counseling programs. In addition, 100% of employers stated they would hire another PCMHC graduate if there was an opening at their organization.

Half of the employers (3) had a Neumann alumnus working at their organization for 2 years or less, and the other half have employed a graduate for 3 or more years. Two employers indicated that the graduate had been an intern at their organization prior to becoming an employee. Supervisors were invited to rate alumni on different skills/behaviors from missing, developing, to mastered. None of the alumni were rated as "missing" on any of the skills. An "X" on the chart below indicates at least one employer endorsed their employee as being at that level of skill development.

<b>Supervisory and Interpersonal Skills</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
Receptive to feedback from supervisor and peers.	-	-	X
Initiates pertinent discussion in supervision.	-	-	X
Open to self-examination.	-	-	X
Communicates clearly.	-	-	X
<b>Professional Identity and Ethical Behavior</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
Respects confidential nature of counseling.	-	X	X
Recognizes and uses countertransference.	-	-	X
Maintains professional boundaries.	-	X	X
Reacts to situations in a professional manner.	-	-	X
<b>Clinical Assessment Skills</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
Formulates working diagnosis and treatment goals.	-	X	X
Attends to clients in empathetic and non-judgmental ways.	-	-	X
Has knowledge of and uses theoretical approaches.	-	-	X

Uses clinical skills consistent with their level of experience.	-	X	X
Identifies presenting problem and underlying issues.	-	X	X
<b>Documentation, Paperwork, and Time Management</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
Finishes paperwork and documentation in a timely manner.	-	X	X
Follows organizational policies, procedures, and protocols.	-	X	X

**Supervisor responses.** A total of 7 supervisors responded to the invitation to evaluate their experiences working with Neumann students. The supervisors responding to the evaluation included on-site supervisors and independent supervisors of students who were enrolled in practicum or internship in AY 2019-2020. An “X” on the chart below indicates at least one supervisor endorsed their supervisee as being at that level of skill development. All supervisors reported they would consider working with a Neumann student in the future.

<b>Supervisory and Interpersonal Skills</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
Receptive to feedback from supervisor and peers.	X	X	X
Initiates pertinent discussion in supervision.	-	X	X
Open to self-examination.	-	X	X
Communicates clearly.	-	X	X
<b>Professional Identity and Ethical Behavior</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
Respects confidential nature of counseling.	-	X	X
Recognizes and uses countertransference.	X	X	-
Maintains professional boundaries.	-	X	X
Reacts to situations in a professional manner.	X	X	X
<b>Clinical Assessment Skills</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
Formulates working diagnosis and treatment goals.	-	X	-
Attends to clients in empathetic and non-judgmental ways.	-	X	X
Has knowledge of and uses theoretical approaches.	-	X	X
Uses clinical skills consistent with their level of experience.	-	X	X
Identifies presenting problem and underlying issues.	X	X	X
<b>Documentation, Paperwork, and Time Management</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
Finishes paperwork and documentation in a timely manner.	-	X	X
Follows organizational policies, procedures, and protocols.	-	X	X

### Subsequent Program Modifications

The faculty engaged in a collaborative process of gathering and analyzing data for the program assessment plan. As a result, modifications to the assessment plan were identified. The first modification is the assessment criteria for the clinical courses. The assessment criteria were for 80% of students to receive a score of 2.5 or greater on identified matrix items. The matrix ranged from missing (1), developing (2), and proficient (3). Students are identified as passing if

they receive a score of 2 or above. Faculty noted an aggregate score of 2.5 or higher was an unrealistic expectation based on the developmental stage of students and the norms of grading processes among faculty. In addition, when faculty examined the specific items on the matrix being assessed, some of the assessment points were evaluating advanced skills and concepts. It was agreed to change the assessment criteria to 80% of students receive a score of 2 or higher and to better align the matrix items to course content and student development.

PCC 781: Career Counseling received the most negative evaluative feedback. Several modifications will be made to enhance students experience and learning outcomes. A fundamental change will occur in the delivery of the course; PCC 781 move from a fully online, asynchronous format to face-to-face instruction. The course will be also be reformatted to more strongly emphasize counseling and working with clients in a career counseling capacity.

Another programmatic modification is the of renaming of PCC 720: Personality to better align with course content, CACREP standards, and licensure board requirements. Historically, the course has covered all standards included in the CACREP core area of “Human Growth and Development” with an emphasis on the role of personality. As such, the new name of the course will be PCC 720: Personality and Human Development.

The final program modification is related to the delivery format of courses. Per academic year, the program previously offered 1-3 entirely online, asynchronous courses. Based on feedback from students and the assessment results, all courses in the program will be taught in the customary “web-enhanced” format of the program, where the majority of instruction happens face-to-face and less than 33% of course instruction is offered online or through alternative instructional equivalencies. Courses offered fully online due to COVID-19 will follow a similar format; the majority of instruction will happen synchronously and less than 33% of instruction will happen asynchronously or through alternative instruction.

### **Substantial Program Changes**

Programmatic changes will be implemented in AY 2020-21 as a result of the evaluation process. A major change in the program is the implementation of a new evaluation tool and process of assessing professional dispositions of students. The faculty gathered on multiple occasions to review their current evaluative practices, practices from other institutions, and professional norms. Building on the clinical matrix and previous evaluation practices, a new assessment of professional dispositions was created. Students will be evaluated using this new rubric at key points in their academic progression.

The program assessment plan also underwent significant changes. It was initially created in 2017 and had reached the end of its three-year cycle. Faculty met regularly during the 2019-2020 academic year to discuss the format and use of the assessment plan. The faculty built upon the foundations on the previous program assessment plan to create a new plan. The new plan has been reformatted for clarity, aiming to more clearly identify the program objectives and related CACREP standards being evaluated. In addition, parts of the plan were revised based on assessment data and faculty expertise, such as the modification in the assessment criteria for clinical courses.