**Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program**

**Neumann University**

**2023-24 Annual Report**

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) 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. This report outlines the findings of the different evaluation measures from summer 2023-summer 2024 as well as program modifications and substantial program changes.

**Evaluation of Program**

**Program Assessment Plan Results**

The Program Assessment Plan systematically evaluates program objectives with related CACREP standards. Key performance indicators are assessed for each course in the CMHC program as well as aggregate data on student knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions. Assessment data is obtained on each course every time it is offered, and all 20 courses were offered at least once during this evaluation cycle.

 The results of the assessment were favorable. Across the full year (summer 2023 to summer 2024), 20 individual courses were offered where data was able to be collected. Of those courses, 11 individual courses met all IDEA evaluative criteria. In one course, the minimum threshold was not met to report data. For the remaining eight courses, IDEA objectives were partially met. The faculty will review the IDEA criteria for each course that did not meet the objectives. The IDEA objectives may need to be revised to better address class content.

The results of the assessment were also favorable for the formative and summative objectives. All 20 courses met formative objectives. Out of the 20 courses offered, 16 also met the summative objectives. In the four courses that did not meet summative objectives, the assessments were all final examinations. According to the data, current students appear to struggle with taking tests and exams. Thus, a review of each exam will occur to assess each item and determine if problematic areas exist. Additionally, faculty will increase preparation for the exams in these courses.

**Demographics and Other Characteristics**

Applicants to the CMHC program represent diversity in regard to gender, citizenship, and racial/ethnic identity. The total applicant pool from summer 2023 to summer 2024 was comprised of 26 individuals, which includes only those students who completed an application and deposited into the program. Of the 26 applicants, a total of 23 became enrolled students in the program. Nearly all the prospective applicants (96%) identified as US citizens while one applicant identified as a foreign national. Twelve applicants identified as White (46%), nine (35%) identified as Black, two (7%) identified as Asian, one (about 4%) identified as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific, and two (7%) identified as Other. Seventeen (65%) of the applicants identified as female, while the remainder identified as male (35%).

Demographic data on students enrolled is also collected. The majority of students identify (78%) as female. Using the categories provided by the Department of Education, 50% of students identified as White, 28% identified as Black or African American and around five percent of students responded as unknown. Five percent of students identified as Hispanic and less than one percent of students identified as Asian, while an additional 5% identified as two or more races. Finally, less than one percent of students identified as Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander. Around three percent of current students are international students. Twenty-eight percent of students are veterans and less than three percent are active-duty military.

**Follow-Up Studies**

Neumann seeks feedback from graduates, employers, and supervisors of the program. This feedback is designed to assess outcomes related to the program objectives as well as solicit other feedback.

**Alumni responses.** An invitation to participate in a survey was sent to the graduates from summer 2023-summer 2024. Five alumni responded to the survey invitation and were invited to rate their experience of professional growth and identity, theoretical skills, and clinical counseling skills, on a 1-5 Likert-style scale. Four alumni are currently employed in the clinical mental health counseling field, and all indicated that they plan to pursue licensure. The results were positive overall and are detailed below.

*Professional Identity and Growth*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Measure | Strongly Agree or Somewhat Agree |
| Understand the field of professional counseling.  | 100% |
| Recognize key ethical principles and use an ethical decision-making model.  | 100% |
| Apply a theological reflection process to personal integration and therapeutic relationships.  | 100% |
| Provide skills and service in areas that entail advocacy, outreach, and consultation.  | 80% |
| Recognize critical points of development and maturation in self and others.  | 100% |
| Demonstrate an openness to feedback that allows for self-examination, theologically based reflection and others and articulation of pastoral/spiritual character.  | 100% |

*Theoretical Skills and Areas*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Measure | Strongly Agree or Somewhat Agree |
| Work with diverse populations and support ongoing efforts to promote cultural awareness.  | 100% |
| Evidence knowledge of state and stage theories of lifespan development.  | 100% |
| Recognize the etiology, symptomology, progression of pathologies, consider effective treatment modalities and report on persons dealing with these competently and comprehensively. | 80% |
| Identify an orientation to a major counseling theory that can allow student to create a framework for therapeutic assessments, interaction and outcomes that combine clinical skill and compassionate presence. | 100% |
| Apply knowledge of career assessment protocols and theories of career development for both selves and others seeking life directions. | 100% |
| Apply and interpret necessary methods and analyses in terms of research writing, needs assessment, statistical results and program evaluations. | 60% |
| Employ strategies and interventions for both small and large group dynamics that will allow clear communication within and among members and engage persons in healing practices. | 100% |

*Clinical Counseling Skills*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Measure | Strongly Agree or Somewhat Agree |
| Formulate working diagnosis and treatment goals. | 80% |
| Integrate the higher skills of therapeutic intervention within a clear multicultural and ethical guidelines for practice. | 100% |
| Demonstrate knowledge and use of theoretical approaches consistent with client issues.  | 80% |
| Integrate spirituality and psychology in the assessment of various cases and therapeutic interactions. | 100% |
| Attend to clients in empathic and non-judgmental way.   | 100% |
| Reflect theologically in counseling relationships that facilitate understanding role as Pastoral Counselor.  | 100% |

*Experiences in the Program*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Measure | Somewhat Good or Extremely Good |
| Education  | 80% |
| Clinical Experience  | 80% |
| Process and preparation of becoming a counselor  | 40% |
| Faculty Interaction  | 60% |
| Overall Experience  | 80% |

**Supervisor Responses**

Clinical supervisors of current students were asked to provide feedback on their experience, and a total of eight supervisors responded to the invitation to participate in the survey. Most participants felt “supported” in their role as a supervisor and on supervisor felt “somewhat supported.” All supervisors who responded stated they would be willing to work with Neumann students in the future. The supervisors responding to the evaluation included on-site supervisors and independent supervisors of students who were enrolled in practicum or internship in AY 2023-2024. The results were favorable, and the supervisees indicated that Neumann students were “developing” or “mastered” in most skills. The chart below reports the results of the 3-point Likert-type survey.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Supervisory and Interpersonal Skills**  | **Developing or Mastered** |
| Receptive to feedback from peers.  | 100% |
| Initiates pertinent discussion in supervision.  | 100% |
| Open to self-examination.  | 100% |
| Communicates clearly.  | 100% |
| **Professional Identity and Ethical Behavior**  | **Developing or Mastered**   |
| Respects confidential nature of counseling.  | 100% |
| Recognizes and uses countertransference.  | 100% |
| Maintains professional boundaries.  | 100% |
| Reacts to situations in a professional manner.  | 100% |
| **Clinical Assessment Skills**  | **Developing or Mastered** |
| Formulates working diagnosis and treatment goals.  | 100% |
| Attends in empathetic and non-judgmental ways.  | 100% |
| Has knowledge and uses theoretical approaches.  | 100% |
| Clinical skills are consistent with counselor’s level of experience.  | 100% |
| Identify presenting problem and underlying issues.  | 100% |
| **Documentation, Paperwork, and Time Management**  | **Developing or Mastered** |
| Finishes documentation and paperwork in a timely manner. | 85.7% |
| Follows organizational policies, procedures, and protocols.  | 85.7% |

**Employer responses.** Alumni were invited to provide contact information of an employer who could speak to their clinical skills or training. Only two individuals provided contact information, and one employer filled out the survey. Due to the low response rate, the date will be summarized rather than displayed via tables. The employer rated the alum as “mastered” in supervisory and interpersonal skills, professional identity and ethical behavior, clinical assessment skills, and documentation. Additionally, the employer rated the alum as “well-prepared” in comparison to graduates from other counseling programs.

**Subsequent Program Modifications**

The faculty engaged in a collaborative process of gathering and analyzing data for the program assessment plan. In the past year, faculty had the opportunity to update their IDEA and formative/summative assessments on the CMHC assessment plan to better fit class objectives. After feedback from the CACREP site visitors, the Academic Unit Leader began a review and update of the program’s assessment plan. The Academic Unit Leader has consulted with experts in the field and a new assessment plan will be completed by May 2025.

After collecting and analyzing data, the CMHC faculty discovered that some students are struggling to pass the final exams in a few courses (COUN 782, COUN 720 and COUN 781). In response to this data, the counseling faculty who teach these courses plan to perform an item analysis for each exam to explore problematic questions that can be re-written. Additionally, to assist our students with test-taking skills and preparation for the NCE, the CMHC department plans to require eligible students to take the CPCE in academic year 2025-2026 and annually moving forward.

In response to this year and previous alumni surveys, the CMHC department is continuing to plan a treatment and diagnosis course. The CMHC faculty plan to participate in a curriculum review in the near future to explore options for creating the space to add a treatment and diagnosis course. The CMHC faculty are also interested in adding another semester of internship to further prepare students to become counselors.

Finally, the CMHC program was able to re-activate their CSI chapter, Alpha Omega Nu, last year. Our CSI chapter held two initiations last year and inducted 21 new members. We also elected three student leaders who planned a service project and social hour for the students in the fall of 2024.

**Substantial Program Changes**

 In August 2024 we received a letter from CACREP indicating that one of our three core faculty members did not satisfy the CACREP requirements for counselor identity. As a result, we had only two core faculty members. We began a search for a new faculty member immediately. To remain in compliance with CACREP standards, we hired Sr. Suzanne Mayer as a full-time CMHC faculty member. Sr. Suzanne Mayer was previously a CMHC core faculty member and program director. In late November, Neumann hired a full-time CMHC faculty member who will meet the qualifications of a core faculty member per CACREP standards. The new faculty member will start working at Neumann in May 2025. No other substantial program changes were made to the program between summer 2023 to summer 2024.