Graduate Council
One University Plaza, PAC 383
Springfield, IL 62703

TO: Lynn Fisher
Chair, Campus Senate

FROM: Sharron LaFollette and John Laubersheimer
On behalf of Graduate Council (Sharron LaFollette, Chair)

DATE: November 11, 2012

RE: Department of Human Development Counseling Program Review

The Graduate Council (GC) carefully reviewed and discussed the Department of Human Development Counseling (HDC) Program Review at our September 24th meeting. The GC met with faculty of HDC and Interim Dean Ermatinger on October 22, during which HDC provided GC with additional information and in-depth discussion of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accreditation requirements.

The GC found that the report presents a well-written summary of HDC objectives, curricula, and activities. HDC has three concentrations: School Counseling, Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) and Marriage, Couples & Family Counseling (MCFC). All concentrations are fully accredited by CACREP and currently enjoy growth in enrollment. The curricula are rigorous with extensive, individually-focused student evaluation to ensure a qualified workforce.

GC found a number of curricular and programmatic strengths important to highlight. These include:

- Faculty who work collaboratively toward building and implementing the curriculum, while individually they have impressive records of professional leadership, service, scholarship and teaching;
- An impressive screening admission process (including - comprehensive written essays and oral interviews) to better identify students who will succeed in the curriculum;
- Structured and nurturing assessment at the student-level designed around clearly outlined competencies and skills, time-intensive yet with a great deal of merit and success;
- A remediation process in place for early intervention as needed and designed to improve student success rate in the program;
- A comprehensive student closure evaluation including an intensive clinical presentation and a standardized exam with passage set at the national mean for other CACREP programs and timed in conjunction with the State licensure exam; and
- Current growth in student enrollment to an all-time high.

To be competitive in the academic market for Counseling Education, it is critical for HDC to maintain accreditation through CACREP. This requires forward-thinking faculty and additional faculty resources
to meet minimum criteria of student/faculty ratios and staffing in the three discipline areas. GC has the following suggestions for continued improvement:

- **Faculty Resources:** At least one additional faculty member is needed to meet the minimum CACREP requirements of two full-time tenure-track faculty in each discipline area. Currently, HDC is a faculty short in School Counseling. Along with the minimum faculty in discipline areas, CACREP has a target student-to-faculty ratio of 12/1. With the current student enrollment and faculty, the HDC student-to-faculty ratio hovers around 17/1. Beyond CACREP requirements, the intensive one-on-one student evaluation burdens faculty with a heavy advising and assessment loads. In addition, CACREP is increasing the minimum credit hours to graduate from 50 to 60 hours. Both the department and GC are concerned regarding the potential for faculty burnout under this load. In order to meet the additional coursework demands, additional faculty will be needed. In a curriculum with heavy advising and student-driven assessment, additional faculty resources are needed to free contact hours with the students to allow more time for scholarship and service. With this recommendation, GC recognizes that any discussion of staffing increases should also consider the likelihood of the department sustaining the current high level of enrollment.

- **Curricular Assessment:** Individual student assessment is strong; however, assessment across students needs to be strengthened. Initially, the department should develop measurable objectives for evaluating curricular success. Meaningful across student assessment will help identify curricular strengths and weakness and allow for guided changes to both individual courses and across the curriculum. In addition, assessment across students will help identify strategies for student development that will work across the student population, not just those identified through individual assessment. GC recommends that HDC investigate the use of the standardized exam and licensure exam as one of the strategies for curricular assessment, if possible.

- **Sustained Enrollment:** Although the program has experienced satisfying growth in enrollment, efforts to sustain this growth should be put in place. This may be particularly challenging for growth within the School Counseling concentration, as this area is currently facing serious challenges in the job market. Continued marketing and tracking of student enrollment is necessary to ensure a qualified student body yet stabilized enrollments.

cc: James Ermatinger, Interim Dean EHS
    Bill Abler, Chair HDC
    Cecilia Cornell, Faculty Associate in the Provost’s Office
    Campus Senate Office