

## **Department of Human Development Counseling**

### **University of Illinois Springfield**

#### **Annual Report**

**2021**

The Department of Human Development Counseling is pleased to announce we were granted the full, 8-year reaccreditation in July 2020, following the submission of an Interim Report in May 2020 which addressed questions and deficiencies raised from the Self Study and Site Visit. Based on the date of our initial submission of documents (i.e., 2017), our current accreditation will expire in 2025.

In addition, we are excited to have hired a new Core faculty member, Dr. Tim Hakenewerth, who joined the faculty in August 2020. Dr. Hakenewerth completed his Master's degree in counseling from Southeast Missouri University, and his Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Counseling from Idaho State University.

Despite the many challenges raised by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department is pleased to report we have been able to continue offering our curriculum without significant delay. In Spring 2020, academic courses were immediately moved to Zoom delivery. Clinical courses were soon thereafter offered via Zoom (there was a brief delay while we acquired licenses for HIPAA-compliant Zoom and Box). While there have been some delays to clinical site experiences, we appreciate the creativity that sites have employed in continuing to provide opportunities for our Practicum and Internship students to offer clinical services. While this did result in minor delays for some students, we have overwhelmingly observed that students have been able to graduate on-time as planned. We are grateful to the patience of our students as we all navigated these unseen territories together.

In Fall 2021, the Department resumed our delivery as an on-ground program, adhering to protocols put in place by the government and university. Currently, that means masked and socially-distanced classrooms. We will continue to monitor best-practices in providing a safe return to the classroom, and make adjustments as the guidelines indicate.

The following report addresses methods of informal and formal evaluation, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches, a summary of findings, changes made to-date and anticipated changes as a result of the assessment and evaluation process.

#### **Evaluation Measures and Changes to Evaluation Measures**

In AY 20-21, the Department transitioned from utilizing the CPCE as our comprehensive exit exam to utilizing the CECE for this purpose. In addition, the CECE is now utilized in place of the CECE as a secondary measure of knowledge across the 8 CACREP core areas. This change made for a number of reasons including the decreased cost to students as well as offering more autonomy to the department in terms of scheduling the exam (including frequency of

scheduling), as well as a reduced turnaround time for results. The department has been pleased with this transition and we have seen similar pass rates with the CECE versus the CPCE.

In an effort to improve assessment and evaluation procedures, the department has explored a number of technologies that could streamline those processes. We are pleased to announce that we have identified a software program that will “house” all of our assessment and evaluation processes and data; will facilitate communication between clinical sites and the department, including improvement of the site placement approval process; will interface with our new learning management system (Canvas); and which will assist in the analysis and reporting of data. The University is currently in the process of entering into contract with the software provider, and will provide more details regarding this change as details are finalized. Implementation of the software is anticipated for Fall 2022.

In the years 2014 through 2017 alumni and employer survey data was gathered using our 2014 survey version. Starting in academic year 2018-2019, a new survey was implemented that more closely aligns survey data with our measures of the assessment of student learning and professional dispositions (which were revised in 2018-2019), which are designed to meet the 8 CACREP core and 3 CACREP Specialty areas. The revision of these rubrics and surveys was based on a number of evaluation factors, including faculty observation and experience with previous, inconsistent measures (i.e., multiple rubrics that resulted in difficulty tracking and comparing data points) and advisory board feedback. In regard to evaluation of Professional Dispositions, significant changes were made to the identified dispositions, scale of measurement, and points of measurement, in order to more efficiently and more systematically address those domains as well.

Due to the scheduling of our Stakeholder Surveys, the next surveys will be distributed in 2022. The included summary pertains to our most recent survey process and results (i.e., 2019-2020).

## **Outcomes**

### **Student Learning Outcomes Summary**

Based on primary (i.e. course-level) measures of student learning outcomes, HDC Students are demonstrating the highest levels of knowledge in the areas of Professional Orientation and Ethics, Group Counseling, and Social and Cultural Diversity. Students are demonstrating the least level of knowledge in the area of Appraisal and Diagnosis – specifically regarding appraisal, and in Career Development.

Based on secondary (i.e., CECE) measures of student learning outcomes, HDC Students are demonstrating the lowest levels of knowledge in the areas of Research and Program Evaluation; and Appraisal and Diagnosis, and highest in the areas of Social and Cultural Diversity and Group Counseling.

For a full report of the HDC SLO data, please visit the following page:  
<https://www.uis.edu/hdc/about/>

## **Professional Dispositions**

In 2019, the Department revised our evaluation plan and measure for assessing student dispositions. This included re-defining the specific dispositions that are measured, as well as the key points at which they are assessed. Dispositions are now measured in all clinical classes: HDC 512 Prepracticum, HDC 513 Group, HDC 587 Practicum, and HDC 590 Internship. In addition, students are notified of dispositional expectations in all Core courses, and any faculty can complete a dispositions evaluation at any time concerns arise, even if the concerns are not related to a clinical course. Further, the Site Supervisor evaluations of students have been revised to include the dispositions.

Aggregate disposition evaluation outcomes from Fall 2019 indicate that across the majority of dispositions, students are on average achieving at least a “Proficient – 3.00” level, with the exception of Self-awareness, where the mean score is just below 3.00, at 2.97, and Professionalism and Presence, where the mean score is 2.95. Ongoing examination of dispositional data does not indicate any group trends, rather there are individual outliers at different points of measurement.

## **Applicant, Student and Graduate Characteristics**

Having a diverse student body can foster diverse thinking. While our program has historically struggled to attract diverse candidates (as indicated in student demographic tables posted on the HDC website <https://www.uis.edu/hdc/about/>), we have observed our students working effectively with clients from diverse and marginalized backgrounds, and we continue to emphasize the importance of cultural competence throughout our curriculum, including the addition of our Social Justice and Advocacy course to the curriculum. The percentage of racial and ethnic minorities in our program has remained relatively stable over the past several years, and is slightly lower than the University’s numbers, with HDC reporting 26.1% of students as racial and ethnic minorities, vs. the University reporting 37.7%. in proportion to white students. In addition, our A comparison of our University’s diversity profile, using the U.S. News and World Report’s Campus Ethnicity report (<https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rankings/national-universities/campus-ethnic-diversity>) indicates that our Institution has a similar diversity profile rating (.54) to comparable public institutions in the state that offer counseling programs: Western Illinois University (.57) and Eastern Illinois University (.55). Northern Illinois University’s Diversity Profile is slightly higher, at .67. In regard to gender, HDC is less diverse than the University, where there is a roughly even split between Male and Female students. Being female dominated, HDC’s gender distribution mirrors trends in the counseling profession.

The Department also notes limitations in terms of the institutional data gathered, as it does not include data regarding sexual identity or gender orientation. The introduction of an additional demographic survey at the department level could provide a richer picture of the demographics of our student body.

This commitment to embracing diversity is further reinforced by student feedback,

supervisor/employer feedback, and graduate feedback, as obtained from the Stakeholder Surveys. In addition, the Department is making concerted efforts to recruit diverse students, including reaching out to minority serving institutions. The admissions coordinator is responsible for identifying those opportunities, and the CEHS Dean has indicated commitment to providing financial resources for travel and marketing, to that end. The Department hopes to be able to continue to make in person visits to diverse-serving institutions during Academic Year 2021-2022; however, with the constantly moving target surrounding on-campus and travel guidelines due to COVID-19 concerns, this plan will be revisited when restrictions are lifted (as was the case for AY 2020-2021).

In an effort to more directly attend to issues of diversity and inclusion, in Spring 2021 the HDC Faculty created a student task force (BEST -Belonging, Equity and Social Justice Task Force), led by Assistant Professor Tim Hakenewerth and comprised of volunteer members of the HDC student body. Students were both nominated by HDC Faculty as well as could self-nominate. Over the Spring 2021 semester the committee held several meetings as well as disseminated a survey. A summary of that committee's determinations can be found at (webpage). The program is currently in the planning stages of implementing recommendations. For a summary of that initiative, please visit the following page: <https://www.uis.edu/hdc/about/>

Finally, the Department believes our commitment to diversity is best evidenced in our Department's community presence. Specifically, HDC serves a number of community schools, agencies, and groups, some of which lack the resources to employ mental health professionals. When possible, HDC Faculty serve as site supervisors in order to make the provision of mental health services possible to underserved communities.

In summary, the Department of HDC is actively continuing to make systematic efforts to recruit diverse applicants and students, to address issues of diversity and inclusion within the department, and will continue to engage in service to the community via activities that serve marginalized populations, in alignment with Department, College, and University goals.

### **Findings from Follow Up Studies**

The Department of HDC conducts surveys of graduates, employers/supervisors, and students, every three years. The most recent surveys were sent to stakeholders in February 2020, and a summary of the data was presented to the HDC Advisory Board on March 6, 2020.

Surveys were sent to 80 students, 67 alumni and 47 supervisors/employers in February 2020, and the return rates were 42% for students, 24% for Alumni, and 17% for employers/supervisors.

What follows is a narrative summary of the findings collected from each stakeholder category. A full report of the data can be found from the following link: <https://www.uis.edu/hdc/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2020/05/Stakeholder-Survey-Summary-for-Website.pdf>

Again, the Department of Counseling at ISU has three specialty options: Clinical Mental Health Counseling; Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling; and School Counseling; however, data is presented here in the aggregate across specialty areas as opposed to for each individual specialty.

### **Alumni Survey**

In regard to Knowledge, results indicate that as a result of their master's program graduates feel they are best prepared in the areas of: Appraisal and Diagnosis; Helping Relationships; and Professional Orientation and Identity. Graduates indicate they feel they are least prepared in the area of Career Development.

In regard to Skill, graduates indicate they feel the most prepared in the areas of: Human Growth and Development; and Helping Relationships, and least prepared in the area of Research and Program Evaluation.

The following comments are a selection of those obtained from the Alumni Survey:

- ▶ Classroom size, individual attention
- ▶ Individual and group supervision skills
- ▶ Diagnosis and appraisal, counseling relationship, prepracticum
- ▶ Curriculum is well balanced
- ▶ Class interaction was spectacular. The exchange of ideas, feelings and experiences allows all students to be exposed to situations, ideas and beliefs that they never knew existed, or proved some of their beliefs completely wrong.
- ▶ The approaches by most of the professors was relaxed enough to where students feel they can open up, which allows them to absorb opposing views, which is almost always a wonderful experience.
- ▶ The HDC curriculum allowed for growth in clinical skills as well as client-focused holistic treatment.
- ▶ I have been able to utilize information from every class to build a foundation on which to further my experiences in the workplace.
- ▶ Helping relationship
- ▶ Assessment and diagnosis, theory, self-exploration.
- ▶ Taking the NCE
- ▶ Emphasis on personal growth

This feedback provides reinforcement to the Department that we are addressing our program objectives in the training program and meeting our goal of providing an intimate and student-centered learning experience where students can take risks and grow.

### **Site Supervisor/Employer Survey**

In regard to Knowledge, Site Supervisor and Employer results indicated they feel students/employees are most knowledgeable in the areas of: Professional Identity; and Diversity, and least knowledgeable in the area of Research and Program Evaluation.

In regard to Skill, Site Supervisors and Employers indicated they believe students/employees are most skilled in the areas of Professional Identity and Helping Relationships, and least skilled in the area of Career Development.

In addition to qualitative data, the following comments were included on the surveys

- ▶ “Interns are prepared for their internships [They] arrive on time. Communicate well with clients. Respect agency policies and procedures.”
- ▶ “They are “self-sufficient [and] know how to ask questions when they need further clarification.”

These comments indicate that HDC students are demonstrating professional dispositions in the area of professionalism and presence.

### **Student Survey**

In regard to Knowledge, Student Survey results indicated that as a result of their current enrollment in the HDC program, students feel most knowledgeable in the areas of Professional Orientation and Ethics; Human Growth and Development; and Helping Relationships, and least knowledgeable in the area of Research and Program Evaluation.

In regard to Skill, Student Survey results indicated that students feel most skilled in the areas of Diversity, Human Growth and Development; and Helping Relationships; and least skilled in the area of Research and Program Evaluation.

Again, these results were presented at an HDC Advisory Board meeting on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The advisory board noted that due to low response rates and numbers for alumni and supervisors/employers, the program should proceed with caution in making any major program level changes as a result of that data alone. Student response numbers and rates were much higher, and

When comparing mean Skills scores from each of the three stakeholder groups, the smallest range in high scores was in the area of Professional Orientation and Ethics, with a range of .36. In the lower scored areas, the three groups scored most similarly on the areas of Research and Program Evaluation (range = .12); Appraisal and Diagnosis (range = .31); and Career Development (range = .35). Based on these findings, the faculty will continue to more closely monitor student learning outcomes in those domains, to determine whether that data reflects stakeholder perception.

Qualitative feedback was also gathered from the Student Survey:

- ▶ “Opportunities for exploration and creativity”
- ▶ “Deep exploration of topics in development, DSMV, drugs and alcohol, and specific family counseling-oriented classes.”
- ▶ “Experiential learning, discussion-based course, student involvement, group work, humanistic approaches, student outcomes.”

- ▶ “Professors are judgement free, kind, extremely knowledgeable and practiced in the field as well as passionate for what they do.”

As discussed in regard to the alumni survey feedback, student comments indicate the Department continues to achieve our goal of providing a student-centered, experiential learning experience where trainees can take risks and grow.

### **Summary**

In summary, this report summarizes the HDC Program Outcomes, including data from Student Learning Outcomes and Professional Dispositions evaluations; Department Characteristics; and Follow Up Studies. We believe that we continue to meet our Program Objectives through classroom, curricular, and community-based activities, and look forward to continuing to evaluate and make data-driven revisions, where necessary.