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Professional Counseling Program Annual Assessment Report 2023-2024

The Professional Counseling Program assesses the program on an ongoing basis. The following is a summary of the assessment activities over the 2023-2024 academic year. Information includes exam (e.g., CPCE and NCE) outcomes and student, graduate, and alumni surveys. All surveys were scored on a five-point Likert type scale (1= Poor Preparation, 2= Somewhat Poor Preparation, 3=Fair Preparation, 4= Good Preparation, 5= Excellent Preparation).

Program survey results were sent to alumni, including Spring 2024 graduates. We had 7 participants complete the survey, and while the response rate is low, it provided valuable feedback to the program. Alumni reported their preparation in the eight core curriculum areas was, on average, good, or excellent. Data revealed that participants felt they were “quite a lot” to “very much prepared” to function as a competent counselor (72%), and indicated they felt “very much” prepared for practicum/internship and received the skills they needed (86%). Participants responded that the knowledge of the faculty was good to excellent (100%).

The 2024 annual survey to assess preparedness for clinical work via the 8 CAREP domains from, both, internship site supervisors and employers yielded eight responses this year. Although this is a slight decline from last year’s results, comparative to previous years where we received zero responses it can be considered high. A lower response is something that we historically face despite inviting supervisors and employers to participate by sending consistent reminders. We will continue to discuss strategies to improve the response rates for these annual surveys. The 8 responses were from site supervisors; we had no responses from employers. Regarding annual surveys from employers, we are working to continually update our database and continuing outreach to graduates and alumni to ensure we have current employer information.

From the 8 participants in the supervisor survey, data revealed positive feedback. Overall, participants indicated that students were prepared for their role as intern or professional when

entering the field. Areas of strength that were noted included professional identity, human growth and development, social & cultural diversity, career development, group work & theories, assessment & appraisal, research & program evaluation, work with families and children, consultation, individual counseling theories, research and program evaluation, normal and abnormal behavior, legal and ethical issues, case conceptualizations, and professional dispositions. Areas in which participants indicated a need for their continued improvement included crisis intervention and report writing, although these were still rated above average. The anecdotal comments from site supervisors showed recognition that students need to continue learning about report writing, case conceptualization and diagnosing, as well as crisis-related topics. Areas of improvement to the overall program included telehealth training, role playing crisis intervention scenarios, and clinical documentation. Other suggestions included continuation of in-person practice of counseling interventions and conversations.

This year, we returned to the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) after administering a different exam for the past two years. We felt that this exam is more closely aligned to the NCE and would assist in our students' preparations. We administered the CPCE in the Spring 2024 semester, and we had a pass rate of 100%. Though this was positive, the breakdown of specific domain results provide areas of focus for improvement as we prepare for the upcoming academic year. Program faculty will continue to use the CPCE for the next upcoming cycle.

This past Spring 2024, some of our students (n=17) took the National Counselor Exam in their final semester before graduation. The overall pass rate of the exam was 88%. This is an increase from the 2023 pass rate. A further look at the scores reveal that the students on the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) track had a pass rate of 85%, while the School Counseling had a pass rate of 100%. As a program, we continue to monitor these scores to assist in our annual review of syllabi, course content, matching faculty to areas of expertise and classes, and analyzing each year's data to provide direction to help strengthen our program.

For further details about our assessment activities, or if you would like to see the raw data, please contact, Dr. Meredith Drew at drewm2@wpunj.edu or Dr. Michelle Hinkle at hinklem@wpunj.edu.