



## Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health

### Program Assessment Report – 2016

The Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at Denver Seminary uses a systematic plan for evaluating the program. Data that is used to evaluate the program objectives include the following:

- 1) Student Assessment data that is used to evaluate student knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions;
- 2) Demographic and other characteristics of applicants, students, and graduates; and
- 3) Data from systematic follow-up studies of graduates, site supervisors, and employers of program graduates.

The purpose of this report is to disseminate the findings of these evaluations to current students, program faculty, institutional administrators and personnel in cooperating agencies. In this report, **Section I** will give a summary of the data collected, **Section II** will report on program modifications that have been made this year as a result of this data; and **Section III** will discuss other substantial program changes that have been made to the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program in the past year.

#### **Section I: Data collected**

- 1) Student Knowledge, skills and professional dispositions:
  - a) Student Knowledge: The process used by the Counseling Division to evaluate Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) is to identify two of the four institutional SLOs within at least two core courses, and then identify artifacts within each course and within additional program requirements for evaluation. The SLOs and the artifacts chosen rotate every year in order to complete a full evaluation every two years. This past year the program evaluated the following two SLOs:

#1: Demonstrate ability to use biblical material to address contemporary issues related to counseling;

#2: Demonstrate sensitivity and ethical practice when working within diverse contexts and diverse clients.

The courses used to evaluate these two SLOs were CO 621 Social and Cultural Foundations of Counseling and CO 631 Counseling and Spirituality, along with the program requirement of a comprehensive exam. The artifacts chosen included questions on the student's comprehensive exams covering both of these courses as well as the Personal Integration paper in CO 631, and the Cultural Immersion Project Report in CO 621. The success benchmark used is that 80% of students will achieve 80% or better on each question/paper. The result of this evaluation in the

past year was a success rate of 90% or better on each chosen artifact. The results were reviewed by two faculty within the Counseling Division and one faculty member from another Division.

The Observations/Interpretations that were made are as follows: "The results speak well of the program. But in some respects, the rate of success may be too high. We need to make sure that the artifact benchmarks are rigorous enough and are not set too low." The program was advised by the Assessment of Student Learning Committee to reevaluate the artifacts and the targeted benchmarks after the next year of program assessment.

A second method used to evaluate student knowledge is the aggregate scores of the students who take the National Counselor Exam. Students are tested on the 8 CACREP content areas for this exam, which takes place twice per year. The scores are reviewed by faculty and administration at Denver Seminary each time the exam is given. Faculty particularly pay attention to the results of our students in each area to determine if there are areas of weakness, as well as their scores in comparison to national averages of all people taking the NCE, and particularly the scores of Denver Seminary students in comparison to other CACREP student results. In the past year Denver Seminary's students have a 100% pass rate for the NCE, and a 98% pass rate over the past 10 years. In this past year the students in Denver Seminary's program had overall higher scores on all 8 sections of the exam than the average for all other CACREP student results combined.

- b) Student skills: Student skills are evaluated by Internship Site Supervisors. The Site Supervisor fills out a formal evaluation on each student reviewing specific skills which are required in CACREP's Standards for Internship Students at the end of every semester. Denver Seminary uses a program for data collection that is accessible only by the Clinical Training Director, the student, and the student's supervisor. However, any concerns that come up regarding a student's skill development is discussed by the faculty as a whole at regular Counseling Division Meeting. If remediation is required, that is discussed by the faculty, and then reported back to the student through a one-on-one meeting, usually conducted by the Clinical Training Director.

In the 2015-16 Academic Year, 6 students went through a process of skills remediation. Four have completed the process successfully, and two are still in process.

- c) Student Professional Dispositions: The professional development of students is a process which begins in the student's first semester and concludes in the final semester of Internship. The process requires students to meet with the Professional Development Director throughout their program, and includes group sessions, individual sessions, and remedial sessions. Students who are struggling with professional dispositions are brought up for discussion at the Counseling Division meetings, where a determination is made if further action needs to be taken.

In the 2015-16 Academic year, 7 students were required to attend additional meetings and/or requirements to work through professional dispositions. Of those students, 3 have completed what was required of them in professional development, 3 are still in process, and 1 has determined not to complete the program.

- 2) Demographic and other characteristics of applicants, students and graduates: This information can be found on Denver Seminary's Website under the title of "Program Descriptive Data" at this [link](#).
- 3) Data from systematic follow-up studies of graduates, site supervisors, and employers of program graduates : The Counseling Division conducts regular, bi-yearly surveys of program alumni, Internship Site Supervisors, and employers of Counseling program graduates. These surveys were conducted in the summer of 2016.
  - a. Alumni Survey: The Alumni Survey was sent to alumni from 2006 to 2015, and received a 34% response (179 of 523 surveys completed). Some of the key results of the survey include:
    - i. Of the eight CACREP Content Areas, the majority of responders felt that they were well prepared in these areas. A Likert scale was used, with 1 being "Excellent" and 5 being "Poor." The strongest area, Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice, received a weighted average of 1.44; and the weakest area, Career Development, received a 2.20, which was still an overall score of "Good" or "Excellent." A score of 1 or 2 is the desired response.
  - b. Internship Site Supervisors and Employers of Graduates survey: This survey was sent to 109 individuals, with 37 responding – also a 34% response rate.
    - i. The Site Supervisors and Employers were also asked to rate the knowledge of the interns/employees on the eight CACREP Content areas. A Likert scale was used, with 1 being "Below expected level of understanding," and 3 being "Above expected level of understanding" (the reverse of the Likert scale used with Alumni). Again, interns and graduates/employees scored at or above expectation for all eight areas of knowledge, with the lowest average score as a 2.2 out of 3, and the highest being 2.9.

## **Section II: Program Modifications**

In light of the data collected, no substantial changes were made to the Clinical Mental Health Counseling curriculum.

## **Section III: Substantial Program Changes**

In 2016 a few changes have taken place in the Counseling Division as a whole.

- 1) Faculty Changes: In the 2016-17 Academic year, Dr. Janelle Hallman has taken a leave of absence from teaching courses in the Counseling licensure program. She has remained working in a part-time position as Clinical Training Faculty Consultant, working with the Practicum students in our on-site Shepherd's Gate clinic. Dr. Paula Tipton has stepped in to this teaching position for this academic year, teaching all of the courses that would have been assigned to Dr. Hallman. Dr. Tipton has her PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision from a CACREP accredited program, and has an extensive teaching background.

- 2) Changes in Practicum and Internship: The content and structure of Practicum and Internship remain largely unchanged. However, there are two minor changes in leadership and supervision of the Practicum experience:
  - a. In the past we have had one staff person, Debbie Edwards, covering both practicum and internship experiences for students. In August of this year, Debbie Edwards shifted to concentrate solely on Counseling Internships, and the program has hired Bethany Adams to oversee the Practicum Experience as Director of Shepherd's Gate Clinic. Bethany Adams is a graduate of Denver Seminary with her MA in Counseling, and has been working both as Debbie Edwards's assistant in the past, as well as a Professional Development Director for the past few years.
  - b. The second change is that as of this Fall (2016) students in the CO 511 Practicum course will be supervised in two manners: they will have triadic supervision, with two students meeting for an hour every week with a licensed supervisor, and they will also have two hours each week in group supervision (as opposed to 1.5 hours in the past). The reason for this change is to determine if there is added value in having the perspective of another student during supervision. This change will be evaluated at the end of the academic year to determine the benefits and/or detriments to this type of supervision. In group supervision, the additional 30 minutes have been added for the benefit of allowing supervisors to adequately cover cases. The supervisors felt the additional time was needed for the benefit of the students' development as therapists.
- 3) Program Operations change: In July of 2015, Dr. Fred Gingrich stepped down as Chair of the Counseling Division, but remains full time as Professor of Counseling. Dr. Monte Hasz is the current Chair of the Counseling Division. He has taught in the Counseling program at Denver Seminary since 1997, first as an adjunct faculty member and eventually coming on full-time. Dr. Hasz also served as Chair of the Counseling Division in 2006 during a transitional time in leadership in the Division, as well as servicing as the Interim Chair during Dr. Fred Gingrich's sabbatical in 2012.