Department of Counseling and Student Affairs
CMHC MCFC Program Assessment Annual Report
April 29, 2025

Counseling Faculty, Drs. Mason, Payne, Pickett and Sauerheber and Director of Professional Practice, Bethany Johnson met on April 29, 2025 to review, discuss and address CACREP Section 4: Evaluation in the Program. A summary of their discussions is noted in response to the related standards outlined below.

A. **Counselor education programs have a documented, empirically based plan for systematically evaluating the program objectives, including student learning. For each of the types of data listed in 4.B, the plan outlines: (1) the data that will be collected; (2) a procedure for how and when data will be collected; (3) a method for how data will be reviewed or analyzed; and (4) an explanation for how data will be used for curriculum and program improvement.**

B. **The counselor education program faculty demonstrate the use of the following to evaluate the program objectives: (1) aggregate student assessment data that address 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 Department maintains a CMHC MCFC Program Assessment Data spreadsheet that includes detailed information about the data summarized throughout this report. Due to confidential information, it is distributed publicly and is only available to CACREP per their request.

1. <u>Admissions and Applicant Data</u>
- Rubrics have been updated to 5-Likert Scale to allow for more differentiation among applicants.
- Experiential Group Case Example was updated to allow for greater critical thinking among group interviewees (versus the previous group activity used). Faculty/staff observers noted collaboration among group interviewees.
- Part-time faculty and the Department's Director of Professional Practice were invited to participate as observers given limitations in full time faculty resources. All observers are provided an introduction of the process, including the rubrics and how to assess. The entire group of observers met after the interview to discuss the process, as well as any questions that they had. Part-time faculty are hired by the Department based upon the appropriateness of their terminal degree, as well as their clinical and supervision experience.

After the admissions interview (April 15, 2025), all faculty and staff observers met to process the experience; and have made the following updates to the interview process as follows:
- Logistics: Share list of applicants with faculty/staff observers ahead of time
- Group Interview
  - Introduction of Experience and Faculty/Staff Observers (10 minutes)

- o GA Panel (40 minutes)
- o Group Interview (40 minutes)
  - ▪ Observers will share questions after group answered the previous.
  - ▪ Discussed giving observers the liberty to pose questions that help them assess interview ratings, including both process and content questions which will include additional process questions.

Use of Artificial Intelligence. Based upon the suggestion from a part-time faculty observer, as well as observations that at least two applicants were possibly using AI during the interview, the following AI policies have been added to the counseling programs and are on the website and in the *Counseling Student Handbook*.

- *Due to the personal, reflective nature of the application process, use of AI is not permitted. Further, per the Department's Counseling Student Handbook, using AI outside of the perimeters guidelines is considered academic misconduct. Applicants who use or who are suspected of using AI during the admissions (including application and group interview) process will be denied admission.*
- *Permission on whether or how AI may be used to complete course requirements is up to the discretion of the instructor. That is, unless department faculty have granted permission, AI is not permitted in the creation of self-reflection assignments, case conceptualizations, and/presentation content. Using AI outside of the perimeters guidelines is considered academic misconduct. Per the WKU Student Handbook, students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in a course without possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present the case to the Office of Student Conduct.*

2. CPCE Comprehensive Examination Data

This year's cohort has been deliberate in creating and maintaining study groups (i.e., through COGA, other small personal groups). Our student scores across content areas and total are similar to the national means, if not higher. CPCE has changed their processes over the last year which the Department is still adjusting to (i.e., various tests, interpreting reports). Faculty agreed that we will review the essay exam questions and make appropriate adjustments after the Department has updated the CMHC MCFC curriculum to match the 2024 CACREP learning objectives.

3. Key Assessments

The Department has launched the Anthology system as of this spring, 2024. All faculty teaching courses with Key Assessments attended training by Lucas Green, the CEBS Data Specialist during February 2024. Full-time faculty are responsible for properly listed as Chalk and Wire Assessments (as a part of the Teaching Expectation in the Department's P&T Expectations). Full time-faculty should assure that other sections of their courses taught by part-time faculty are also uploaded.

Due to the inefficient nature of Chalk and Wire, the College is looking into securing another service. For example, in CNS 557, the system notes only 1 student having submitted the Key Assessment (but in the Blackboard shell, the majority of students submitted it and were graded).

Faculty agreed that the grading rubric for Key Assessments needs to be consistent across all Key Assessments and might include: exceed expectations, met expectations, somewhat met expectations, hardly met expectations. This appears consistent with ratings on the CNS 596 related Key Assessments, which is also developmentally consistent. These ratings will allow faculty to recognize those excelling, while also encouraging those with potential and/or need additional encouragement.

4.   **Professional Performance Reviews (PPRs)**

The mean scores across PPR criterion are consistent with what faculty believe should be represented. The legend is as follows: (4) Exceeds Criteria; (3) Meet Criteria consistently for program level; (2) Needs support; meets criteria minimally or inconsistently for program level; (1) Needs remediation; does not meet criteria for program level. Based upon discussion of the process, as well as the desire to create the perception and experience of a more supportive process, the Support Plan and Remediation Process have been differentiated and are noted in the updated *Counseling Student Handbook*.

The criteria were updated as of a year ago to address student behaviors that faculty deemed relevant and important (i.e., reference to digital mediums). Given this change, and the inability to compare across criteria, previous years are not included in this report. At the time of this report, several students are receiving formal, outlined support. Due to the public nature of this report, other statistics are kept confidential.

5.   **Site Supervisor Evaluations (of Students)**

Faculty focused on the ratings of criteria that had the highest average ratings, as well as criteria that averaged lower ratings; with the rating scale on Likert (1 = unsatisfactory, did not meet expectations; 6 = outstanding for training level).

Higher Rated Criteria
- Item 2. Invest time and energy in becoming a counselor. (5.76)
- Item 1. Demonstrates a personal commitment to developing professional competencies. (5.72)
- Item 3. Accepts and uses constructive criticism to enhance self-development and counseling skills. (5.55)
- Item 9. Keeps appointments on time. (5.55)
- Item 4. Engages in open, comfortable, and clear communication with peers and supervisors. (5.52)

Lowest Rated Criteria
- Item 28. Explains, administers, and interprets tests correctly. (5.03)
- Item 16. Recognizes and resists manipulation by the client. (4.96)
- Item 20. Uses silence effectively in the interview. (4.83)

The results are not surprising to faculty. They place significant effort in helping students develop skills especially across the higher rated criteria. They have noticed students' difficulty with silence and many faculty have addressed that in class settings. Dr. Sauerheber asked that all evaluations be due prior to the annual Program Assessment meeting so that the faculty/staff can

address concerns, as well as highlight aspects that are rated and experienced as positive among students and Site Supervisors.

6. <u>Student Evaluation of Supervisor forms</u>

Faculty focused on the ratings of criteria that had the highest average ratings, as well as criteria that averaged lower ratings; with the rating scale on Likert (1 = unsatisfactory, did not meet expectations; 6 = outstanding for training level).

Higher Rated Criteria
- Item 2. Accepts and respects me as a person. (6)
- Item 5. Provides me the freedom to develop flexible and effective counseling styles. (5.96)
- Item 17. Encourages me to engage in professional behavior. (5.96)
- Item 18. Maintains confidentiality in material discussed in supervisory sessions. (5.86)
- Item 13. Allows me to discuss problems I encounter in my practicum/internship setting. (5.75)

Lowest Rated Criteria
- Item 11. Helps me define and achieve specific concrete goals for myself during the practicum experience. (5.29)
- Item 21. Helps me organize relevant case data in planning goals and strategies with my client. (5.32)
- Item 9. Encourages me to use new and different techniques when appropriate. (5.36)

Bethany Johnson, Director of Professional Practice mentioned a concern about the accuracy of the Evaluation of Site Supervisor data. In order to open confidential dialogue, Bethany invited graduating interns for an exit interview. To this date, no one has signed up for a meeting. Dr. Pickett offered to assist with meeting with graduating interns.

Faculty discussed the importance of making regular and/or spontaneous contact with sites in order to ensure compliance and/or to gain information related to any updates at the site and with staff.

7. <u>CNS Student Satisfaction Exit Survey (2025, Spring)</u>

The survey includes questions related to demographics, current employment, conference attendance, extracurricular activities, scholarships received, as well as questions related to satisfaction across various domains. There was a total of 19 responses. Excerpts and responses are as follows:
- The Department of Counseling and Student Affairs is committed to providing quality programs and maintaining highly satisfied students and graduates. (APR E.1): Curriculum and Programming.
  - When classes are scheduled, 67% of participant response
  - Face-to-face classes, 83% of participant response
  - Hybrid classes, 33% of participant response

- o On-line/Digital Delivery, 50% of participant response
  - o Structure of class meetings, 83% of participant response
  - o Classes offered, 50% of participant response
  - o New Student Orientation, 25% of participant response
- The Department of Counseling and Student Affairs is committed to providing quality programs and maintaining highly satisfied students and graduates. (APR E.1): Faculty.
  - o Knowledge base and expertise of faculty, 100% of participant response
  - o Faculty mentoring/relationship, 82% of participant response
  - o Preparedness of faculty, 27% of participant response
  - o Other, 9% of participant response
- The Department of Counseling and Student Affairs is committed to providing quality programs and maintaining highly satisfied students and graduates. (APR E.1): Personal and Professional Development.
  - o Support from faculty for your personal development, 100% of participant response
  - o Support Plans, 18% of participant response
  - o How the program helped prepare you for employment, 55%

A selection of narratives are as follows:

Curriculum and Programming Options:
- When Classes are Scheduled:
  - o The two options made it feasible to see clients/work during the day
  - o I always felt I had plenty of time to schedule the classes I needed.
- Face-to-Face Classes:
  - o There is lots of room for collaboration between students and faculty. There is more room for questions and shared experiences.
  - o Easier to retain information.
  - o Very engaging
  - o These gave me an opportunity to connect with my colleagues. These were my preference.
- Structure of Class Meetings:
  - o Courses were a mix of lecture, discussion, and partnerships which felt beneficial.
  - o Group work is annoying but necessary at times.
  - o Really liked the mix of instruction and discussion.
  - o I typically learned most from in-class discussions, presentations, and readings with an accompany discussion/discussion board. I did not learn much from readings with a quiz attached.
  - o The similar structure of each class section was nice and allowed for breaks as well as time to collaborate, and time for lecture.
- Classes Offered:
  - o I would have enjoyed more electives / special course offerings
  - o A great variety of classes to get lots of different clinical knowledge was nice.

Faculty:
- Knowledge base and expertise of faculty:
  - I appreciated the diverse faculty and their different perspectives.
  - Every professor seemed competent and willing to research what they didn't know.
  - Staff seemed competent.
  - Strong expertise, particularly Drs. Sauerheber, Dye, and Sneed
- Faculty mentoring/relationship:
  - I always felt welcome to ask questions and seek support from faculty members.
  - Most professors seemed to genuinely care for students.
  - Faculty could do better getting back in a timely manner
  - I always felt my relationship was good with the faculty.
- Preparedness of faculty
  - Some faculty seemed to be winging things, but overall, I didn't feel underprepared for the courseware.

Personal and Professional Development:
- Support from faculty for your personal development
  - Faculty were very supportive of my personal and career plans
  - Some professors were more accommodating to unexpected life situations.
  - I felt as though every conversation with faculty was considerate of my own personal development.
  - Besides learning a lot of Adlerian stuff, I didn't feel like the faculty pushed to heavily one theoretical model or another. I do wish exposure to other theories and interventions could've been helpful, but I get the limitations.
- How the program helped prepare you for employment:
  - I feel really prepared to begin my job post grad.
  - Taught me how to work with others and techniques to use within the field.

Faculty are pleased with the number, as well as positive nature of the responses. In regard to the feedback related to theoretical knowledge; it is difficult to teach more than a couple of theories in depth when also needing to meet many CACREP standards embedded in courses. Dr. Sauerheber mentioned the possible need of updating the survey according to updates in the program, as well as to the 2024 accreditation standards. Faculty believe that emphasis on building relationships with students throughout their matriculation may impact the overall positive ratings across the survey.

8. **Alumni Counseling Satisfaction Survey (2025, Spring)**
The overall average score will not be less than 3 on a Likert 1-5 scale. Per the required Assurance of Student Learning Report required by SACS, this survey is an indirect measure of the Program Student Learning Outcome 2: Obtain appropriate state or national credentialing in their chosen profession. Alumni are sent an invitation via email to complete a satisfaction at the

end of each academic year. The survey includes a set of demographic questions, as well as qualitative and quantitative questions related to obtaining credentials: (a) are your currently employed in a clinical and/or counseling-related job; (b) did you pass the National Certified Counselor exam; (c) how satisfied are you with your experience in the WKU counseling program; (d) how well did WKU counseling program prepare you for working in the field?

The results from the 2025 Spring Survey are as follows: The results from question (a) are you currently employed in a clinical and/or counseling-related job: yes (15/15 respondents). Results from question (b) did you pass the National Certified Counselor exam: 12/12 respondents passed. Results from question (c): how satisfied are you with your experience in the WKU counseling program: "extremely satisfied," 9/13 respondents; "somewhat satisfied," 3/13 respondents; "somewhat dissatisfied", 1/13 respondents. The results from question (d) how well WKU counseling program prepared you for working in the field: "extremely well," 6/13 respondents; "very well," 4/13 respondents; "moderately well," 1/13 respondents; and "slightly well," 2/13 respondents. Responses to the qualitative question, "From your experience, what would you say are the greatest strengths of the WKU counseling program?" was as follows:

- Helpful professors, lots of options in the community to do internships at
- The staff
- The program was not good when I went back in 2006-2008. Dr. Sauerheber and Dr Kindsvatter were the only professors who us students really learned from, the rest of the program was lacking considerably. I would never have recommended anyone go to it back then. HOWEVER, now I've seen firsthand how the quality has greatly improved and would DEFINITELY recommend it to anyone.
- Diverse, educated, professional faculty. Excellent practicum and internship experience.
- The professors that were teaching while I was there were a great strength because they prepared me for what working in the field would be like. The Talley Family Counseling Center was another strength as well as the connections the former director had with the local school districts for the interns to seek other experiences while in internship.
- The Professors are invested in your career. They are approachable and very knowledgeable and helpful.
- Professors' care for students and interest in relationships with them, discussion-style learning format with some classes
- The professors affiliated with the program and the diversity they had.
- The greatest strengths for me were the faculty of the department at the time. The faculty were supportive of one another and all brought a variety of perspective and knowledge to me and my cohort in the program. I maintain communication with several members of the faculty even today, 11 years after graduating.

A selection of narratives are as follows:

- It would've been excellent to have gotten practice at taking documentation in the classroom setting, especially Progress Notes. I think it would've been

helpful to watch a videoed session and then have all the students take a note from the therapist perspective, then compare and discuss.

- In my opinion, we need to still prioritize in-person classes as counseling is a relational field and when you aren't in-person, you can miss a lot. Online is good if it's the only option, but if there is an option for in-person, we need to continue to promote that. If we don't value in-person, then how can we encourage our clients to value and prioritize in-person human interactions?
- I know shortly after leaving you had to drop the school counseling program but I really think that would be great to bring back. I also think the 4 classes that the CMHC track would need to also get licensed as a school counselor, if those could be offered online, I think you would find a decent subset of people who would come back to take those 4 classes as a way to further their marketability.
- Have more elective options, and have earlier shadowing opportunities so that the students can get more hands-on experience of what a day to day looks like for different types of counseling.
- I do think it would have been helpful for the coursework to be more rigorous, especially in theory… I think seeing more examples of actual counseling sessions from different theoretical approaches would have helped tremendously, and learning more about each theory would have given me more direction on which fit how I conceptualize clients.
- I enjoyed all the hands-on experiences I felt that prepared me best for this field. More in class prep for the exam may have been helpful as I have found the exam is not close to what it is we do on this field! Having to answer questions that are relevant 50 years ago on the exam is just not reality today. Telehealth education would be appropriate today also!
- Courses in specific counseling techniques (like Motivational Interviewing).
- Stop focusing on online offerings— the magic happens in person
- Maybe a "real life counseling class" and how to deal with clients that are court ordered and don't want to be there. Dealing with difficult clients. Also discuss person centered theory and trauma informed care

Responses are favorable of recent changes and updates to our programming. The Department took great investment in applying to CACREP for an entirely digital program; we are committed to expanding our residential and digital programming and maintaining accreditation requirements. Per CACREP, the experience of both digital and residential students must be similar, and we are committed to that policy.

9. <u>Counseling Site Supervisor & Employer Satisfaction Survey (2025, Spring)</u>

Per the required Assurance of Student Learning Report required by SACS, this survey is an indirect measure of the Program Student Learning Outcome 3: Develop skills desired by prospective employers. The survey includes a set of demographic questions, as well as qualitative and the following quantitative questions related to their experiences of our students: (a) how satisfied are you with the professional performance of WKU counseling interns and/or graduates; (b) How well do WKU counseling interns and/or graduates meet the expectations of

your agency or school?; (c) How likely are you to employ WKU counseling graduates and/or supervise interns in the future?

The results from question (a) how satisfied are you with the professional-performance of WKU counseling interns and/or graduates were as follows: 7/7 respondents were "extremely satisfied". The results from question (b) How well do WKU counseling interns and/or graduates meet the expectations of your agency or school were as follows: 4/7 respondents noted "extremely well;" 3/7 noted "very well". The results from question (c) How likely are you to employ WKU counseling graduates and/or supervise interns in the future were as follows: 7/7 respondents noted "extremely likely". Responses to the qualitative question, "From your experience, what are the greatest strengths of WKU counseling graduates and/or interns?" was as follows:

- WKU graduates are more prepared to begin counseling relationships with clients than other schools I have worked with. They are competent and have a better understanding of expectations and ethics in my opinion.
- The willingness to continue to learn and adapt their skills according to the needs of the clients they serve.
- The interns that I have worked with have been professional, ethical, and eager to learn and engage. They tend to be prepared to work with trauma and couples. I have stopped taking interns from other universities over the years due to feeling like they are less prepared than WKU Counseling Dept. students and receiving less support from their programs.
- They come well equipped with the expectation that they have more to learn, but enough of an understanding to practice and work with as a supervisor.
- I love the frequency with which the program reviews recorded sessions from the interns.

Recommendations from site supervisors were as follows:
- The changing of site supervisors has been quite confusing for my intern at times, as there are subtle differences in the way they communicate about expectations for WKU breaks and what that means for being on-site with clients.
- I would like to see more coverage from faculty supervision during breaks such as Christmas. We are a residential program not outpatient so when we give interns a case load to work then there are gaps in services during these extended breaks.
- I would like to see better training in a wider variety of theoretical perspectives.
- Somewhat lacking professionalism sometimes, specifically regarding replying to emails and/or respecting other parties' time.
- I was not a fan of the 7-week gap over December and January of this school year when the interns were not allowed to see clients. It felt a little reckless to me for these clients to have to be put on pause because there was not an advisor at the school to support the interns.

Faculty are pleased with the feedback from Site Supervisors and employers regarding our students' preparation, skill set, and ethics. We appreciate the honesty of responders and we are excited about the services our interns are prepared to provide the community.

The Department is a proponent of wellness and life balance, which is also an ethical mandate and accreditation requirement. Further, students and faculty are expected to follow official, university breaks; therefore, are not permitted to see engage in the clinical experience (or supervisory experiences) outside of this time; nor should faculty host formal instructional outside of their assignments.

C. Counselor education program faculty provide evidence of the use of program evaluation data to inform program modifications.

Other updates have been made or are in the process as a response to new CACREP standards and policy, as well as a result of program assessment related discussions among faculty and staff.

1. Per CACREP policy, the Department will begin requiring "Counseling Weekend Intensives" in the fall of 2026, as a requirement in both the CNS 554 Group Counseling and CNS 557 Techniques of Counseling courses. Please see the agreed upon details on the CMHC and MCFC program websites and schedule accordingly. (Students must attend the entire intensive to pass the respective course.) Schedule and details are posted on the Department website.
2. Department Personnel Updates:
   a. Rhonda Jones' position is in the process of being reclassified to Program Manager, Counseling. In this role, Rhonda will continue to relieve faculty of some of the administrative burden of department as coordinator and academic advisor of the Addictions Education Graduate Certificate program, counseling admissions process, and the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination. She will also provide administrative support related to CACREP, assisting with part-time faculty, advising non-degree seeking students seeking licensure, as well as marketing and recruitment. I am grateful to Dean Murphy who has made it possible to invest in new resources that make Rhonda's new (master's degree required) position possible.
   b. Bethany's hours and responsibilities as Director the TFCC and Director of Professional Practice have increased to also relieve faculty of counseling programmatic obligations.
3. New Student Orientation, now held within weeks of being admitted versus months includes a summary of major points in the *Counseling Student Handbook* including how to matriculate through the program (i.e., using Degree Works, the Program of Study available on the website).
4. Admission
   a. Non-degree Seeking Students. New messaging updated on the website: *The Department does not recommend that those who are interested in pursuing a degree in counseling enroll as a non-degree seeking student. Given the clinical nature of this degree (i.e., necessity of supervision*

throughout the entire program), accreditation requirements, as well as the need for formal advising, those interested in pursuing a counseling degree should apply to the respective CMHC or MCFC concentration by the application deadline.

5. Use of Artificial Intelligence.
    a. The following will not be expected in all courses: *USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTEGRITY (AI) Due to the personal, reflective nature of the assignments in this course, use of AI is not permitted unless otherwise indicated by instructor. Per the Department's Counseling Student Handbook, using AI outside of the perimeters guidelines is considered academic misconduct. Additionally, per the WKU Student Handbook, students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in a course without possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present the case to the Office of Student Conduct.*

6. Part-time Faculty Orientation. The Blackboard Part-time Faculty Orientation has been updated to include important updates within the program. An end-of-the-Semester communication to part-time faculty will also be sent regarding frequently questions that have surfaced over the last year, as well as other information.

D. Counselor education program faculty disseminate an annual report that includes, by program level, (1) a summary of the program evaluation results, (2) subsequent program modifications, and (3) any other substantial program changes. The report is published on the program website in an easily accessible location, and students currently in the program, program faculty, institutional administrators, and personnel in cooperating agencies (e.g., employers, site supervisors) are notified that the report is available.

E. Counselor education program faculty must annually post on the program's website in an easily accessible location the following specific information for each entry-level specialty area and doctoral program: (1) the number of graduates for the past academic year; (2) pass rates on credentialing examinations; (3) completion rates; and (4) job placement rates.

F.

This information is always included in the Vital Statistics Surveys that are posted at https://www.wku.edu/csa/evaluationdata.php.