

Intro Page 3: Annual Programmatic Review and Changes

Professional Considerations

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic impacted the delivery method of NKU's Counseling Program throughout the 2020-21 academic year. Despite the faculty's decision that most clinical courses within the program (e.g., Counseling Techniques, practicum, internship) would be taught in a face-to-face format in fall 2020, medical considerations established by the Commonwealth of Kentucky forced the university to a fully online delivery method. As of November 2020, the majority of courses utilized a virtual/synchronous format. In spring 2020, several courses (e.g., Counseling Techniques) returned to face-to-face instruction, utilizing the health and safety precautions established by the university (in conjunction with the Commonwealth).

Data Points

Program Data Point 1. Counseling Program Vital Statistics

At the faculty's request, the university reduced the program's metro tuition rate (governing students from Ohio and Indiana) from \$738 per credit hour to \$630 per credit hour. This 14.6% decrease makes the program among the least expensive in the Cincinnati metropolitan region. The faculty will monitor the number of applications to determine the extent to which the decrease impacts the program's profile in the region.

Program Data Point 2. Counseling Program Admission and Enrollment

A review of demographic information reveals a continued need to expand the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity within the program. The faculty has responded by increasing its recruitment efforts in the university's undergraduate Human Services & Addictions (HSR) Program. All Counseling faculty now teach in the HSR program, which is one of the more ethnically diverse programs in the College of Health & Human Services. Of the 176 students who are enrolled in the HSR program (i.e., those who list Human Services as a major, minor, or area of focus), 58 students (33%) are from underrepresented minorities. The presence of the counseling faculty, and the incorporation of their professional experiences in course presentations/discussions, has increased students' understanding of the relationship between human services and counseling, and expanded student awareness and knowledge of NKU's Counseling Program in general.

In terms of completion rates, NKU is a regional public university that values access to higher education. Historically, NKU has offered opportunities for students who would be unable to attain admission to more selective universities. This philosophy also permeates the counselor education program. The faculty believes traditional admission metrics are far from perfect, and that within reason, individuals should be given the opportunity to demonstrate success in the program. However, said leniency does not extend to the matriculation process. The program holds students to high standards, and as described elsewhere, NKU's students typically score very high on the CPCE, pass the NCE at high rates, and are successful in attaining licensure. It is through that lens the faculty views its completion rates, which have been added to this data point in the annual report.

Program Data Point 3. Annual Student Professional Development Plans

Faculty advisors propose and track Professional Development Plans. Students satisfy conditions for PDPs at an adequate rate.

Program Data Point 4. Counseling Program Learning Objectives

Key Objective Assessments (KOAs) have provided a clear means of assessing student learning according to the CACREP standards. Reviews of the KOAs at the end of each fall and spring semester inform decisions pertaining to modification of courses, as well as assignments.

Low scores in the Spring 2020 semester (e.g., COU 680) were attributed to a number of factors, including the shift to an all-online format mid-semester (due to COVID-19), as well as an influx of students from a new university who were adjusting to NKU's program.

Program Data Point 5. Admission to Practicum and Internship

Enrollment in Practicum and Internship is consistent with admissions and matriculation.

Program Data Point 6. Evaluation of Internship

The program currently employs several systematic approaches to obtaining site supervisor and graduate data. These approaches include site supervisor evaluations at the cessation of students' clinical field experiences, as well as the university's Destination Survey.

In the fall of 2020, the faculty added a block of questions to the practicum and internship evaluations in both the School and Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs. These queries seek stakeholders' views on the knowledge-, skill-, and disposition-related development at which the counseling program aims. Specifically, the program asks site supervisors to evaluate the following questions on a three-point Likert Scale (1 = Does Not Meet Expectations, 2 = Meet Expectations, 3 = Exceeds Expectations), and seeks qualitative feedback on the strength and growth areas for the program.

Based on the data collected, the stakeholders are satisfied with the program's efforts. One stated the program provides a "great base of knowledge" for students to build upon in clinical practice. Another offered, "NKU appears to be one of the more rigorous programs in the area... This is appropriate since the field itself is or can be rigorous." The faculty has begun working to address some of the recommended changes (i.e., offering CE trainings for supervisors).

Program Data Point 7. Counseling Program Comprehensive Exam (CPCE)

Our students continue to score above the national mean on the CPCE.

Program Data Point 8. National Exams

Pass rates on National Exams are 100%.

Program Data Point 9. Recommendations for Certifications and/or Licensure

The Commonwealth of Kentucky does not require school counselors to pass credentialing examinations as a condition of practice. Kentucky's Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB), which oversees school counselors within the state, issues certifications for the field.

Recommendations for certifications remained consistent with graduation rates.

Program Data Point 10. Post-Graduation Review

The Destination Survey is sent out by the university every fall and spring semester and asks recent graduates about their current employment status. The school and clinical mental health counseling program directors collaborate with analysts from NKU's Office of Institutional Research to develop counseling-specific questions (Yes/No) and prompts (evaluated via a Likert Scale) for program graduates. Given the low response rate, the faculty continues to investigate alternative means for collecting more reliable program data from graduates. These include conducting using social media (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn), and using other forms of technology (e.g., e-mail, text) to notify recent graduates of the availability and importance of the Destination Survey. The survey will also be modified to enhance insight into job placement rates.

The faculty recognizes the need to enhance stakeholder input in the program, and – in the fall of 2020 – designed modifications to its end-of-semester evaluations to facilitate that. The new questions/prompts were collected within the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program for the two subsequent semesters (Spring & Summer 2021), and will be used by the School Counseling Program beginning in Fall 2021. The findings may be located within Program Data Point 6.

Program Data Point 11. Supervisee Evaluation of Site and Site Supervisor

The data suggest students believe their sites and site supervisors are providing effective training experiences. In 2020, the faculty introduced a more formalized process for evaluating and monitoring opportunities for professional activities offered at participating field sites, adding questions to the midterm and final evaluations in field placement courses aimed at assessing students' development of counseling skills, dispositions, and engagement in professional activities at their field sites.

Program Data Point 12. Counselor Disposition Rating

Student Dispositions are incorporated in the KOAs. Dispositions on average improve throughout the program. Disposition survey questions are included in the KOAs for the orientation courses COU 600 and COU 602, COU 640: Counseling Techniques, and COU 691-2: Counseling Internship.

Program Data Point 13. Faculty to Student Ratios

Faculty-to-Student Ratios are within the parameters established by CACREP.