

WCU

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

Department of Counselor Education

Annual Evaluation Summary
Academic Year 2019-2020



Introduction

The purpose of this report is to inform our department's stakeholders (e.g., students, alumni, site supervisors, etc.) on the assessment data collected by the department, as well as inform those stakeholders on program modifications we have made as a result of collecting and analyzing those data.

While our department is in a constant process of collecting and analyzing data, this report will outline several specific data elements that have been integral in assessing the work of our program, our faculty, and our students. Specifically, this report will discuss data collected on:

- Our New Student Orientation program held each semester for newly matriculated students;
- The survey conducted annually to collect data from our site supervisors on program and student performance;
- The survey conducted annually to collect data from our alumni on program performance;
- The survey conducted annually to collect data from our alumni employers on student and program performance;
- Data collected regarding administration of our comprehensive examination;
- Data collected on student performance on the National Counselor Examination (NCE) and PRAXIS II exam for school counseling candidates
- Aggregate data regarding student learning related to standards established by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Academic Programs (CACREP).

This report will also outline program modifications made as a result of these data, as well as other substantial program changes made during the 2019-20 academic year.

It is our hope that through this report, we can inform our stakeholders on the effectiveness of our program, the successes of our students, the modifications made, and the ways in which we are constantly working to improve our teaching, student learning, and our overall academic program. Thank you for your attention and we hope this report is useful. If you have any feedback, please do not hesitate to reach out to our department's Assessment Coordinator, Dr. Peter J. Boccone (pboccone@wcupa.edu).

Summary of Program Assessment Data

New Student Orientation

At the beginning of each academic year, we hold an orientation program for new students who have matriculated to the department. Goals of the New Student Orientation are as follows:

1. Students will connect with faculty and other students to help with transition to a new environment, college, program.
2. Students will be able to articulate the expectations of graduate level work in the Department of Counselor Education.
3. Students will develop an emerging understanding of the ethical, legal, and professional obligations of professional counselors/counselors-in-training, and the consequences for violation of these standards.
4. Students will understand course sequencing for their particular track.
5. Students will be exposed to information in their particular track, which will help them to be successful in the program.
6. Students will understand the requirements for licensure and/or certification.

At the conclusion of the program, we assess how well we met these goals through a simple survey instrument. The results of that survey are as follows:

Fall, 2019

Question 1: This orientation helped me to connect to fellow students

Agree = 13

Somewhat Agree = 16

Neither Agree or Disagree = 5

Somewhat Disagree = 1

Question 2: This orientation helped me feel better prepared to start the program

Agree = 29

Somewhat Agree = 6

Question 3: I understand the expectations for me as a graduate student

Agree = 29

Neither Agree or Disagree = 1

Somewhat Agree = 5

Question 4: I understand the course sequencing for my specialty

Agree = 29

Neither Agree or Disagree = 1

Somewhat Agree = 5

Question 5: I know where I can go to additional information if I have questions

Agree = 33

Somewhat Agree = 1

Somewhat Disagree = 2

Question 6: It was helpful to hear about the program from a current student

Agree = 33

Somewhat Agree = 2

Site Supervisor Survey

The department surveys our site supervisors in an effort to better understand their experiences working with our department. Specifically, the survey is designed to determine how well our department liaises with our sites, aggregate student performance on site, and how well students are prepared for their work in the field.

Overall, there were 45 participants who completed the Site Supervisor Survey. Of the 45, 14 supervised WCU counselor education students for internship, 16 supervised WCU counselor education students for practicum, and 15 supervised WCU counselor education students for both internship and practicum. The breakdown of setting included: 19 Elementary school; 8 Middle school; 15 High School; and 8 Clinical settings.

When asked about the Quality of Communication between the Site Supervisor and their WCU faculty member, 16 responded to the item and rated the communication as *Very Good*.

The following set of questions answered by Site Supervisors gauged how well we prepared our students in regard to specific counseling skills and characteristics. The first question centered on acting in an ethical manner. Responses showed that approximately 95% of participants either *Strongly Agree* (91%) or *Somewhat Agree* (4.5%) that WCU prepared our students to act in an ethical manner when working with clients. Approximately 2% indicated they *Neither Agree nor Disagree* and 2% that they *Somewhat Disagree*. Next, participants were asked if they agreed that WCU prepared students with the necessary skills to be effective for that individual site. Data show 93% of Site Supervisors *Strongly Agree* (58%) or *Somewhat Agree* (35%) concerning necessary skills for the site. There were three participants that indicated they *Neither agree nor disagree* and three that indicated they *Somewhat disagree*.

Site Supervisors were asked if they agreed that WCU prepared the supervisees to meet the counseling needs of clients from diverse backgrounds. Overall, the majority (93%) of Site Supervisors indicated they *Strongly agree* (69%) or *Somewhat agree* (24%) students were prepared to work with client from a diverse background, with 1 participant selecting *Neither agree nor disagree* and 2 selecting *Somewhat disagree*. In regard to preparing students to maintain appropriate records, 88% selected *Strongly agree* or *Somewhat agree*, 8% selected *Neither agree nor disagree* and 2% selected *Strongly disagree*. The next question focused on being an effective advocate, where 95% of participants selected *Strongly agree*, 39% *Somewhat agree*, with the remaining respondents selecting *Neither agree nor disagree*.

The last two questions regarding WCU's preparation for our students related working with clients in a holistic manner and empowering clients. Again, the majority of Site Supervisors (91%) selected *Strongly agree* or *Somewhat agree*, 6% *Neither agree nor disagree*, and 2% *Somewhat disagree*.

We also gave the Site Supervisors an opportunity to openly respond to how WCU might improve the preparation of our counseling students to meet the needs of the sites and their clients, as well as to leave any additional feedback to any of the above questions. Minimal suggestions for how to improve were provided and no specific theme appeared in the data.

Alumni Survey

Similar to the Site Supervisor Survey, at the end of each academic year, the department surveys our alumni in an effort to better understand their experiences as students in our programs. Our goals are to understand their level of preparation, support, and overall experience as master's students in our department.

In 2019/2020, there were 19 participants who completed the Alumni survey. Of the 19 participants, 3 (7%) graduated in 2019 and 16 (93%) graduated in 2020. Of the 19 respondents, 6 graduated with a degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with the remaining 13 having earned a School Counseling Degree. Of the professional organizations in which participants were members, 5 were members of the American Counseling Association (ACA), 9 of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), 3 of the PA School Counseling Association (PSCA), and 2 "Other."

When asked about their current employment status, 79% were employed in the field, with 21% not employed in the field of counseling. Of those employed, 20% secured a job prior to graduation, 60% within 3 months of graduation and 20% within 6 months of graduation.

Employer Survey

The department has attempted to survey employers of our alumni in order to understand how well students are prepared for their work as professional counselors. In 2019/2020 we had a total of two responses. Of the two participants, one was from a Higher Education/Student Affairs setting and the other from a k-12 setting. Academic degree, the reputation of WCU's counselor education programs, applicant personality, and applicant interview skills were named as the top reasons employers hired these individuals. Areas that received the highest ratings regarding training that our graduates received included: overall counseling skills, knowledge of current issues, skills in dealing with diversity, and ability to develop a working alliance with clients. Employers commented on our students being up-to-date in the field, their ability to build rapport, excited to come to work, ability to implement high-quality educational programming. In the future, we hope to gain additional participants to add to the employer data.

Comprehensive Examination

Students in the department are required to take the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) at the conclusion of their academic program. The purpose of this exam is to serve as a final gatekeeper in ensuring the students has acquired the core content necessary to be competent in the field. A passing score is set at one standard deviation below the national mean.

In Fall of 2019, 38 students took the exam, of which 37 successfully completed during the initial administration. The student who did not successfully complete the initial exam was successful in their remediation.

During Spring 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak occurred and subsequent closures of various facilities made it impossible for outgoing students to participate in the CPCE. In response to this unforeseen complicated, a CPCE-Alternative was created in-house to serve as a replacement. The Alternative included exclusively multiple-choice items, each linked to the content areas associated with the original CPCE. Twenty-two students participated in this CPCE-Alternative during Spring 2020 and all of them passed.

In Summer of 2020, 8 students took the CPCE-Alternative, all of which successfully completed during the initial administration.

National Counselor Examination (NCE) and Praxis Examination

Over the course of the 2019-2020 academic year, 9 WCU students took the National Counselors Examination (NCE). All 9 students (100%) successfully completed the exam. Twenty-six students took the Praxis II. All 26 students (100%) successfully completed the exam.

KPIs and CACREP Standards

In our ongoing commitment to providing an educational experience that is true to our department statement and in accordance with CACREP standards, faculty members collected data on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to determine the effectiveness of our teaching, as well as the outcomes for our students.

In order to assess student learning for each KPI, faculty determine the percentage of students who successfully complete the given course assignment (e.g., exam, case study, etc.) and report those data back to the department.

Synopsis of Fall 2019/Spring 2020/Summer 2020 KPI CACREP Data

In Fall 2019, three outcomes were not met. Each of these outcomes were related to a different CACREP standard and In Spring 2019, five outcomes were not met. Each of these outcomes were related to a different CACREP standard but in all cases, the outcome not met was measured via a specific content area of the CPCE (i.e., professional orientation, career development, and assessment). All other outcomes for these standards however were met. Outcomes measured over Spring and Summer 2020 were all met. It is important to note however that, as mentioned above, during these terms the CPCE was unavailable due to COVID-19 and a CPCE-Alternative was created to replace it temporarily. The Alternative however was not a standardized assessment however and thus could not be used to collect data related to any CPCE-based outcomes. Moving forward, faculty will revisit the way in which content is delivered, specific to the areas addressed above, and how students are prepared for demonstrating knowledge via multiple choice examinations.