

Date: September 6, 2024

To: Rachel Bowser, Ph.D., Dean of the College, Agnes Scott College
Kelly Ball, Ph.D., Dean for Graduate Studies, Agnes Scott College

CC: Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Core Faculty

From: Jennifer Fulling-Smith, Ph.D., LPC, ACS, RPT-S, Director & Associate Professor

Dear Dean Bowser, Dean Ball, and Counseling Program Advisory Board and Stakeholders,

This annual report summarizes the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program's program evaluation results, program modifications made as a result of the program evaluation, and any other substantial program changes and program accomplishments. This summary is from Academic Year (AY) 2023-2024.

Program Evaluation Results

Admissions Data

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling program conducted its admissions review for the cohort entering this Fall of 2024 on a rolling basis throughout the AY 2023-2024. The Program Director along with graduate admissions staff reviewed all applicants with completed materials. If there was discrepancy between the Program Director and the graduate admissions staff (the Clinical Mental Health Counseling admissions counselor), then a review for a decision went to a counseling faculty member (the Clinical Coordinator). The applications received and reviewed for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program across AY 2023-2024 totaled 152. Of those 152 applicants, 118 were offered admission, 92 enrolled, and 83 students started the program this August of 2024.

The table below reflects the demographics of the applicant pool. The total number of applicants who applied, were admitted, and enrolled in the program, including those who deferred or renege, or withdrew after enrollment and before classes started, for Fall 2024 are reported. For Fall 2024, there were 83 students who started the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. 98% of the students who started the program were in-state, 2% were out of state, and 0% were international. 51% of students for this admissions cycle identified as BIPOC. 6% identified as non-binary or transgender.

Admissions 2024	Total	Out of State	In-State	Intern'l	BIPOC	Gender Minority (T&NB)
Applied	152	5	144	3	66	11
Admitted	118	5	112	1	60	10
Enrolled	92	4	88	0	48	5

Deferred to 2025	5	0	5	0	3	0
Reneged	4	0	4	0	3	0
Started Fall 2024	83	4	81	0	42	5

Counseling Program Demographic Data

During the 2023-2024 academic year, there were a total of 45 enrolled students across cohorts. To date, our program only allows full-time students. This upcoming year, there will be three that will be viewed as part-time due to needing to delay their clinical sequence (practicum and/or internship). This year, however, all students were full-time. 44% of the current counseling students identify as BIPOC. Regarding gender, 11% identify as non-binary/transgender, 82% as female, and 7% as male.

Total	Out of State	In-State	Intern'l	BIPOC	Gender Minority (T&NB)	Female	Male
45	6	39	0	20	5	37	3

Retention and Completion Rates

Retention and Completion for the Inaugural Cohort of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program:

The inaugural class of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program started in AY 2022-23 (Fall 2022), and included 25 students. Three of the 25 students discontinued their program of study in the first semester, and all three reported personal or family reasons for withdrawing, bringing the inaugural cohort size down to 22. After the second semester and before entering practicum and internship, one more student withdrew from the program citing the reason for withdrawing was due to the desire to complete the clinical sequence at an unapproved clinical site. The inaugural class graduates included 18 students. 82% of the inaugural cohort graduated in two years from the start of the program, which was May 2024. Of the remaining 21 students, three delayed their clinical sequence, therefore, lengthening their program of study by one year. All three of those students were on track to complete their program of study as planned at the time of this report.

Retention for the Second Cohort of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program:

The second cohort of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program started in AY 2023-24 (Fall 2023), and included 24 students. One of the 24 left within the first semester citing personal reasons for withdrawing from the program, bringing the cohort to 23 students. After the second semester and before entering practicum and internship, one more student withdrew from the program citing the reason for withdrawing was due to a desire to work at a clinical site that was not approved after being vetted by the Clinical Coordinator. The Clinical Coordinator discussed the potential site and concerns with the core program faculty and the

site was not approved by the faculty. In the third semester, one additional student took a leave of absence for personal and family reasons with plans to return next year in the program, bringing the cohort size to 21. To date, 88% of the second cohort has been retained and plans to graduate in May 2025.

Comprehensive Examination Pass Rates

The program's first administration of the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) was offered in Fall 2023 to 20 students who met eligibility criteria, which was to have completed coursework covered in the CPCE and be in good standing with the program. Only 19 students registered for the exam. Of the 19 students, 18 who were graduating and 1 who delayed only practicum and internship, all 19 passed the CPCE. The national mean for the CPCE during the administration of the exam was 76.45. Agnes Scott College's Clinical Mental Health Counseling students' mean score was 96, a full standard deviation above the national average. Below is a table of the program's CPCE mean scores by area.

School	Section	Items	n	Mean	National Mean
Agnes Scott College	C1: Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice	17	19	11.5	10.12
Agnes Scott College	C2: Social and Cultural Diversity	17	19	11.8	9.5
Agnes Scott College	C3: Human Growth and Development	17	19	12.1	10.66
Agnes Scott College	C4: Career Development	17	19	11.8	9.37
Agnes Scott College	C5: Counseling and Helping Relationships	17	19	12.6	8.77
Agnes Scott College	C6: Group Counseling and Group Work	17	19	11.8	10.37
Agnes Scott College	C7: Assessment and Testing	17	19	11.5	8.37
Agnes Scott College	C8: Research and Program Evaluation	17	19	12.9	9.27
	Total	136	19	96	76.45

Credentialing Examination Pass Rates

During this annual review period, the NBCC's Handbook for the National Counselor Examination (NCE) reported that programs not accredited by CACREP were ineligible to offer

students registration to the NCE. Upon inquiry in Fall 2022 by the Program Director, NBCC personnel reiterated this. Given this, our program did not offer the NCE to program students before graduation and instead explained to graduating students where and how to register for the NCE post-graduation. In the state of Georgia, counseling program graduates not from a CACREP accredited program must receive approval from the state board after starting the Associate Professional Counselor (APC) application to sit for the NCE. Before applying to be an APC, graduates must have a place of employment with a director and a clinical supervisor. Given this, our program does not have data to report on NCE outcomes. After gaining our program completed the CPCE through NBCC and applied for CACREP accreditation, the Director received an email stating that our program could apply for students nearing graduation to complete the NCE before graduation. During the Summer 2024 semester, our program applied for and was approved to offer the NCE to students in the semester before graduation.

Employment Rates

This Summer 2024, the program launched an employer survey along with the graduation of its inaugural cohort. Given the survey launched and will remain open into Fall 2024, there is currently no data to report. The program anticipates reporting on employment rates of the inaugural cohort and employer feedback of counselor preparation based on program learning outcomes in next year's annual report on AY 2024-25. Anecdotally, from graduates returning to program events or informal emails and visits with faculty, 14 of the 18 graduates are employed in various settings, including private practice, community agencies, and private schools. The program expects to report more formally in AY 2024-25 that our employment rate for the inaugural cohort is 78% or greater. The survey collecting graduate employment launched Summer 2024 and is currently open for graduate completion.

Graduate Survey Results

As indicated in the section on Employment Rates, there is currently little formal data to report. The survey for graduates has been launched and is open. Data will be reported in the annual report for AY 2024-25. At the time of this report, all 18 grads were contacted, 2 responded by completing the graduate survey, which indicates an 11% response rate.

Employer Survey Results

As indicated in the section on Employment Rates, there is currently no data to report. The survey for employers has been launched and is open. Data will be reported in the annual report for AY 2024-25.

Site Supervisor Survey Results on Program Outcomes

At the time of this annual report, 29 site supervisors were contacted via email to provide programmatic feedback on program learning outcomes. Site supervisors were current, active site supervisors to the inaugural (completed practicum and internship) and second incoming cohort (initiated practicum at the launch of the survey). Two emails were returned undeliverable and 20 sites were represented in the program outreach. Of the possible 27 site supervisor responses, 7 site supervisors responded to the survey with feedback on 13 interns. This indicates a 26% response rate in the initial launch of the site supervisor survey on program outcomes.

The first program learning outcome is as follows: Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge in the social and behavioral sciences and its application to the profession of mental health counseling. Site supervisors indicated 92% of students/interns were well prepared or adequately prepared. The second program learning outcome is as follows: Engage in the delivery of counseling and helping skills including individual and group counseling, supervision, testing, interviewing, diagnosis, and assessment in an effort to promote emotional health and well-being. Site supervisors indicated 92% of students/interns were well prepared or adequately prepared. The third program learning outcome is as follows: Articulate the role of the professional mental health counselor within organizations (e.g., human service agencies, educational settings) based on populations served. Site supervisors indicated 92% of students/interns were well prepared or adequately prepared. The fourth program learning outcome is as follows: Use research and evaluation in the delivery of counseling services in a wide variety of settings (i.e., community agency, school, or organization). Site supervisors indicated 92% of students/interns were well prepared or adequately prepared. The fifth program learning outcome is as follows: Enhanced ability to work with individuals, groups, and communities representing diverse populations and to deliver ethical and culturally responsive mental health services. Site supervisors indicated 100% of students/interns were well prepared or adequately prepared.

Site Supervisor Survey of Clinical Sequence Feedback

Site supervisors generally rated our program students in their clinical sequence as proficient or exemplary as opposed to developing or unacceptable. Site supervisors responded to surveys on student skill development and acquisition at midterm and the end of each clinical sequence course: practicum, internship I, and internship II. The Clinical Coordinator examined site supervisor surveys administered during practicum and internship for an increase in scores to see if there is little or no improvement or growth in a given area. Interaction and interview skills were noted to have significant improvement or growth from practicum to internship II. It was noted by site supervisors that students did not demonstrate improvement in diagnosis or clinical assessments from practicum to internship despite the diagnosis and assessment course being held and completed before initiating practicum. A similar pattern was reported by site supervisors regarding ethical decision making where there is no demonstrated growth from practicum to internship I; however, growth or improvement is reflected between internship I and internship II. Overall, mean scores gradually increased every semester and in between midterm and final evaluations.

Program Modifications and Changes

Increased Faculty

In order to support the second cohort of Clinical Mental Health Counseling students, four new faculty were hired this year. These core program faculty began August 2023 and all were previously employed as counselor educators at other institutions.

Dr. Mary Chase Mize taught as an adjunct within our program in our inaugural year before becoming full-time, core faculty. Additionally, she completed a post-doc in Counselor Education at Georgia State University where she also completed her PhD in Counselor Education and Practice. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Approved Clinical Supervisor (ACS), and ASIST trainer, gerontologist, thanatologist, and is currently the

co-editor for the Chi Sigma Iota newsletter, *the Exemplar*. She specializes in suicide prevention and older adults.

Dr. Danielle Dunkley previously taught at the University of West Georgia full time in a clinical line. Her PhD is from Mercer University in Counselor Education. She is a LPC, ACS, National Certified Counselor (NCC), and is a private practitioner and researcher specializing in intergenerational and interpersonal trauma. Her teaching, supervision, and clinical work have focused on people who hold systemically marginalized identities. Her current research focuses on trauma within black families.

Dr. Regina Finan spent the past two years as tenure track faculty at the University of West Georgia. She received her PhD in Counselor Education from the University of Georgia. She had a previous long career in student affairs and academic advising in a local counseling program. She is actively seeking licensure as an LPC and holds an NCC. She specializes in social justice, intersectionality, and career counseling.

Dr. Amber Norman previously taught at Prescott College and the University of Central Florida over the past three years. She received her PhD from the University of Central Florida, and holds Florida licensure as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) and NCC. Her clinical work and scholarship are in human sexuality and diverse sexual expression and identity. She specializes in postmodern theories, experiential teaching, intersectionality, and sexuality.

With the addition of these four core faculty, our program now has six core full-time faculty members. Our program is also supported by two full-time tenure track faculty members in the psychology department at Agnes Scott College, one of which is a counselor educator, who teaches in our program each year.

Revised Course SLOs to Reflect Counselor Identity and Values

Over the course of this past academic year, the core counseling faculty in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program examined and revised course titles, descriptions, and student learning outcomes (SLOs) to reflect counselor professional identity. Faculty waited until each course was offered and underway to determine the extent to which changes were needed in each course. Most changes were nominal, but important in that the changes reflect increased attention to counselor wellness and reduced focus on pathology. Additionally, course titles and descriptions now provide clarity on what is actually being taught in each course and align with licensure requirements for LPC.

National Counselor Examination Offering Before Graduation

This academic year was the first cohort of students that were eligible for the National Counselor Exam (NCE) and/or the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE). Given we are not yet accredited by the Council for Accreditation on Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP) and did not have an established relationship with the National Board for Certified Counselors until this academic year, we were only able to offer the CPCE before graduation. This left our graduates for this academic year to take the NCE post-graduation. Given the barriers to licensure as an Associate Professional Counselor (APC) in Georgia this presents, our program applied with NBCC as soon as possible to offer the NCE

before graduation to future graduates. At the year end of AY 2023-2024, our application was under review.

Revised Admissions Reviews

Our program, with the support of the Graduate Admissions team, planned for a revised admissions process. This past academic year (2023-2024) the Program Director and the program dedicated Graduate Admissions Counselor reviewed all 152 Clinical Mental Health Counseling program applicants. The Clinical Coordinator served as a third reviewer when there was discrepancy in the recommendations made by the Program Director and the Graduate Admissions Counselor. This allowed the program to reduce the program service load to new faculty by protecting them from entering in their first year as core faculty in our program and taking on the task of reviewing applicants. Given the volume of applicants and leadership responsibilities of the Program Director and the Clinical Coordinator, this is not sustainable. During AY 2023-2024, the Program Director and the Senior Director of Graduate Admissions planned a revised process with the input from program faculty. In future academic years, applicant reviews will be made by the Program Admissions Committee. This committee includes two core program faculty to conduct thorough reviews of applicants, and a third core faculty member to review when there is discrepancy in recommendations from the first two core faculty. Graduate admissions will still have a program dedicated staff person, the Graduate Admissions Counselor, review all applicant materials and ensure application completion before being sent to the Program Admissions Committee. This revised process will involve more core program faculty in the admissions review process and distribute the service load more equitably among program faculty.

Seeking CACREP Accreditation

At this time of this annual report, our Clinical Mental Health Counseling program received a positive initial review from CACREP and we were recommended for a site visit this coming fall of 2024. Our program is excited to have received this news and we are committed to doing all we can to ensure a successful accreditation. We are eager to welcome site visitors in the coming academic year of 2024-2025.

Program Accomplishments and Future Directions

Student Accomplishments

Before graduation during an informal survey in internship, 78% of our Clinical Mental Health Counseling students reported already having secured job placement. As stated above, we are currently waiting on formal survey data post-graduation to report our actual employment rates from graduates. This survey is currently open for data collection and will remain open into AY 2024-2025. This data will be reported in the next annual report.

Additionally, our Clinical Mental Health Counseling students scored a standard deviation above the national average on the CPCE. Area scores were also reported above the national average in all eight areas on the CPCE.

Students and recent graduates took advantage of attending professional development opportunities offered within the program. AADA's national divisional conference was held at Agnes Scott College and sponsored by the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program and

Graduate Studies. Students and recent graduates presented and attended conference sessions in summer 2024.

One of our 18 graduates applied to Counselor Education PhD programs and was successful in being admitted to the doctoral program of their choice.

Faculty Accomplishments

During the 2023-2024 academic year, our Clinical Mental Health Counseling core faculty collectively published 6 journal articles, 4 book chapters, and presented 4 sessions at the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision national conference and twice at the American Counseling Association national conference. Two core faculty secured internal grants for teaching and scholarship. Two core faculty applied for a large scale federal grant that was not funded. One core faculty applied for a foundation grant to support a program based minority fellowship program that was not funded.

Conclusion

Our Clinical Mental Health Counseling program has had many successes this year with our first graduates from the inaugural cohort. We were able to recruit four new core counseling faculty and retain our two core counseling faculty and our two psychology department support faculty, including the one who is a counselor educator in identity and practice. Our students performed higher than the national average on the CPCE in all eight content areas. 78% of our students nearing graduation reported having already secured employment, with one gaining admission to their top choice doctoral program in counselor education. Our faculty were productive in scholarship while maintaining or working toward licensure and teaching newly launched course curriculum, with the second year sequence for the inaugural cohort being in its first iteration. Our program and leadership made some revisions to admissions review processes, and our program faculty revised course titles, descriptions, and SLOs for counselor identity alignment and general clarification for licensure purposes. We have launched newly developed surveys to gather graduate data on program learning outcomes, employment, and NCE since this academic year brought our first program graduates to assess. Additionally, we developed and launched site supervisor and employer surveys to gather feedback on program learning outcomes and areas for improvement. We are looking forward to continuing to develop and maintain community site partnerships and welcome our new cohort of 83 students for daytime and evening programs of study in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.