University of Pittsburgh

Department of Counseling and Behavioral Health
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program

Annual Report 2023-2024

Mission and Vision

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling program strives to be a world class educational program, delivering a personalized educational experience for future professional counselors. We prepare our students to address the complex challenges faced by clients of diverse backgrounds, including individuals across cultures, across the lifespan, and those with disabilities and mental and behavioral health challenges. Our program emphasizes experiential training in evidence-based practices while advancing the field through clinical research. We are committed to community engagement, advocacy, and promoting diversity, inclusion, and cultural humility.

Objective of the Annual Report

This report reflects a summary of program outcomes of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program within the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Department of Counseling and Behavioral Health, for the academic year spanning September 1, 2023 to August 31, 2024. Portions of this report are required by our accrediting body, the *Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)*. These sections provide details on applications, enrollment, evaluation of student performance, graduation rates, certification and licensure status of graduates, and employment outcomes.

Counseling Faculty

Counseling Faculty Members (CACREP core faculty)

- Michelle Schein, PhD, CRC, LPC
- Jamie Kulzer, PhD, CRC, LPC
- Quiana Golphin, PhD, LPC, NCC
- Michael Pramuka, PhD, CRC
- Chandra Carey, PhD, CRC

Counseling Faculty Members (Non CACREP core)

- Laura Dietz, PhD
- Eric Meyer, PhD
- Roger Little, MS
- Molly Gorzelsky

Applications and Enrollment

Application and enrollment data for the past three years are presented in **Table 1**. These data reflect the continued growth of the program. The number of applicants we have attracted has steadily increased over the past three years. Additionally, beginning for Fall 2024, the counseling program implemented interviews for applicants.

Table 1. Application and enrollment data: 2022-2024

	2022	2023	2024
Total size of incoming class	31	30	31
Total applications received	137	168	189
Completed and valid applications received by the application deadline	110	122	166
Offered regular admission	67 (61%)	71 (58%)	55 (33%)
Initially accepted offer of admission	36 (53%)	38 (54%)	34 (62%)
Offered wait-list admission	27 (25%)	21 (17%)	38 (23%)
Offered admission from waitlist	0	10 (48%)	4 (11%)
Deferred/withdrew admission	5 (5%)	8 (10%)*	5 (9%)
Enrolled from number of complete/valid applications	29 (26%)	30 (25%)	28 (17%)
Enrolled from total number offered admission*	29 (43%)	30 (33%)	28 (47%)
Admitted following prior deferral	2	0	3
Part-time students enrolled	0	0	0
Left the program before completing	0	4**	0

* Includes wait-list admission offers
**1 student currently on leave of absence

Student Characteristics

Table 2. Self-reported demographic data for the 2024 cohort

	Matriculated (n=31)
White	24
Hispanic or Latinx	0
Black or African American	3
Asian	6
American Indian	0
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0
Unknown	0
International Student	1
Veteran	1
With a Disability	2

*Students were able to identify with multiple categories.

Program Outcomes

Sixty-three students were enrolled in the counseling program during the 2023-2024 academic year. Thirty students participated in the clinical capstone examination.

Table 3. Clinical Capstone Examination Performance

Capstone Outcome	N = 30
Fail	0
Pass with Revisions	20 (67%)
Pass, unconditional	10 (33%)

Table 4. Graduation, employment, and certification data for those who entered the program <u>full-time</u> from 2020-2022

	2020	2021	2022
Entered the Program	25	20	31
Graduated	19 April 2022 1 August 2022 (76%[b])	20	29
Pursuing advanced doctoral or clinical studies	1	0	4
Job placement rate[a]	16 (80%)	20 (100%)	23 (100%)[c]
Survey response rate	84%	71%	55%
Employed in counseling field	17	20	19[c]

Certification
    CRC
    NCC
	
	2
	14
		
		1
		16
			
			0
			18

Employment Setting	• 10 Community Mental/Behavioral Health • 3 Private practice • 2 University counseling centers	• 9 Private practice • 8 Community Mental/Behavioral Health • 2 University Counseling Centers • 1 Secondary School • Public Vocational Rehabilitation	• 5 Private practice • 10 Community Mental/Behavioral Health • 2 University Counseling Center or Program • 2 Secondary School

Table 5. Graduation, employment, and certification data for those who entered the program <u>part-time</u> from 2019 to 2020[b]

	2018	2019	2020
Entered the Program	2	3	2
Graduated	2	3	1
Still enrolled in program	0	0	1
Pursuing doctoral studies	NA	NA	NA
Job placement rate[a]	100%	100%	100%
Employed in counseling field	1	3	1

Certification
    CRC
    NCC
	0
	2
		0
		2
			0
			1

Employment Setting	• Private practice • University	• Community MH/BH • Private Practice • University Disability Office	• Community MH/BH

Table 6. Key Performance Indicators: 2023-2024

Pitt Counseling Program Benchmark: 85% of students will meet or exceed expectations for each assessment.

1. PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING ORIENTATION AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE					
Key Performance Indicators	**Related CACREP Standards**	**First Assessment**	**Second Assessment**	**Results (Academic Year 2021-2022)**	**Reflection and Action Steps**
KPI 1: Students will demonstrate competency related to professional counseling orientation and professional practice.	2.F.1.b. the multiple professional roles and functions of counselors across specialty areas, and their relationships with human service and integrated behavioral health care systems, including interagency and interorganizational collaboration and consultation	**COUN 2730 FOUNDATIONS IN COUNSELING** (Knowledge) *What is Counseling?* Students will conduct a 5-10-minute introductory session with a simulated 'new' client explaining counseling while incorporating a creative approach.	**COUN 2751 CAPSTONE** (Knowledge and Skills) Students Capstone Paper and Oral Presentation will be evaluated using the Capstone grading rubric, which includes a section on Ethics.	**COUN 2730 FOUNDATIONS** (n=29): Exceed Expectations: 55% Meets Expectations: 41% Near Expectations: 3% **COUN 2751 Capstone Examination Ethics** (n=30): Exceed Expectations: 23% Meets Expectations: 73% Near Expectations: 3%	Meets Benchmark
2. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY					
Key Performance Indicators	**Related CACREP Standards**	**First Assessment**	**Second Assessment**	**Results**	**Reflection and Action Steps**
KPI 2: Students will demonstrate competency related to social and cultural diversity.	2.F.2.b theories and models of multicultural counseling, cultural identity development, and social justice and advocacy	**COUN 2730 CULTURE** (Knowledge) *Cultural Autobiography* Students will engage in thoughtful self-examination of how they have been socialized into their own culture as well as an analysis about their own knowledge and beliefs about	**COUN 2751 CAPSTONE** (Knowledge and Skills) Students Capstone Paper and Oral Presentation will be evaluated using the Capstone grading rubric, which includes a section on Cultural Humility.	**COUN 2731 CULTURE** (n=29): Exceed Expectations: 44% Meets Expectations: 44% Near Expectations: 10% **COUN 2751 Capstone**	80% of students met the mark of Cultural Diversity for the second KPI assessment, which falls just short of our ≥ 85% benchmark. This is a change from previous years. The program and CODEI committee are monitoring to see if this data point is an outlier or if

				Examination Culture (n=30): Exceed Expectations: 23% Meets Expectations: 57% Near Expectations: 20%	modifications need to be made. The CMHC program strives to infuse social and cultural diversity considerations throughout the program.
		multicultural issues and topics.			

3. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT					
Key Performance Indicators	**Related CACREP Standards**	**First Assessment**	**Second Assessment**	**Results**	**Reflection and Action Steps**
KPI 3: Students will demonstrate competency related to human growth and development.	2.F.3.a. theories of individual and family development across the lifespan 2.F.3.f. systemic and environmental factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior	**COUN 2732 Human Development** (2.F.3.f) (Knowledge) *Reflection Timeline Paper* Students will identify significant events they believe have impacted their development. Of these events, at least two events must have occurred during childhood, two during adolescence, and two during adulthood.	**COUN 2743 Family and Couples** (2.F.3.a) (Knowledge) *Response Paper 4* Students will conceptualize a couple's problem(s), describing the issues that contribute to or sustain the problem (including family development), and initial treatment goals	**COUN 2732 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT** (n=29) Exceed Expectations: 97% Near Expectations: 3% **COUN 2743 FAMILY AND COUPLES** (n=29) Exceed Expectations: 100%	Meets Benchmark

4. CAREER DEVELOPMENT					
Key Performance Indicators	**Related CACREP Standards**	**First Assessment**	**Second Assessment**	**Results**	**Reflection and Action Steps**
KPI 4: Students will demonstrate competency related to career development.	2.F.4.a. theories and models of career development, counseling, and decision making 2.F.4.i. methods of identifying and using assessment tools and	**COUN 2724 Career Counseling and Vocational Issues** (2.F.4.a) (Knowledge) *Career Autobiography/Self-Assessment* Students will synthesize their personal understanding	**COUN 2724 Career Counseling and Vocational Issues** (2.F.4.i) (Skills) *Career Counseling Interview and Analysis* Students will complete an intake interview with a volunteer "client".	**COUN 2724 CAREER Assessment 1** (n=29): Exceed Expectations: 48% Meets Expectations: 48%	Meets Benchmark

				Near Expectations: 3%
	of career development and experiences learned throughout the semester. The assignment should be completed to demonstrate the insight gained while applying the course content which has been learned.			**COUN 2724 CAREER Assessment 2** (n=20): Exceed Expectations: 55% Meets Expectations: 41% Below Expectations: 3%	

5. COUNSELING AND HELPING RELATIONSHIPS					
Key Performance Indicators	**Related CACREP Standards**	**First Assessment**	**Second Assessment**	**Results**	**Reflection and Action Steps**
KPI 5: Students will demonstrate competency related to counseling and helping relationships.	2.F.5.g. essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization skills	**COUN 2733 SKILLS** (Skills) *Counseling Session with Actor* Students will conduct an initial counseling session with a paid actor, write a progress note, review the video and complete the assigned self-review topics/questions. After feedback from the instructor students will meet in person or via Zoom with the instructor for brief discussion of session strengths and opportunities for development.	**COUN 2747 CASE CONCEPTUALIZATION, TREATMENT PLANNING, AND CASE MANAGEMENT** (Knowledge) *Final Exam* Students will complete a case study using relevant Case Conceptualization forms that emphasizes goal setting and treatment planning.	**COUN 2733 SKILLS** (n=28): Exceed Expectations: 7% Meets Expectations: 75% Near Expectations: 14% Below Expectations: 4% **COUN 2747 Final** (n=29) Exceed Expectations: 14% Meets Expectations: 72% Near Expectations: 3%	The program benchmark is 85%, and we fell just short (82%). We acknowledge that this is the second year in a row we were at or near this expectation. We will monitor students who did not meet the benchmark during their practicum experiences to ensure they continue to hone their skills in case conceptualization as part of their broader development as counselors. We will also continue assessing if modifications to the curriculum are warranted. The program is also exploring additional ways to improve feedback to students and provide additional practice opportunities.

6. GROUP COUNSELING AND GROUP WORK

Key Performance Indicators	Related CACREP Standards	First Assessment	Second Assessment	Results	Reflection and Action Steps
KPI 6: Students will demonstrate competency related to group counseling and group work.	2.F.6.d. characteristics and functions of effective group leaders 2.F.6.e. approaches to group formation, including recruiting, screening, and selecting members	**COUN 2739 Group Counseling** (2.F.6.e) (Knowledge) *Group Proposal* Students will write a group proposal that includes the following sections: cover page, rationale, objectives, practical considerations (including recruiting, screening, and selecting members), procedures, evaluation, and references.	**COUN 2739 Group Counseling** (2.F.6.d) (Skills) *Final Oral Exam* Students will be presented with four scenarios, one each from the initial, transition, working, and final stage of the group. Students will describe the characteristics and functions of effective group leaders of each stage prior to engaging in a short role play demonstrating skills at each stage.	**COUN 2739 GROUP Assessment 1** (n=28): Exceed Expectations: 32% Meets Expectations: 57% Near Expectations: 11% **COUN 2739 GROUP Assessment 2** (n=29): Exceed Expectations: 89% Meets Expectations: 11%	Meets Benchmark

| 7. ASSESSMENT AND TESTING ||||||

Key Performance Indicators	Related CACREP Standards	First Assessment	Second Assessment	Results	Reflection and Action Steps
KPI 7: Students will demonstrate competency related to assessment and testing.	2.F.7.f. basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessments, and group and individual assessments 2.F.7.l. use of assessment results to diagnose developmental, behavioral, and mental disorders	**COUN 2737 Assessment** (2.F.7.f) (Knowledge) *Exam 1* Students will complete an examination related to basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessments.	**COUN 2751 CAPSTONE** (Knowledge and Skills) Students Capstone Paper and Oral Presentation will be evaluated using the Capstone grading rubric, which includes a section on Assessment and Diagnosis.	**COUN 2737 ASSESSMENT** (n=29) Exceeds Expectations: 3% Meets Expectations: 59% Near Expectations: 24% Below Expectations: 7% **COUN 2751 Capstone Examination Assessment** (n=30):	Assessment continues to be a challenging course for our students. We plan to evaluate the Fall 2024 KPI assessment data to determine if changes need to be made to the instruction or assessment to address this KPI.

				Exceed Expectations: 17% Meets Expectations: 77% Near Expectations: 7%	

8. RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION					
Key Performance Indicators	**Related CACREP Standards**	**First Assessment**	**Second Assessment**	**Results**	**Reflection and Action Steps**
KPI 8: Students will demonstrate competency related to research and program evaluation.	2.F.8.b. Identification of evidence-based counseling practices	**COUN 2748 EBP AND RESEARCH METHODS** (Knowledge) *Writing Assignment* Students will conduct an article analysis and evidence synthesis. Students identify three articles describing counseling practices, summarize the findings and critique the methods, compare and contrast the interventions and findings in order to draw conclusions regarding counseling practice, and deliver an in-class presentation on their conclusions.	**COUN 2751 CAPSTONE** (Skills) Students Capstone Paper and Oral Presentation will be evaluated using the Capstone grading rubric, which includes a section on EBP.	**COUN 2748 EBP Writing Assignment** (n=29): Exceed Expectations: 52% Meets Expectations: 48% **COUN 2751 Capstone Examination EBP (n=30):** Exceed Expectations: 23% Meets Expectations: 47% Near Expectations: 30%	A new instructor covered the EBP course for Fall 2023. This item was also noted by the students in the exit survey. Given the heavy emphasis on EBP for Capstone, we plan to revisit the EBP course to ensure students continue to be well prepared to complete the capstone experience. Data will be reevaluated for Fall 2024 to determine if further changes need to be made.

CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING					
Key Performance Indicators	**Related CACREP Standards**	**First Assessment**	**Second Assessment**		
KPI 9: Students will demonstrate competency related to clinical mental health counseling.	5.C.1.b theories and models related to clinical mental health counseling	**COUN 2734 COUNSELING THEORIES** (5.C.1.b) (Knowledge) *Examinations*	**COUN 2740 CLINICAL APPLICATIONS** (Skills) *CBT Session* Students will conduct a 45-minute CBT session with a	**COUN 2734 FINAL** (n=29) Exceeds Expectations: 76% Meets Expectations: 24%	Meets Benchmark

		Students will complete a Final Exam focusing on counseling theories.	Standardized/Simulated Patient (SP).	**COUN 2740 CLINICAL APPLICATIONS** (n=24): Exceed Expectations: 4% Meets Expectations: 96%	

For full-time students who matriculated in 2022 and who graduated in 2024 (n=29):

- 24% (n=7) met or exceeded all KPI assignments.
- 28% (n=8) met or exceeded all KPI assignments, except one assignment on which they were evaluated as being near expectations.
- 3% (n=1) met or exceeded all KPI assignments, except one assignment on which they were evaluated as being below expectations.
- 45% (n=13) had 2 or more near or below expectations ratings on KPI assignments.

Student Awards and Scholarships

Oyler Awards. Four students (Janaya Carlisle, Christina Murzynski, Gerret George, Kelisa Hysenbegasi) received the Nancy L. Oyler Student Award in Counseling. This award is designed to support and encourage graduate level training and clinical excellence in Rehabilitation. These awards support a portion of awardees' tuition.

CRESTS Scholarships. Three students (Victoria Huston, Katherine Soller, and Carlee Stelter) continued with the Certified Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Supporting Transition Success; (CRESTS) scholarships. These scholarships are made possible through a U.S. Department of Education training grant and fully fund the awardees' graduate training. They are designed to promote inter-disciplinary training in supporting those who are blind or visually impaired in achieving improved career outcomes and quality of life.

Evaluations of the Program

Student Exit Survey Results. We conducted an exit survey in 2024 with the full-time cohort who entered our program in 2022 and part-time students who graduated in April, June, or August 2024. Twenty-nine of 30 students (97%) responded. These data are presented in **Table 7**. All students responded to a prompt to describe our program's greatest strengths. These strengths included: numerous positive comments about the faculty as a whole being the program's greatest strength as well as strengths of specific faculty members, an inclusive and supportive environment, counseling skills evaluations through role plays, simulated clients, and skills recordings, strong emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion, including the integration of cultural considerations into multiple classes and activities.

Table 7. 2024 Exit survey results (n=29)

The Pitt Counseling Faculty:	Strongly Agree % (n)	Agree/Slightly Agree % (n)	Disagree/Slightly Disagree % (n)
Were effective teachers and able to successfully convey counseling and mental health knowledge	29	9	
Were effective in teaching clinical skills (counseling, case conceptualization, interviewing, etc.)	19	10	
Treated students with respect	20	9	
Had an open-door policy & were accessible & sensitive to different needs, learning styles, and diversity	16	12	1
Diversity and Equity	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree/Slightly Agree**	**Disagree/Slightly Disagree**
The curriculum content is inclusive.	13	15	1
Racially and culturally diverse issues or content are discussed in ways that feel safe and inclusive during class.	17	11	1
The professors seemed comfortable leading open and respectful discussions of racially and culturally diverse issues.	17	12	
The program helped me develop my competency in the following areas:	**Strongly Prepared % (n)**	**Adequately Prepared % (n)**	**Poorly Prepared % (n)**
Professional counseling orientation and professional practice	20	9	
Social and cultural diversity	16	12	1
Human growth and development	16	13	
Career development	10	17	2
Counseling and helping relationships	24	5	
Group counseling and group work	16	13	
Assessment and testing	16	13	
Research and program eval	9	15	5
Clinical mental health counseling	23	6	
Clinical Placements	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree/Slightly Agree**	**Disagree/Strongly or Slightly Disagree**
I am satisfied with the clinical placement process	14	10	5
I completed my placements at one of my preferred sites for practicum/internship.	14	9	6
Beyond accruing the required hours, my practicum/internship training made a valuable contribution to my development as a counselor	16	13	

Overall Program Assessment	Strongly Agree	Agree/Slightly Agree	Disagree/Slightly Disagree
The exams, activities, and clinical evaluations were a good measure of my knowledge & skills	8	20	1
At the time of graduation, I feel that I am well prepared for entry-level into the field	10	18	1
The Pitt Counseling Program helped me develop my identity as a counselor	13	16	
At the time of graduation, I am satisfied with my overall experience in the Pitt Counseling Program	15	14	

Alumni Survey. 17 of 30 graduates (57%) responded to this survey, the results of which are presented in **Table 8**.

Table 8. 2024 Alumni survey

	2024 (n=17)
	% (n)
Program prepared you to function effectively as an entry-level professional	
Strongly agree	65% (11)
Agree	29% (5)
Neither agree nor disagree	6% (1)
NCC	
Yes	71% (12)
Applied, haven't taken yet	12% (2)
No, still considering	12% (2)
No, not currently considering	6% (1)
Licensed	
Currently pursuing	47% (8)
Plan to start in the future	41% (7)
Undecided or not interested in pursuing	12% (2)
Current Salary	
Less than $40,000	0
$40,000 – 45,000	20% (3)
$45,000 – 50,000	13% (2)
$50,000 – 55,000	33% (5)
$55,000 – 60,000	7% (1)
$60,000 – 65,000	20% (3)
No Answer	7% (1)

Programmatic Changes, Improvements, and Response based on AY23/24:

Based upon feedback in response to the exit and alumni surveys, the following programmatic changes, improvements, and responses have been identified:

- Counseling skills and helping relationships
  - For AY 24/25, students who did not meet the benchmark for the KPI in counseling skills will be monitored during their practicum experiences to ensure they continue to hone their skills in case conceptualization as part of their broader development as counselors. We will also continue assessing if modifications to the curriculum are warranted.
  - The program is also exploring additional ways to improve feedback to students and provide additional practice opportunities.
  - For AY 25/26, the program is exploring capping the sizes of the skills class to ensure additional opportunities for feedback from instructors. This includes breaking the skills courses into smaller sections with fewer students.
- Evidence-based practice and research methods
  - A new instructor covered the EBP course for Fall 2023, though this item was also noted by the students in the exit survey. Given the heavy emphasis on EBP for Capstone, we plan to revisit the EBP course to ensure students continue to be well prepared to complete the capstone experience. Data will be reevaluated for Fall 2024 to determine if further changes need to be made.
- Practicum/internship process
  - Practicum and internship placement continues to be a source of stress for students. At this time, Dr. Schein continues to chair the clinical coordination. Given her expanded role as the program director and Vice Chair for Education in the Department, the program is actively working on to hire a new clinical coordinator who would have more dedicated time to devote to this role for AY 25-26.
- More application of different theories (ability to practice theories) and more modern theories
  - Given the structure of the counseling theories class, application is not the primary focus. We are exploring ways to include additional theories into the supervision didactic sessions.

- Greater emphasis on LGBTQ+ issues
  - As the program strives to take a broad approach to cultural humility, we encourage students interested in specific populations and issues to focus on specific populations through their projects in individual courses.
- More support from faculty
  - In reflecting on these comments, we note that the majority of students identified the faculty as the greatest program strength. In the next program retreat, we plan to identify additional resources we can share with students and assess communication strategies with the cohorts.
- Additional program changes based upon discussions in faculty meetings
  - Explore the possibility of adding additional electives