



Gannon University

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program

2012

Program Evaluation

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Evaluation

Review of Current Program Goals

Counselor Knowledge

Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination
National Counselor Exam

Counselor-in-Training Skills

Counselor Skills Scale
Counselor Skill and Personal Development Rating
Site Supervisor Evaluation

Counselor Awareness

Multicultural Assessment

Consumer Satisfaction

Alumni Survey
Employer Survey
Site Supervisors Program Survey
Graduating Students Survey
Graduating Students Focus Groups
Employment

Faculty Evaluations

Additional Evaluations

Review of 2008 Action Plan

Action Plan

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Evaluation

Passion for Excellence

The mission Gannon University's Clinical Mental Health Counseling program is to educate and train students to become professional counselors who are committed to the wellness of individuals, families, groups, and the greater community. The philosophy of the program focuses on the development of the competencies required of professional counselors. The program is committed to (a) enhancing students' knowledge of counseling theory and concepts; (b) developing strategies to facilitate human growth and development over the lifespan; (c) providing skills and training requisite of generalist entry-level counseling practitioners; (d) developing multicultural competencies; (e) promoting the development of sound legal and ethical decision-making skills; and (f) preparing individuals for national certification and professional licensure. Although students are typically drawn from the regional area, applicants with diverse backgrounds and from outside the region are encouraged to apply. Students are guided to embody and contribute to the spirit of diversity to which the program and profession are committed.

Review of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program

The goals of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program are delineated in our assessment plan: counselor knowledge; counselor-in-training skills; counselor awareness; consumer satisfaction; and employment. In the spring of 2012, the faculty adopted Student Learning Outcomes which will be added to future assessment plans and program evaluation. Program evaluation is conducted on a continuous basis in order to assess how the program meets each of these program goals. A formal Program Evaluation Report is generated on a three year cycle. *The following results are derived from accumulated program data stemming from the following academic years: Fall 2008/spring 2009, fall 2009/spring 2010, and fall 2010/spring 2011.* Other appropriate data is derived from year end reports, outcome assessments, faculty evaluations, and embedded evaluations. The action plan reflects these evaluations and emphasizes continuous improvement.

Counselor Knowledge

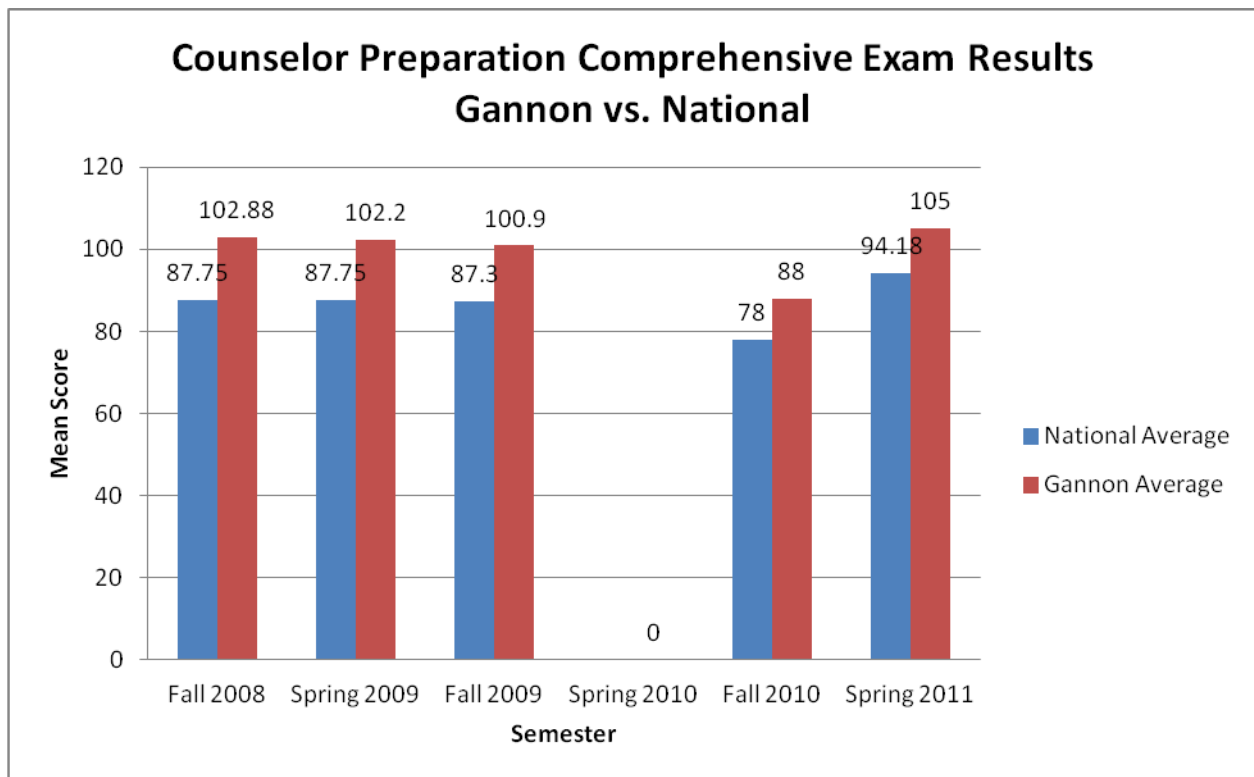
Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination

The Gannon University Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program utilizes the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) as a mechanism to evaluate students' core knowledge of counselor competency areas. The CPCE is maintained by the Center for Credentialing and Education, an affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). The CPCE is utilized by over 330 universities and colleges. The CPCE is designed to assess students' knowledge of the common core information viewed as important by counselor preparation programs. The CPCE consists of 160 items with 20 items per CACREP content area. Of the 20 items per section, 17 are scored items and the remaining three are pretest items. Scores

for each section and total scores are reported for each student. The content on the CPCE is similar to the National Counselor Examination (NCE), which is used for national certification for the Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) credential and for the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) credential in Pennsylvania and 43 other states. The CPCE serves as a strong mechanism to assist students with assessing areas of content knowledge, increasing the likelihood of being successful on the NCE. The CPCE has been administered to Gannon University Counseling students since spring 2005. A passing score must be within one standard deviation of the national mean for each of the eight content areas on the test. Students can remediate up to two content areas in which they do not attain passing scores. Failure to pass three or more content areas constitutes failing the exam. Some students have had to remediate 1-2 content areas on the exam since 2005 but no student has failed the CPCE.

Results

Gannon students have consistently scored at or above the national mean for each content area. In addition, students’ overall scores on the CPCE have also been consistently at or above the national mean (see Chart).



**Note: No students took the CPCE in Spring 2010.*

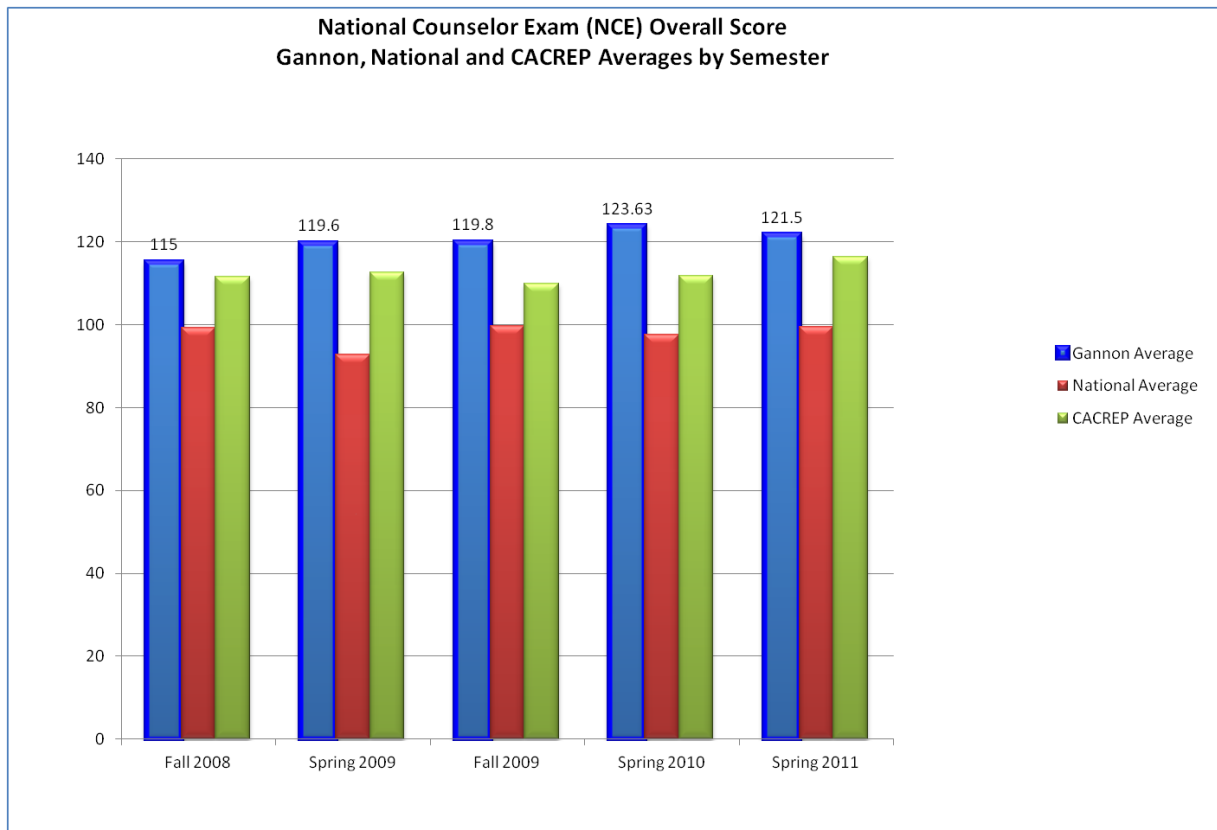
National Counselor Exam

The National Counselor Exam (NCE) is used for two purposes: national counselor certification and state counselor licensure. The purpose of the NCE is to assess knowledge, skills, and abilities viewed as important for providing effective counseling services. The NCE is designed to be general in nature and is comprised of 200 multiple choice questions to be administered in a four hour period. Of the 200 items, 40 are pretest items and not included in the passing score. 160 items are scored to determine the minimum criterion for that form of the NCE. The pass rate average for the NCE ranges from 78-80%.

Satisfactory performance on the NCE is one of the criteria used by NBCC to identify professionals who may be eligible to become a National Certified Counselor (NCC). The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania uses the NCE for state credentialing as a Licensed Professional Counselor. The majority of states use the NCE for counseling licensure. The NCE is administered to Gannon University Clinical Mental Health Counseling students in their last semester or within six months of graduation.

Results

From fall 2008 through spring 2011, Gannon students have consistently scored well above the national mean and have first-time pass rate of 92% since fall 2008 (see Chart).



**Note: No students took the NCE in Fall of 2010.*

Revised 1/29/13

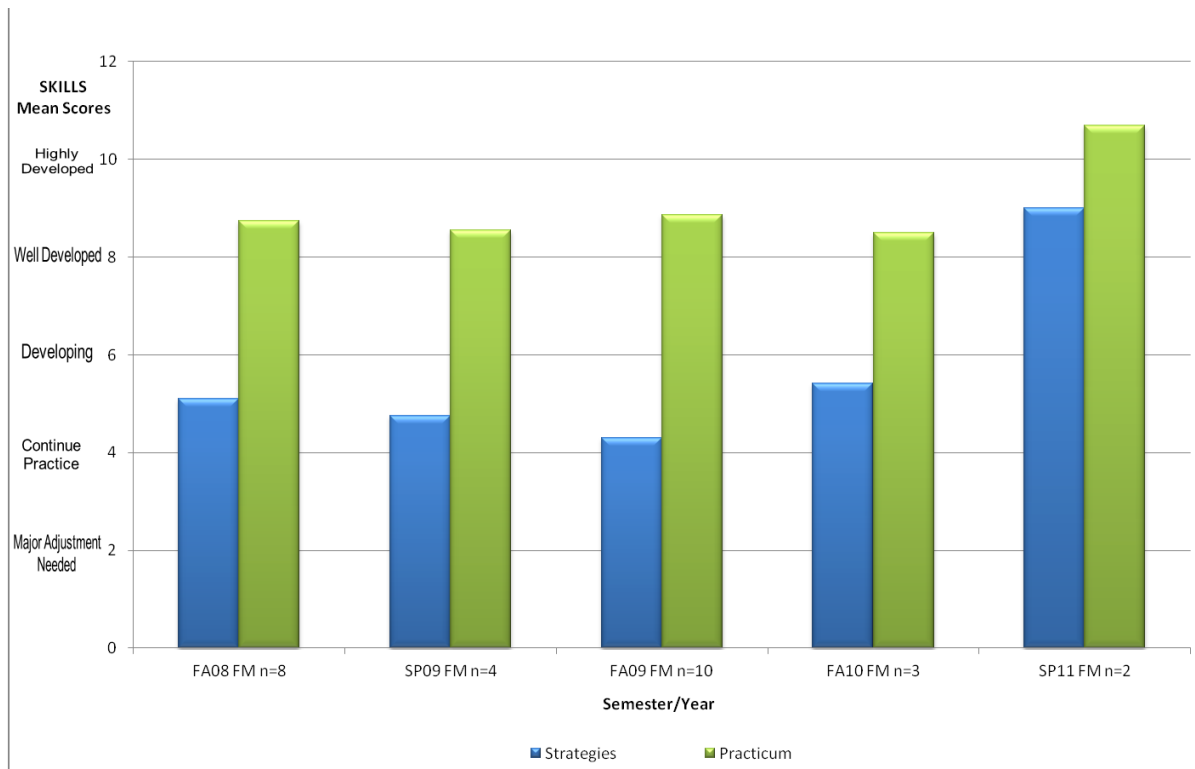
Counselor-in-Training Skills

Counselor Skills Scale

Practicum students are evaluated by their site supervisor using the Counseling Skills Scale (CSS) that assesses the quality of student performance on counseling skills. Nineteen specific “micro-skills” are rated on a Likert scale ranging from -2 to +2. An additional form is attached to the CSS that includes remarks from the supervisor regarding students’ areas for improvement, strengths, and general comments. All practicum students are evaluated at mid-term and end of semester by faculty supervisors and on site supervisors.

Results

Twenty-seven students completed GCOU 650 Supervised Practicum from fall 2008 to spring 2011 and were evaluated by site supervisors. Students were rated on average between 0 and +2 on the micro-skills items on the CSS (see Chart).



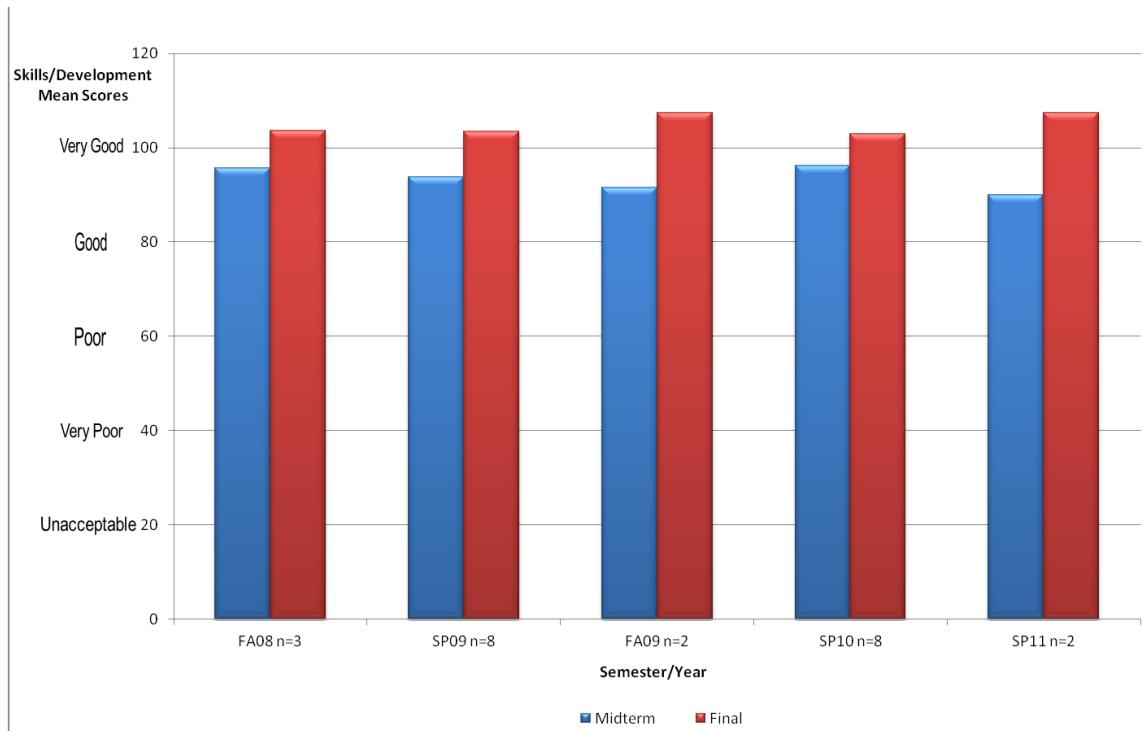
**Note: No students enrolled in Supervised Practicum in Spring of 2010.*

Counselor Skill and Personal Development Rating

Internship students are evaluated by their site supervisor using the Counselor Skill and Personal Development Rating Form (CSPD-RF). The CSPD-RF includes 20 items designed to rate the student counselor’s personal and skill development in sessions with clients, using a 6 point Likert scale ranging from “unacceptable” to “outstanding”. An additional form is attached to the CSPD-RF that includes remarks from the supervisor regarding students’ limitations and weaknesses, assets and strengths, and general comments. All on-site supervisors of internship students complete this evaluation at mid-term and the conclusion of internship.

Results

Twenty-three students completed GCOU 650 Supervised Internship from fall 2008 to spring 2011 and were evaluated by site supervisors. Responses of site supervisors’ evaluations of students ranged from “good” to “outstanding” on scales for the following: communication skills, congruence, empathy, feedback skills, awareness of strengths and weaknesses, observational skills, confrontational skills, tolerance for cultural differences, reflection of meaning/feeling, and self-disclosure skills. Areas noted as strengths in written comments included: perception of non-verbal cues, empathy and understanding, clinical notes, ability to receive supervision, and clinical decision-making. Areas of weakness noted, which are consistent developmentally with counselors-in-training includes: building confidence, knowledge of drug and alcohol, and effect of counselor-client interactions. The results provide an overall indication that there is a positive increase in skill development from the midterm to final evaluations.



****Note: No students enrolled in Supervised Practicum in Fall of 2010.***

Revised 1/29/13

Site Supervisor Evaluation

The Supervision Styles Inventory (SSI) was designed for practicum and internship students to rate their supervisor's general style of supervision. The SSI includes 33 adjectives with responses on a 7 point Likert scale ranging from "not very" to "very". The SSI is completed by all practicum and internship students each semester.

Results

Supervision styles were rated consistently high and scores ranged from 5 to 7. Frequent adjectives included: committed, sensitive, collaborative, reflective, perceptive, supportive, facilitative, positive, and evaluative. Written comments about supervisors included: very experienced, supportive, ability to provide warmth and guidance, and exceeded expectations.

Counselor Awareness

Multicultural Assessment

The Multicultural Counseling Knowledge and Awareness Survey (MCKAS) (Ponterotto, 1997) is a self-report inventory that contains 32 items. The instrument is designed to measure perceived multicultural knowledge and awareness. The author of the MCKAS cautions users against use as an evaluative tool to make individual decisions as it is undergoing continuing validation research, and its psychometric strengths and limitations are still being studied. The author recommends use of the MCKAS for research and it is one of a handful of measures that has received preliminary endorsement from multicultural scholars.

Results

This program level assessment occurs as a pre-test and post-test measure. Students are assessed in their first and last semesters of the program. The following summarizes the MCKAS aggregate data from the two beginning student cohorts (2010 and 2011) and one graduating cohort (Spring 2012):

<u>New Students</u>		
Fall 2010	N= 20	Mean = 154.3
Fall 2011	N= 18	Mean = 146.27
<u>Graduating Students*</u>		
Spring 12	N = 8	Mean = 188

The initial review of the MCKAS results indicates overall student improvement between the pre-test and post-test scores. Graduating students scored 20% higher than new students on self-reported multicultural knowledge and awareness.

Revised 1/29/13

Consumer Satisfaction

Alumni Survey

The Alumni evaluation of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program is designed to assess alumni perceptions of their experience in the program. The survey is designed to assess the following: (a) faculty performance and quality of program instruction based on a 5 point Likert scale with a range of “Very strong” to “Very weak”; (b) the degree to which aspects of the program prepared them for their current responsibilities based on a 5 point Likert scale with a range of “Extremely helpful” to “Not at all helpful”; (c) the extent to which they currently use a range of counseling-related skills compared to the extent to which the program prepared them for that skill set based on a comparative Likert scale with a range of “To a great extent” to “Not at all”. Forty-one alumni who graduated between May 2008 and December 2011 were invited to evaluate the program. Twenty-one surveys were returned yielding a 51% response rate. The survey was administered late in the survey rotation cycle, in the Spring 2012, and will be administered on a three year rotation in the future.

Results

Section I (a) rated faculty performance items.

The following items were rated *Very strong*:

- inspiration and encouragement from faculty
- interaction with faculty
- general quality of instruction

The following items were rated *Very strong* to *Somewhat strong*:

- general academic advising
- level of rigor and scholarship demanded
- flexibility/adaptability to student needs

Section II (b) evaluated aspects of the program and preparation for current responsibilities.

The following items were rated *Extremely helpful*:

- the seminar course, practicum and internship experiences
- preparation for licensure
- preparation for National Certification (NCC)

The following items rated as *Extremely helpful* to *Very helpful*:

- the core courses
- the advanced courses
- professional orientation

Section III (c) rated skills used in present position and the extent to which Gannon University assisted in developing each of these skills. Out of 14 skills, the following items were rated *To a great extent* to *Some extent*:

- conducting individual counseling sessions
- conducting group counseling sessions
- consulting with colleagues
- reflective practice
- working in and with committees
- communicating professional scholarship
- conducting in-service professional development
- supervision
- understanding diagnoses
- leadership and advocacy roles

Areas of discrepancy constituting ratings of *To some extent* to *A small extent* were noted in:

- using library and other research facilities
- interpreting research
- designing treatment plans.

Alumni were generally satisfied with their degree as indicated by a *To a great extent* rating on the final item evaluating their overall preparation for their professional career. Alumni identified numerous valuable aspects of the program including:

- faculty to student ratio
- the professional portfolio
- flexibility of the faculty
- practicing counseling skills in courses
- Counselor Wellness Day
- a sense of community within the program
- inspiring faculty

Recommendations included: additional courses in child/adolescent counseling, crisis counseling, substance abuse counseling, and additional clinical courses. The following content to the curriculum: professional record keeping, treatment planning, managed care/insurance, neuropsychology and psychopharmacology, additional theories and techniques (EMDR, Energy Psychology, CBT, SBT, ACT).

Employer Survey

The Survey for Employers of Graduates is designed to assess the perceptions of employers of graduates of the program. Twenty five employers of program graduates were invited to participate, 5 surveys were returned yielding a 20% response rate. Employers are asked to rate alumni/employees on a wide variety of counseling-related tasks and work site suitability items. The survey uses a 5 point Likert scale with a range from “Extremely important” to “Not at all important”. The survey was administered in the Fall of 2009 and will be administered on a three year rotation in the

Revised 1/29/13

future. The program faculty are continuing to review the process for assessing employers to increase the response rate for the next review.

Results

The following items were rated as *Extremely important* by employers:

- wanted a graduate degree
- impressions in interview
- references from employers
- professional experiences.

The following items were rated as *Very important* by employers:

- preparation for licensure
- recommendations from faculty
- degree in community counseling

The following items were rated as *Somewhat Important* by employers:

- counseling competence
- degree earned at Gannon University

Site Supervisors Program Survey

The Site Supervisors Review of the Program is designed to assess the perceptions of clinical site supervisors of students that are supervised during Practicum and Internship experiences. Site supervisors are asked to rate students on a wide variety of counseling-related tasks and work site suitability items. The survey uses a 5 point Likert scale with a range from “Very strong” to “Very weak”. The survey rotation cycle was interrupted so consequently, the Site Supervisor Survey will be administered in Fall 2012 and on a three year rotation in the future.

Graduating Students Survey

The Graduating Students Review of the Program survey is designed to assess the perceptions of students who are at the end of their Internship experience in their final semester. The survey is designed to assess the following: (a) faculty performance and quality of program instruction based on a 5 point Likert scale with a range of “Very strong” to “Very weak”; (b) the degree to which they believe that aspects of the program prepared them for graduation and initial employment in the field; (c) the degree to which they were given instruction in a wide range of counseling-related skills based on a Likert scale with a range of “To a great extent” to “Not at all”; (d) changes in the program that they would suggest and reasons for enrolling in the program; (e) open ended questions about strengths and limitations of the program. The survey will be administered at the close of each semester to graduating students.

Results

Section II rated faculty performance and program quality items. The following items were rated as *Very strong*:

- level of rigor and scholarship demanded.

The following items were rated as *Very strong* to *Somewhat strong*:

- general academic advising
- inspiration and encouragement from faculty
- interaction with faculty
- flexibility/adaptability to student needs; and general quality of instruction.

Section III rated program preparation for graduation and initial employment. The following items were rated *Extremely helpful*:

- seminar course
- practicum & internship experiences.

The following items were rated *Extremely helpful* to *Very helpful*:

- preparation for licensure and National Certification (NCC)
- conducting individual counseling
- consulting with colleagues
- speaking in public
- analyzing and evaluating ideas
- using library and other research facilities
- leadership and advocacy roles

The following items were rated *Very helpful* to *Somewhat helpful*:

- the advanced courses
- professional orientation
- conducting group counseling
- consulting with parents and families
- working in and with committees
- interpreting numerical data and research
- disseminating research
- conducting in-service programs
- designing research and writing proposals
- advising student/clients
- administering programs/ organizations

Graduating students were generally satisfied with their counselor preparation as indicated by an *Extremely helpful* rating on the final item evaluating their overall preparation for beginning their professional career.

Graduating students identified numerous valuable aspects of the program including:

- preparation for the CPCE and NCE
- classmates
- emphasis on counselor wellness, reflective practice, and multicultural awareness
- practical experience
- faculty/student interactions
- small class sizes
- opportunities for assistantships
- experiential activities
- the ability to adjust classes to work schedules.

Recommendations included: additional course addressing current theories and techniques, and additional clinical courses. The following content was recommended to be added to the curriculum:

- greater focus on treatment planning
- additional counseling techniques and interventions
- greater attention to abnormal psychology and research
- requiring students to conduct/facilitate a group session in the group class

Graduating Students Focus Groups

Graduating students focus groups are designed to gather and assess the student's experience with counselor preparation and graduate studies. Qualitative data is gathered through the use of open ended questions:

1. After you graduate, what are your career goals?
2. How well has the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program prepared you to meet these goals?
3. What were some of the strengths of your academic preparation (i.e.: coursework, curriculum, learning experience, instructors)?
4. What recommendations do you have for revising the program (i.e.: curriculum, course offerings, etc.)?
5. Please comment on your overall graduate experience at Gannon University.

Results

Focus groups are conducted at the end of each semester. The current data is from spring 2009 to spring 2011 and includes 33 students. In regard to career goals, students voiced a desire to become licensed professional counselors (LPC) and attain a masters level counseling position. Three students applied to doctoral programs and six others expressed a desire to pursue doctoral study. Several students anticipated seeking a specialization in a particular clinical area including: art therapy, crisis counseling, addictions counseling, and child counseling.

In summary, students acknowledged that the program prepared them for their future goals as professional counselors. All students agreed that the program prepared them adequately for a masters level counseling position, national certification and professional licensure. They reported being better prepared than graduates from other programs.

Strengths of the program's academic preparation included: diagnosis and treatment planning, self-awareness and the reflective practitioner training, the basic counseling skills course, advanced courses in specialized training, group experience, comprehensive exam preparation, experience in public speaking, and faculty involvement in regard to career development.

Recommendations included:

- grief and bereavement counseling
- addictions counseling
- more skill training and preparation on treatment planning.

In general, graduating students felt good about their overall interaction with administrative staff. The convenience of the building was appreciated.

Employment

The Gannon University Center for Career Development and Employment Services gathers career placement data on an annual basis. They survey recent graduates and alumni regarding their employment.

Results

Career placement data (2009-2011) indicates that 96% of our graduates are employed in the profession. The Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program has continued to maintain a strong placement rate with the majority of graduates securing employment in the counseling profession.

Faculty Evaluations

Faculty evaluations are integral to the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program and Gannon University. Students complete Faculty Course Evaluation Surveys for each course. Faculty also participate in an annual peer review. These evaluations contribute to a yearly faculty development plan and summative evaluation. Teaching excellence, along with scholarship and service are evaluated for advancement in rank and tenure.

Results

Course evaluations of faculty are completed by students each semester. Items are tabulated on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 poor to 5 excellent. The results are based on 4 program faculty, 1 adjunct faculty, and an accumulation of 20 courses. The following items summarize

Revised 1/29/13

the aggregate data from the three main sections of the course evaluations and rates overall faculty performance:

Course Evaluation Survey Spring 2009 – Spring 2011	
Course Instruction	4.55
Faculty Items	4.58
Assessment Techniques	4.74
Overall Evaluation	4.63

Additional Evaluations

Additional evaluations include ongoing program activities, such as: professional portfolios, professional disclosure statements, and basic skills training assessment. Embedded evaluations occur through interactive feedback with faculty members, community site supervisors, advisory committees, and faculty-student interaction. The program completed a very thorough program review and was awarded accreditation by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) in July of 2009. Program faculty are currently preparing for the mid-cycle report to be completed by fall 2013. They are creating the foundation for the reaccreditation process and self-study to be submitted by spring 2016. In addition, the program was awarded the Outstanding Counselor Education Program by the Pennsylvania Counseling Association in 2009.

Action Plan

Each May, faculty hold a day long retreat for the purpose of reviewing outcome assessments, consumer responses, and program evaluations. As a result, an action plan was developed that contributes to ongoing program development.

Based on the 2008 Program Review, the following initiatives were implemented:

- Increase emphasis on student professional disclosure statements.
- Enhance program communication.
- Market program to faculty colleagues in the region.
- Increase clinical emphasis throughout curriculum.

Results*Increase emphasis on student professional disclosure statements.*

- Creation of individualized student professional disclosure statements in GCOU 650 Supervised Practicum. The student professional disclosure statements were included as one of the required elements in the Professional Portfolio compiled in GCOU 690 Seminar in Counseling.

Enhance program communication.

- use of an Angel Community Group
- numerous program meetings and revised orientation groups (New Student Orientation and Practicum / Internship Orientation).

Market program to faculty colleagues in the region.

- Creation of a program brochure, promotional poster and post card outlining the strengths of the program mailed to 100 colleges and universities within a 200 mile radius of Gannon University.
- Thank you letters written to faculty members who provided reference letters for students accepted into the program.
- Office of Graduate Admissions sent representatives to numerous graduate school fairs and other regional recruiting venues marketing the program.
- The results were an increase of new student admissions in both fall 2011 (n=18) and fall 2012 (n=22).

Increase clinical emphasis throughout curriculum.

- Increased the clinical content in the following courses:
 - GCOU 631 Diagnosis and Treatment Planning
 - GCOU 642 Child and Adolescent Counseling
 - Revisions to GCOU 649 Advanced Counseling Strategies and Techniques resulting in a more clinical course renamed Mental Health Counseling
- Elimination of GCOU 655 Advanced Counseling Theories and the 1 credit special topics courses.
- Create two new clinically oriented courses
 - GCOU 667 Crisis and Disaster Counseling
 - GCOU 668 Addictions Counseling.
- The name of the program was changed to Clinical Mental Health Counseling in the summer of 2012 to reflect the 2009 CACREP Accreditation Standards.

Based on the 2012 Program Evaluation, the following initiatives are planned:

- Review of the curriculum and syllabi in preparation for CACREP reaccreditation.
- Refine the CMHC Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan, collect and review data.
- Renew a marketing plan around the evolution of the newly named Clinical Mental Health Counseling program.