

## **Alabama A&M Department of Psychology & Counseling**

### **Annual Report Summary**

**2022- 2023**

### **OVERVIEW**

The Counseling program at Alabama A&M University uses a variety of assessments and evaluation to direct program change and engender student learning and success. The following details assessment results in the program. These assessments are based on the 2016 CACREP Standards.

Areas of assessment include:

- Evaluation of the Program
- Evaluation of Students
- Evaluation of Faculty
- Evaluation of Clinical Experience

### **About the Program**

The Master's in Counseling (M.S) is a terminal master's degree program with a Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling specialization that provides students with the skills necessary to become master's level practitioners, certified rehabilitation counselors, and prepares them for doctoral-level training in Counseling and certification or licensure. The program curriculum requires 60 credit hours, a 100-hour practicum, and two (2) 300-hour internship experiences in a setting appropriate for the career trajectory, and a comprehensive examination or thesis. The counseling program requirements align with CACREP, and the program is currently applying for CACREP accreditation.

### **Program Objectives**

The Counseling program has 4 Program Objectives. Each Program Objective has associated Key Performance Indicators that are assessed throughout the program of study.

Program Objective 1- To foster ethically responsible counselors:

Program Objective 2- To cultivate students' identities as professional counselors:

Program Objective 3- To engender multiculturally competent counselors:

Program Objective 4- To provide students with the knowledge and skills related to working with those with disabilities

## EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

The following evaluations include institutional data, community assessments, faculty assessment and student assessments of the program. These assessments inform and guide necessary programmatic changes. The following demographics detail those who applied to the Counseling program AY 2022- 2023

### *Program Statistics*

<b>Enrollment &amp; Graduation</b>	
Credit hours	60
Applications Received	136
Applications Accepted	101
Acceptance Rate	74%
Current Enrollment	73
No. of Graduates	30

### *Acceptance/Admissions/Enrollment*

	Fall 2022	Spring 2022	Summer 2022	Fall 2023	Spring 2023	Summer 2023
<b>Applicants</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>
Completed Applications	48	27	5	39	17	5
Denied	2	3	1	2	1	1
Admitted	38	20	2	25	12	4
Deferred Term	4	2	3	8	31	0
Declined Admission	4	2	0	4	0	0

***Applicant Demographics/ Characteristics***

	Fall 2022	Spring 2022	Summer 2022	Fall 2023	Spring 2023	Summer 2023
Applicants Total	73	47	7	84	41	14
<b>Gender</b>						
Male						
Female	59	38	7	64	36	11
<b>Race</b>						
Black	36	15	3			6
White	0	1				
Not Identified	23	22	4			5
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	14	9	0	20	5	3
<b>Race</b>						
Black	7	4				1
White	0	0				
Not Identified	7	5				2

**COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS**

**Professional Advisory Council**

The Counseling program maintains a Professional Advisory Council that provides program input from state and regional counseling professionals. A list of the members of the Council for 2022-2023 is included in program office. Data are not available at this time.

## FACULTY ASSESSMENTS

### Annual Student Review

During the fall of 2023, the counseling program faculty reviewed each student based on academic performance and professional dispositions. The following details the outcomes of the disposition and academic performance of the evaluations. Students were ranked as *Exceeds*, *Meets*, *Developing* or *Does Not Meet Expectations* in each area. There are 10 Professional Dispositions that are measured: diversity, integrity, professional conduct, personal responsibility, emotional regulation, oral communication, written communication, attendance, academic performance. The majority of students scored, “Meets Expectations” on the disposition assessment, with a few scores of “*Developing*” in the following areas: emotional regulation, personal responsibility, openness to feedback, and written communication skills.

### Faculty Meeting Minutes

The faculty holds monthly meetings to provide governance and oversight to the program. During these meetings, faculty assess the program mission, objectives, key performance indicators, curriculum, and other key components to the counseling program. The minutes on file in the department.

### Key Performance Indicators

The counseling program’s objectives emerge from the program’s mission and are grounded in the core area and specialty standards. As such, the program objectives are designated as the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to systematically assess both program objectives and student learning. The program uses KPI signature assignments to assess each KPI. The outlined KPIs measure at least one knowledge, skill, or a combination of both performance indicators to assess student learning. The program also uses two measures across two points in time for the core and specialty areas to cross-validate student outcome data for each area. To measure the outlined KPIs, the target outcome for signature assignments is 80% of students will achieve a minimum score of 80% except for the Comprehensive Examination. The target outcome of the Comprehensive Examination is 80% of Students will score within one standard deviation of the national mean on the professional orientation and ethical practice sub-section of the most recent administration of the comprehensive exam.

## STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

### Exit Survey

The following exit survey was sent to the 15 graduates of fall 2022 and spring 2023 academic semester in which N= 7 responded ( 7 females 0 Females 0 Non-binary). Results are below.

Question	Yes	No
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2. Did your internship site offer to hire you?	5	2
3. If your internship offered to hire you, did you accept the offer?	4	3
4. Do you have a counseling related job upon hire?	3	4
5. If yes, where do you have a job?	Bradford Health Services, Wellstone (NOVA), Behavioral Health Group	
6. Do you plan to seek counseling licensure upon graduation?	6	1
7. Do you plan to seek rehabilitation certification upon graduation?	4	3

8. How would you rate the Alabama A&M Counseling Program overall?

*Excellent- 1*

*Good- 3*

*Fair- 3*

*Poor- 0*

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied
9. Program Curriculum	3	4	0
10. Practicum/ Internship Experience	4	3	0
11. Instructional Effectiveness	3	4	0
12. Faculty Competence	3	4	0
13. Academic Advisement	3	3	0
14. Academic Knowledge Received	3	4	0
15. Facilities and Resources	1	6	0
16. Faculty as Mentors	2	5	0

17. Program Duration	1	4	2
18. Individual Counseling Training	3	4	0
19. Group Counseling Training	3	3	1
20. Human Development Knowledge	2	5	0
21. Career Counseling Training	3	4	0
22. Diagnosis and Treatment Planning Training	2	5	0
23. Research Methods Knowledge	2	5	0
24. Multicultural Counseling Training	5	2	0
25. Ethical and Legal Issue Training	4	3	0
26. Assessment Training	3	4	0
27. Broad Theoretical Knowledge	3	3	0
28. Rehabilitation Specialization	2	5	0

### **Alumni Survey**

The Alumni survey was disseminated to students who graduated in December 2022 and May 2023 ( $N = 15$ ). Alumni who graduated within the last year were asked to evaluate various aspects of the program. There were 2 alumni who responded to the survey. Alumni identified strengths (e.g., developing empathetic connections with clients and effective listening skills), as well as areas for improvement (e.g., program duration, exposure to different counseling experiences) within the program. Regarding their clinical skills and knowledge, the majority of the ratings were, “*Very Prepared and Somewhat Prepared.*” Regarding licensure and passing the NCE, the majority of students were in the application process and planned to take the NCE.

### **Employer Survey**

The Employer Survey was disseminated to student identified employers ( $N = 4$ ) and 2 responded. Employers identified strengths (e.g., developing empathetic connections with clients and effective listening skills), as well as areas for improvement (e.g., professionalism, realistic work expectations) within the program. Regarding their clinical skills and knowledge, the majority of the ratings indicating students were “*Very Prepared and Somewhat Prepared.*”

## CLINICAL EXPERIENCE EVALUATIONS

### Annual Site Supervisor Evaluation

The site supervisor evaluation was disseminated to site supervisors ( $N = 22$ ) and 5 responded. Site supervisors identified strengths (e.g., openness, willingness to learn, responsive to feedback) as well as areas for improvement (e.g., professionalism, communication) within the program. Regarding their clinical skills and knowledge, the majority of the ratings were very prepared and somewhat prepared. The majority of ratings were “*Agree or Strongly Agree*.” Some areas for growth were identified: communication skills, response to constructive criticism, flexibility, and taking responsibility.

### Student Evaluation of Site Supervisor

The majority of student responses to the evaluation were “Strongly agree and Agree.”

### Student Self-Evaluation

The majority of students rated themselves as “*Good or Excellent*” on the evaluation. Some areas of growth were also identified:

<i>Ability to conduct or assist in assessment activities.</i>
<i>Ability to formulate a treatment plan.</i>
<i>Ability to create progress notes/documentation.</i>
<i>Ability to conduct case management activities.</i>
<i>Ability to conduct career counseling activities.</i>

## PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM MODIFICATIONS

### MS. Counseling Psychology (48- credit hour) to MS Counseling (60-credit hour degree program)

Two major trends in the field of counseling are the movement towards the portability of counselor licensure from state to state and the desire to standardize Professional Counselor training. For counselor education, this standardization ensures that a professional counselor has the same basic training, regardless of specialty area, which allows for more effective advocacy for the profession at large and for the development of a more unified agenda in professional development. It is felt that this shift in the perception and understanding of the counseling profession will lead to more employment opportunities for qualified professionals.

Due to state and national changes, AAMU departmental faculty met and decided to revise the degree program and title of the program from a 48-credit hour MS in Counseling Psychology program to a 60- credit hour Master's program in Counseling with a specialization in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling to align with updated licensure requirements in the state. All handbooks, website, and programmatic materials were updated to reflect the new degree program. For graduates, this shift to more standardized basic professional counselor training should result in a degree that is of more value and better understood by the public, legislators, and third-party payers, such as insurance companies. Working towards a more unified vision, after a major review of curriculum, exhaustive research, consultation, feedback and support of the Advisory Board, the Counseling program chose to move from a 48 credit hour Masters in Counseling Psychology to a 60-credit hour Masters in Counseling with a specialization in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling. Final approval from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) was received in December 2021. The 60-credit hour program accepted its first students in Fall 2021. The shift from a 48-credit hour program, which already had a concentration in rehabilitation counseling, to a 60-credit hour program will assist with preparing the Counseling program to be recognized formally by CACREP as having a specialization in clinical rehabilitation counseling. CACREP, after the CORE/CACREP merger in 2017, is the national accrediting body for counseling programs. The move from the 48-credit hour program to a 60-credit hour program was central as the program prepared for accreditation by CACREP. The program began the extensive accreditation self-study process December 2018.

Final approval from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education was received on December 10, 2021.

### **Curricular Modifications**

- Course roll-out and sequencing of Counseling courses
- Added *Addictions course*
- Added *Foundations of Crisis Intervention Course*
- Streamlined and digitized Internship and Practicum processes, applications, and placements.
- Secured space and funding for the establishment of Counseling Skills Training Laboratory and accompanying training materials
- Revised Program Orientation and included a Mandatory Field Orientation
- Added retention & remediation quiz to initial course taken during first semester of enrollment (i.e., Human Development and Counseling Theories course)
- Revised advising structure to include an Appreciative Advising Model. Also added a dedicated “Advising Week” along with required advisor training to assist with alignment each semester.
- Conducted program information session to advise of the new MS Counseling program.
- Strengthened Group Counseling course based upon feedback from student evaluations, Alumni Survey, and Employer surveys, by adding more immersive experiences to the class to include an outside ALC and guest speakers to assist with groups. Additional opportunities to develop group counseling skills were offered to practicum students during a pilot program under Dr. Davis where students served as academic coaches for at risk students in English courses.



- Added Pre-practicum skills course to help with enhanced skills training prior to first clinical experience (Practicum II).
- Must earn B or better in gateway/ skills courses.
- Change in Comprehensive Exam Policy. For several years, passing the Departmental comprehensive exam has been a requirement. Students tended to take the exam late in the program and in some cases had to retake it to graduate. In a few cases, students who did pass the exam the second time found themselves in internships facing the possibility they might not graduate. To address this problem more effectively, students must pass the exam prior to enrolling in to their first clinical experience (Practicum II).

### **Student and Program Level Assessments**

- **Professional Dispositions Assessment.** In line with the counseling literature, professional dispositions were added to the program. There are a total of 10 professional dispositions that are assessed at various timepoints by faculty and supervisors (e.g., Diversity, Integrity, Professional Conduct that are assess, Openness to Feedback, Personal Responsibility, Emotional Regulation, Oral Communication, Written Communication, Attendance/Participation).

### **Employment/Hiring (Full-time Faculty).**

- In working to align the program with state and national standards and to recruit diverse faculty. Faculty with Counseling backgrounds and counseling licensure were added to the departmental roster.

### **Clinical Training Modifications**

- Enhanced Clinical Training/Professional Development opportunities/Technology training. In the past the department had various faculty such as adjuncts teaching internship and practicum classes which did not offer continuity. Faculty met and it was decided that full-time faculty, preferably licensed or certified counselors preferably with clinical supervision experience would teach all field courses.
- Technology Training tools were included to deliver more deliberate practice. The program began using Theravue software and purchased simulation training hours (e.g., Murison) with grant funds.
- The software Time 2 Track was implemented to assist with track required clinical hours during field experiences (e.g., practicum and internship).
- Tele-mental Health professional development training was developed by the faculty in response to COVID 19 to assist with ethical and legal obligations. During COVID, the faculty developed online training certificates for students to take as part of practicum training.
- The counseling program implemented a requirement for students in practicum to complete QPR-Suicide Prevention Training as part of professional development. The

AAMU University Counseling center purchased the license for the training. Students complete the training and receive a certificate.

- Professional Development/Counseling CEU Provider. The Department obtained a continuing education provider ID from the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) to begin offering CEUs for professional development for Associate and Licensed Professional Counselors (ALC & LPC). The acquisition of this educational provider ID allowed the department to provide free professional development to students currently enrolled in the program and to have exposure to clinical experts in the field. In response to student requests, a professional speaker series was added to focusing on “Emotional Wellness and Careers in Psychology and Counseling.”

### **Student Engagement/ outreach efforts to assist with recruitment/retention**

- The department celebrates academic efforts and holds graduation celebrations and other outreach efforts.
- Establishment of pilot program with the Alabama Counseling Association- Region 2 to establish a *Mental Health Fellows Program*. The partnership was designed to assist with fostering professional advocacy within the profession and assisting students with networking and professional counseling attendance at state counseling conferences. Fellows were also helped with the National Counseling Exam (NCE) upon completion of the program by the Region 2.

### **Establishment of Student and External Advisory Board.**

- An external advisory council comprised of allied health and mental health professionals and alumni was established to support program accountability and garner feedback on improving program delivery and effectiveness.
- A student advisory board is a group of graduate counseling students nominated by their advisor and peers who serve in a consultative role to the Counseling program. The Student Advisory Board allows the program to obtain valuable, first-hand feedback about current policies, procedures, and services. The board meets twice per semester. The board also provides ideas about ways the department can better assist students and the AAMU community. Members met with Program faculty twice per semester. Minutes are on file in the Departmental Microsoft OneDrive directory. Student Advisory Council for 2023-2024 included: Tamiya Boyden, Jessica Reyes, Robin Sims, Ashanti Thomas, Onie Sass. Meeting Dates: August 25, 2023, October 2, 2023, January 23, 2024, February 7, 2024.

Based on data collected throughout the annual Assessment Evaluation Plan, any substantial program changes from the previous year will be included at the end of the Annual Assessment Report. These substantial program changes will be based on the review of the data and extensive discussion among faculty members. Further, these substantial program changes will be covered in the annual advisory board meeting to ensure that advisory board members agree with these substantial program changes. Additionally, a list of program modifications and substantial program changes is updated and maintained on the Counselor Education program website.

