Program Evaluation

Student Learning Outcomes Report

2015-2016

# For this cycle of assessment we sought to clarify our goals for student learning in the area of clinical service, get a stronger idea of how our students were doing in this area towards the end of the program, and figure out what needed to change in our teaching and assessment tools going forward. We looked at three broad SLOs (clinical skills, case conceptualization and treatment planning, and diversity awareness and sensitivity) that could be assessed in the comprehensive signature assignment in Advanced Practicum (Coun 584).

# Evaluation of Clinical Skills, Case Conceptualization & Treatment Planning, and Diversity

Methods and Measures:

We directly assess students’ ability to demonstrate the necessary skills through a signature assignment given at the end of the Advanced Practicum course (Coun 584). The assignment includes a written transcript from a segment of a counseling session, along with a paper in which students write about their work with the client (e.g., assessment of the client, a treatment plan, a description of the treatment), and reflect on their own process and growth (e.g., countertransference, diversity issues, self-care, theoretical orientation). Five signature papers (approximately 20%) were randomly chosen from fall 2015’s advanced practicum classes (584) in order to assess these three SLOs. A committee of three full-time faculty met multiple times to discuss the scoring, and worked until consensus was reached.

We also conduct an indirect assessment of many of the clinical, case conceptualization, and diversity issues through surveys of students or employers post-graduation. For this assessment cycle, we used the alumni survey. We sent an online survey to alumni, using email addresses collected from graduating students’ surveys. We sent the survey out twice and had 136 respondents.  Alumni responded to how courses in the program prepared them for work in the field. We removed the three courses for which over 20% of respondents said they had not taken the class.

Criteria for Success

In the direct measure (the signature assignment), the average score across students sampled is a 3 or higher for each item (i.e., each element of the Learning Goal), and this score meets expectations. In the indirect measure (the alumni survey) we use Question 10, which assesses alumni’s perceptions of how each of the courses in the program prepared them for the field. To meet expectations, we look for 80% or more of alumni to provide an "excellent" or "good" rating for all courses (since clinical skills are taught across so many courses).

# Summary of Evaluation of Clinical Skills

Assessable outcomes:

Students will be able to: demonstrate awareness of the social and cultural influences on human behavior; demonstrate effective counseling skills; evaluate clients’ progress; recognize and mitigate countertransference; and conduct counseling with appropriate awareness of ethical and legal issues.

Data Analysis

Three out of the five SLOs within the broad category of “clinical skills” met the minimum score of 3 or higher, suggesting that students were adequately learning basic counseling skills, were able to monitor clients’ progress, and could recognize countertransference. However, the two SLO’s related to diversity and ethics were not up to standard, indicating a need to reevaluate how we are teaching in these areas.

For the indirect measure resulting 17 courses, alumni gave ratings of “good” or “excellent” to 13 out of 17 courses. We need to have all the courses rated at "good" or "excellent," but also need to revise the survey.

# Summary of Evaluation of Case Conceptualization & Treatment Planning

Assessable outcomes:

Students will demonstrate knowledge of counseling theories and apply them to case conceptualization. They will demonstrate the ability to appropriately use the DSM-5 (diagnostic manual of mental disorders), and to construct relevant treatment plans, including those for people with severe or co-occurring mental illness.

Data Analysis

All three SLOs within the broad category of “Case Conceptualization & Treatment Planning” met the minimum score of 3 or higher, suggesting that students were adequately learning how to apply theory, utilize the common diagnostic system, and create treatment plans for clients, including those with severe illness. However, there is room for improvement on all three SLOs.

For the indirect measure, Alumni responded to how courses in the program prepared them for work in the field. Alumni gave ratings of “good” or “excellent” to all the courses related to case conceptualization and treatment planning (Coun 511, 520, 522, 530, 584).

# Summary of Evaluation of Diversity Awareness and Sensitivity

Assessable outcomes:

Students will be able to: demonstrate awareness of the major cultural influences on human behavior, how those intersect with the mental health of their clients, and how they influence their own perceptions and biases regarding clients.

Data Analysis

Both SLOs were below the minimum desired score of 3, suggesting that students were not adequately learning diversity basics and/or the directions for completing the paper were not clear enough.

**Improvement Actions**

In spring 2016 we discussed the results of the direct measure (signature assignment) with faculty. In summer 2016 we revised the signature paper assignment for Coun 584 (Advanced Practicum) so that students and professors more clearly understand the necessary requirements. In fall 2016 we will orient faculty to the importance of teaching the required skills more clearly and help them understand the expectations of students at this level. We will also implement the standardized use of the same assignment in an earlier course (Coun 530; Beginning Practicum) so that students have opportunity for feedback and growth before needing to demonstrate more mastery. In fall 2016 we will also reevaluate what is taught in earlier courses (Coun 522, Coun 523, Coun 526) so that students are better prepared for the assignment once they start the practicum sequence. Regarding the indirect measure (alumni survey), our first step is to revise the measure so that it more adequately assesses content related to the SLOs, and we will do that in spring 2017.