**Student Learning Outcome Report**

**For Academic Year 2021-2022**

**Assessment Activities and Updates**

* We assessed students individually on every SLO across multiple points in time, with multiple measures.
* Each year we also choose one SLO or one aspect of an SLO to assess with a “deeper dive.” This year we looked at the SLO “Clinical Skills.”
* The assessment coordinator (AC) created a Canvas repository with assessment material and guidelines for faculty so that new and adjunct faculty could be better prepared for the in-course assessments.
* The department was able to buy new students a year’s membership in the California Association for Licensed Professional Counselors (CALPCC).
* See our website for details on the 5 department SLOs, the CACREP core competencies, the clinical mental health specialty, and dispositions. We assess aspects of all the CACREP competencies and requirements; these are embedded within the SLOs.
* In addition, the website provides Vital Statistics on the program itself and you can view the surveys of graduating students, alumni, and employers in full.

**Sources of Data**

We used the following sources of data in this report:

* Signature assignments (e.g., papers, essays)
* Exams
* Dispositions forms
* Practicum professor ratings and feedback
* Practicum site supervisor ratings and feedback
* Student perceptions of their training and experiences with group work/therapy
* Graduating student surveys
* Program Advisory Board met January 28, 2022

**General Methods and Measures**

Specific methods and measures are described for each of the five SLOs and Dispositions. We indicate that department expectations are “Met” or “Not Met.” Sometimes there is a “Mixed” rating, which typically indicates that the average across students was met but that the percentage of individuals scoring below expectation was higher than we would like.

* In rubric scoring of signature assignment evaluations, we use a scoring system of 1 – 6 to indicate that the student’s performance: *exceeds* expectations (5-6), *meets* expectations (3-4), or is *below* expectations (1-2). Our criteria for success is to have the means for each item be 3 or higher, and ideally each student would obtain a score of 3 or higher on each item.
* When we use exams, our criteria for success is to have means of 80% or higher, and ideally each student would obtain a score of 80% or higher.
* Practicum supervisor scoring of student skills is also on a scale of 1 – 6 but 4-5 “meets standard” and 6 “exceeds standard.” Our criteria for success is 4 or higher.
* For this academic year, we conducted an *indirect* assessment of learning goals through the *graduating student survey*. Criteria for success: at least 80% “met” expectations. (Every other year we also survey alumni and employers.)

**Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice (2021-2022 academic year)**

Assessable outcomes (our focus within this broader SLO):

Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of: (a) the historical and philosophical underpinnings of the counseling profession; (b) ethical and legal guidelines of the profession; and (c) professional counseling credentialing, certification, and licensure.

Methods, Measures, and Data Collection:

Earlier in the program, we assess students’ beginning knowledge using:

* *Measure 1:* Multiple choice exam in Coun 526 (the Ethics course)
* *Measure 2:* Multiple choice exam in Coun 530a/b (Beginning Practicum)

Later, in Coun 584a/b (Advanced Practicum), students are seeing clients and are evaluated by both professor and site supervisor on skills:

* *Measure 3:* Professor rating of “dependability, reliability, and ethical behavior” (part of Dispositions)
* *Measure 4:* Professor assessment of signature assignment (A.2 of the rubric)
* *Measure 5:* Site supervisor ratings of ethical and legal knowledge and skills

More data were gathered at the end of the program or after graduation:

* *Measure 6:* *(indirect assessments):* Graduating student survey

Summary and Analysis of Results:

The results for this SLO showed improvement.

*Measure 1:* The exam in Coun 526 has produced highly varied results over the years, with some sections receiving 100% correct and other sections doing quite poorly. There was greater consistency this cycle and scores were higher overall. The average of 94% was up from 90% the previous year and all students individually met expectations (a strong improvement from 82% the previous year).

*Measure 2*: The exam in 530a/b was implemented to reinforce some of what had been taught in the earlier Coun 526 and assess whether beginning practicum students were well enough aware of professional issues. The average of 92% was up from 78% the previous year and 92% of students individually met expectations (a strong improvement from 66% the previous year).

*Measure 3*: For students later in advanced practicum (Coun 584a/b), professors rate students on Part C of Dispositions (*dependability, reliability, and ethical behavior)* and 100% had *no concerns*, compared with only 79.5% the previous year. On *Measure 4*, the comprehensive *signature assignment*, practicum professors rated all individuals as demonstrating adequate knowledge of legal and ethical standards. On *Measure 5,* Site supervisor ratings of *legal, ethical, and documentation* skills were slightly down from the previous year but met expectations.

\*Rating of n/a on dispositions = “no concerns”

*Measure 6:* Data from the *graduating students survey* suggests that our students believe the program prepares them well in terms of professional identity and ethical behavior. A full 100% (N = 45) indicated that the department had “met” expectations in this area, and all students indicated “moderately well” and above in response to a similar question about learning about counselor identity. You can find the survey responses in full on the department website.

**Improvement actions:**

A number of indicators suggested improvement in this SLO this year as compared to the previous year. Average scores across multiple assessments were very good and generally consistent with each other and across sections of courses and faculty. Faculty had also discussed ways to increase students’ involvement in the profession, while being mindful of financial strain. The department was able to buy new students a year’s membership in the California Association for Licensed Professional Counselors (CALPCC) organization for spring 2022. We hope to continue this and integrate orientation to CALPCC as part of students’ first semester course, Coun 500. We will also incorporate more counselor identity training into the practicum orientation.

**Diversity Awareness and Sensitivity (2021 - 2022 academic year)**

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.

Methods and Measures:

Earlier in the program and prior to students beginning practicum, we assess:

* *Measure 1*: In Coun 523 (Counseling & Culture): Cultural Genogram Signature Assignment.

When students are in beginning practicum (Coun 530a/b) and advanced practicum (Coun 584a/b), they are assessed by their course professor and site supervisor, both of whom have directly observed the student’s clinical work:

*Measure 2*: We use a section of practicum instructors’ ratings of students’ clinical skills called “Diversity awareness and sensitivity” (Coun 530a/b Practicum Instructor Final Evaluation).

*Measure 3*: We use the site supervisors’ ratings of students’ skills in “Human diversity” which also assesses students’ work with clients (Coun 530a/b Site Supervisor Final Evaluation).

*Measure 4*: We use a section of advanced practicum (Coun 584a/b) instructors’ ratings on diversity knowledge and skills (B.1, B.2., B.4 on the Practicum Signature Assignment).

More data were gathered at the end of the program or after graduation:

*Measure 5 (indirect assessments):* Graduating student survey

Summary and Analysis of Results

Students did very well in this area.

*Measure 1 (Coun 523 Cultural Genogram):* The average for each item was above 3.0, which meets expectations. Students on average scored somewhat lower than the previous year, but remained close to the improvements gained last year. On an individual level, fewer students fell below expectations on the social justice item (6.02% down from almost 10%). Once again, most of these scores came from a single section, suggesting that the professor may have had somewhat different expectations.

*For Measure 2 (Coun 530a/b practicum instructor final evaluation)*. The practicum professors rated students on a variety of diversity clinical skills. Means and individual performance met expectations for both courses, in scores that were very close to those of the previous year.

*For Measure 3: site supervisors provided ratings* for students in both practicum courses (Coun 530a/b site supervisor final evaluation). The mean score for the “human diversity” skill area (Competency 6) met expectations and means for advanced students were higher than those for beginning practicum, as expected. Seven percent of students received “Meets minimal standard” (below the department expectation) in COUN 530a/b, compared to 2% in advanced practicum.

*For Measure 4* we use a section of the practicum signature assignment. All averages met expectations and 100% of students individually met expectations. Scores were slightly higher in comparison to the previous year.

*Measure 5*: Data from the *graduating students survey* suggests that our students believe the program prepares them well in terms of diversity issues. Over 80% of student responses (N = 45) indicated that the department had “met” expectations in this area, and all students indicated “moderately well” and above in response to a similar question about learning about the impact of diversity on the counseling process. You can find the survey responses in full on the department website.

Improvement Actions

Students continued to do well across multiple measures and at different points in the program regarding diversity knowledge and skills. Averages met expectations (and were close to exceeding on faculty-evaluated rubrics), and the vast majority of students individually also met expectations. In addition to the recent changes to curriculum and teaching, we have taken steps to align multiple aspects of our program with social justice values. For example, we are currently in the process of changing our RTP (retention, tenure, and promotion) standards so that faculty must demonstrate a diverse and social justice orientation in their teaching and research. We increased faculty diversity with a new tenure track hire and have applied for two more positions with expertise in Latinx populations. Faculty continue to work on deepening the learning process for students with regards to multiple kinds of diversity and the integration of social justice into counseling. For example, faculty who teach COUN 523 (Culture) will meet summer 2023 to discuss modifications to the course.

**Clinical Skills (2021 - 2022 academic year)**

Assessable Outcome:

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.

Methods, Measures, and Data Collection:

Earlier in the program we assessed using the following:

* *Measure 1:* Professor ratings of beginning clinical skills in Coun 511a/b (Pre-Practicum)
* *Measure 2:* Signature assignment in Coun 528 (Group Counseling and Group Work)

Later, students were assessed in practicum (Coun 530a/b and 584a/b) by their course professor and site supervisor, both of whom had witnessed the student’s clinical work:

* *Measure 3:* Site supervisor ratings in Coun 530a/b (Beginning Practicum) and Coun 584a/b (Advanced Practicum)
* *Measure 4:* Professor ratings of clinical skills in Coun 530a/b and Coun 584a/b
* *Measure 5:* Professor rubric assessment of Coun 584a/b signature assignment

More data were gathered at the end of the program or after graduation:

* *Measure 6: (indirect assessments): (1)* Graduating students survey; (2) This year the assessment coordinator met with six students who had completed Coun 584a/b (Advanced Practicum) to discuss their group therapy training experiences (brief focus group).

Summary and Analysis of Results

*Measures 1 and 4* (Professor ratings of beginning and advanced students’ clinical skills).

*Global ratings* of skills were strong across all three levels of practicum, with close to 100% meeting at least minimal expectations. A small percentage of students did not meet minimal expectations in Pre-Practicum (COUN 511a/b), a not unexpected result as students are just starting their practice. In Advanced Practicum (COUN 584a/b), 88% exceeded expectations, down from 99% the previous year. However, the global rating also includes skills that are not evaluated in this SLO and tend to be more difficult; Averages on the 14 counseling micro skills all fell within the expected range of 5-6.

Scores on *individual skills* across the practicum sequence were in the expected ranges (1-2 for Coun 511a/b; 3-4 for Coun 530a/b; and 5-6 for Coun 584a/b).

*Measure 5*: Advanced practicum (COUN 584a/b) students also demonstrated strong skills on a comprehensive *signature assignment*, with averages close to or just above 5, and slightly higher compared to the previous year.

*Measure 3:* Site supervisor ratings: All students met at least minimal expectations, and averages across skills all met expectations. Notably, a number of students only met minimal expectations for *Crisis management* and *Treatment* in the beginning practicum course. This was somewhat high but not entirely unexpected, given that they were newly seeing clients. Scores were improved in the advanced practicum course.

*Measure 2:* Students also met expectations on group knowledge, as rated by their instructors; however, the outside committee rated student papers a full point lower on *Group Leadership* on average than did the class instructors. The data also suggest that skills, as rated by site supervisors, grow stronger over time, with students obtaining a higher average in advanced practicum, and most of those students meeting or exceeding expectations.

\*The mean for 530a/b is inaccurate because some supervisors indicated “1” when they meant N/A. The mean would be higher and most likely in the “meets expectation” range.

\*\*n is the number of students who did group work that semester (out of the total number in practicum)

*Measure 6 Indirect Measures*

Data from the *graduating students survey* suggests that our students believe the program prepares them well in terms of helping skills and group skills. A full 100% of student responses (N = 45) indicated that the department had “met” expectations in both of these areas. You can find the survey responses in full on the department website.

The assessment coordinator met with six students who had completed COUN 584a/b (Advanced Practicum) to discuss their group therapy training experiences in a *brief focus group* conversation. The majority reported feeling well-prepared for group work by the COUN 528 group class (somewhat less prepared for psychoeducational groups, as opposed to therapy groups). Students felt more supported in group work and had a better experience in sites where group work was clearly a part of their services to the community. In sites that did not have an established group program, it was more difficult to obtain support. Supervision of group work appeared to be uneven.

Improvement Actions

Overall, students did very well across multiple measures and points in time. Micro skills averages across all three levels of practicum were within expected ranges and increased with experience. Average scores suggested that faculty held students to higher standards as students progressed and we see more forgiving ratings early on in the practicum sequence. However, ratings averages from advanced practicum instructors on the signature assignment were close to exceeding expectations, suggesting an appreciation for how far the advanced students had come. Site supervisor ratings were also strong but presented a slightly different picture, with a small number of students only meeting “minimal” expectations, particularly with beginning practicum. We believe this is due to a normal developmental process but will monitor it going forward. We focused in on group work this cycle and believe it warrants further attention. Graduating students (survey) overwhelmingly reported feeling well-prepared for group work and the focus group results supported this too. However, there is room for improvement in terms of how we can support students in obtaining meaningful group experiences. We plan to explore a larger number of students’ experiences with group work at their sites with a survey in order to gain a fuller picture of their experience. In the coming year, we will strategize about how to advocate for students to bring their group proposals from class into practicum, and on how to help practicum sites provide stronger group experiences.

**Case Conceptualization and Treatment Planning (2021 - 2022 academic year)**

Assessable Outcome

Students will demonstrate knowledge of counseling theories and a bio-psycho-sociocultural framework and apply them to case conceptualization. They will demonstrate the ability to appropriately use the DSM-5 (diagnostic manual of mental disorders). They will construct relevant treatment plans.

Methods, Measures, and Data Collection

This SLO encompasses a number of the CACREP core competency requirements and we use a variety of methods at multiple times throughout the program.

Earlier in the program we assess using:

* *Measure 1:* Exam on biological, neurological, and physiological factors affecting human development in Coun 518 (Human development and functioning)
* *Measure 2*: Signature assignment on diagnosis, biopsychosocial conceptualization, and treatment planning in Coun 522a/b (Diagnosis and treatment planning)
* *Measure 3*: Exam on theories in Coun 527a/b (Systems of family counseling)

Later in the program we assess using:

* *Measure 4*: Assessment exam in Coun 560 (Appraisal in counseling)
* *Measure 5*: Signature assignment on career theory and application in Coun 590 (Summer advanced counseling techniques)
* *Measure 6*: Professor ratings of case conceptualization and treatment planning skills in Coun 530a/b (Beginning Practicum) and 584a/b (Advanced Practicum)
* *Measure 7*: Professor rubric assessment of Coun 584a/b signature assignment
* *Measure 8*: Site supervisor ratings in Coun 530a/b (Beginning Practicum) and 584a/b (Advanced Practicum)
* *Measure 9:* Professor rubric assessment of Coun 538 (Crisis intervention and trauma treatment) signature assignment

Anytime in the program:

* *Measure 10*: Career exam in Coun 502 (Career counseling)

After the program:

* *Measure 11 (indirect assessments):* Graduating Students Survey

Summary and Analysis of Results

Students’ performance, on average, met expectations in this broad conceptualization SLO, including aspects of neurobiology, counseling theories, assessment, and career. Most averages were slightly higher than the prior year, and there was improvement in the number of students scoring below the minimum expected.

*Measures 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, and 10* (exams and signature assignments; see below) indicate strong averages and relatively few students scoring below expectations.

*Measure 2*: Earlier in the program and before students begin practicum, th­ey are assessed in COUN 522a/b (Diagnosis and Treatment Planning) on an intake and treatment planning paper (with a mock client). This is a precursor to the work in practicum with real clients. Scores were just slightly lower than those of the previous year and the vast majority of students met expectations.

*Measure 6*: In both practicum classes, professors rate students’ skills based on their work with clients. Beginning practicum (COUN 530a/b) students met expectations both on average and individually and scores were similar to those of the previous year.

Students in advanced practicum (COUN 584a/b) are held to a higher standard. The averages all met expectations, up slightly from the previous year. Individually, a few students scored a 4. It is acceptable and expected that students may need more time on certain skills so this still meets expectations.

*Measure 7*: Students are also evaluated by their professors on a comprehensive signature assignment in advanced practicum. All students scored within expectations and averages were all within expectations. Scores were slightly higher in comparison to the year before.

*Measure 8*: Site supervisors provide another view of students’ case conceptualization and treatment planning skills. As expected given counselor development, advanced practicum students obtained higher scores than beginning practicum students did. However, a full 20% of beginning practicum students received minimal ratings.

*Measure 11 Indirect assessment:* Data from the *graduating students survey* (N = 45) suggests that our students believe the program prepares them well in terms of assessment, human development, career, and theory. All indicators met expectations. You can find the survey responses in full on the department website.

Improvement Actions

Skills in case conceptualization, diagnosis, and treatment planning showed some improvement this year in advanced practicum students. Faculty have increased their individualized attention and feedback to students prior to them beginning to see clients and we are working to provide students with conceptualization and skills practice across more courses. This year’s data suggested a different perception between beginning practicum faculty and the site supervisors, with supervisors rating students somewhat lower. Perceptions were more aligned by the time students were in advanced practicum. This suggests that although faculty may take a more developmental approach with regard to expectations, site supervisors may be expecting more at the start. We plan to continue to make refinements to courses. For example, the faculty who teach COUN 522a/b (Diagnosis and Treatment Planning) will meet in summer 2023 to discuss modifications to the course. We also plan to give this SLO even closer attention in the 2023-2024 cycle.

**Research and Professional Writing (2021-2022 academic year)**

Assessable outcomes (our focus within this broader SLO):

Students will be able to: critically analyze research methodology and the professional literature regarding a counseling topic; construct an original research project; and demonstrate professional writing skills in accordance with APA guidelines.

Methods, Measures, and Data Collection:

We directly assessed students’ knowledge and skills in a variety of ways:

*Measure 1:* signature assignment in the first semester Coun 500 (The Counseling Profession) class.

*Measure 2:* signature assignment, capstone research project in Coun 597 (Research Project) during the last semester in the program.

*Measure 3: (indirect assessment):* Graduating student survey

Summary and Analysis of Results

Results suggest that students continue to do well in this area. Scores were very similar to the previous year. The averages in the first semester course (COUN 500) were relatively high, with only 1% of students falling below the minimal requirement. This suggests that students are entering the program with good skills and that faculty are working with students to improve their skills. The averages in the final project class (COUN 597), taken the last semester in the program, reflect growth and in many ways exceed expectations. Students and faculty work closely together in this process.

*Measures 1 and 2*

*Measure 3 Indirect:* Data from the *graduating students survey* (N = 45) suggests that our students believe the program prepares them well in terms of research (over 92% indicated we had met our goal). You can find the survey responses in full on the department website.

Improvement Actions

Students have continued to perform well in the research sequence; however, we have become more aware since Covid of the need to reconsider the work load, particularly in Coun 521. We also need to increase our efforts in decolonization and social justice with regard to research and writing. This SLO will be the focus of our “deeper dive” next year.

**Dispositions and Professionalism (2021 – 2022 academic year)**

Assessable outcomes:

Students will demonstrate fitness for the field through four broad categories within Dispositions and Professionalism: (1) *effective and professional communication and collaboration; (2) emotional maturity, self-awareness, and counselor presence; (3) dependability, reliability, ethical behavior;* and *(4) respect for diversity and openness to other world views.*

Methods, Measures, and Data Collection:

We directly assessed students’ dispositions and professionalism in all Coun 511a/b (pre-practicum) courses, Coun 530a/b (Beginning Practicum), and Coun 584a/b (Advanced Practicum) courses. Using a comprehensive form, students are rated with “concern,” “needs improvement,” or “no concern” on four categories (noted above). Our criteria for success is to have each student obtain “no concern” on every category. Practicum site supervisors also rate students on dispositions and professionalism: *personal qualities, documentation, professionalism,* and *supervision*.

Summary and Analysis of Results

We expect all students to receive a “no concern” on dispositions regardless of where they are in the program, and the vast majority of students met this expectation. However, it is not entirely unexpected that a few would *need improvement*, especially early on in the program in COUN 511a/b. Ideally, no one needs improvement on these issues in beginning practicum (Coun 530a/b) but a very small percentage may need more guidance. There were students in COUN 511a/b and 530a/b that received a *concern* and we want to prevent this if at all possible, and if not, then continue to improve our response. Site supervisors rated advanced students higher than beginning students on each element, and beginning students had more scores in *the meets minimal expectations* range, which is consistent with indications from faculty.

Improvement Actions

The vast majority of students have no problems with professionalism and dispositions, as expected. However, there is room for improvement, particularly in beginning practicum. The results suggest that students learn and grow during the practicum sequence, as scores from both faculty and supervisors for advanced practicum students were at expectations. However, ideally we want students to be at expectations across all the practicum courses. We continue to refine our orientation to the program and the first semester courses so that students clearly understand the importance of dispositions and professionalism, and our remediation committee continues to refine the ways in which we support students while holding them accountable.

**Final Conclusions**

Student performance on multiple aspects of assessment throughout the curriculum was very strong. There was good improvement in the Professional Identity and Ethical Practice SLO and better consistency across sections of courses. Diversity skills remained strong. There were some differences between practicum instructors’ and site supervisors’ evaluations of skills in beginning practicum students, but more alignment with regard to advanced practicum students. We need to continue to improve students’ preparation for practicum regarding treatment planning and conceptualization, as well as professionalism and dispositions. More exploration of students’ experiences with group work at their sites is needed. Writing and research performance remained very good as well, although we will be exploring some changes to our research sequence in the next year.

Advisory Board members were highly complimentary of students, reporting that they are “confident” and “humble” and well-prepared. They also recommended strengthening their preparation in a variety of ways, although no patterns or themes stood out.

The program assesses student learning on every aspect every year; however, we will focus on one or two SLOs more deeply each year in terms of making changes and then assessing whether those changes seemed to help produce the desired results. Below is the tentative long-term plan, beginning with 2019-2020. This may change, depending on what the data indicate each year, and what the faculty determines is most pressing.

**ASSESSMENT TIMELINE**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SLO | Assessment | “Deeper dive” closer focus on an SLO  | Improvement actions | “Closing the Loop” (Closer examination of whether or not there has been progress) |
| Diversity Awareness & Sensitivity | Every Year | 2019-2020 | 2020- | 2023-2024 |
| Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice | Every Year | 2020- 2021 | 2021- | 2023-2024 |
| Clinical Skills | Every Year | 2021-2022 | 2022- | 2024-2025 |
| Research & Professional Writing  | Every Year | 2022-2023 | 2023- | 2024-2025 |
| Conceptualization & Treatment Planning | Every Year | 2023-2024 | 2024- | 2025-2026 |
| Dispositions | Every Year | Every year | As needed | As needed |