



**COUNSELING PROGRAM
ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
2013-2014**

Annual Improvement Plan

Purpose: The Counseling (CNS) Program is dedicated to improve the Program curriculum, organization, and communication by frequent and routine evaluations. Various groups help in the evaluation process: CNS students during their last semester of the Program, graduates of the CNS Program within six months of graduating, employers of recent graduates, and practicum and internship site supervisors. Through an anonymous survey format, each of these groups gives feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of our Program curriculum and student educational experiences. The surveys are the Program Evaluation, the Graduate Survey, the Graduate Employer Survey, and the Site Supervisor Evaluation of Counseling Program. The CNS faculty compile, analyze, discuss and use the feedback to determine future foci and/or changes to the Program.

Major Findings: There were a few trends found throughout the four surveys for both strengths and weaknesses of the Program.

Program strengths. Survey participants strongly identified that the Program and CNS students are

- ❖ committed to professional growth and development,
- ❖ have a high degree of self-awareness and value self-awareness in counseling, and
- ❖ have great knowledge and skill in legal and ethical issues of counseling.

Results also reiterated that the Program and CNS students

- ❖ have a strong multicultural counseling focus and appreciate client individual differences,
- ❖ have great knowledge of counseling theory and the ability to apply theory to client issues, and
- ❖ students and graduates seek supervision when needed and actively research topics to use evidence-based practices.

Feedback specifically regarding the CNS Program faculty was positive: faculty is diverse and supportive of students.

Need for Program improvement. The themes that were replicated in regards to student ability were consultation and collaboration skills. Also, participants suggested that the Program focus on helping students acquire a greater ability in appraisal and treatment planning.

Results suggested that the Program should work on making courses more readily available and should include a focus in various topics, like crisis and intervention and working with specific at-risk populations (i.e., sexual orientation issues).

There was also feedback concerning specific courses, such as CNS 618 Issues in Counseling, CNS 624 Theories of Counseling, CNS 683 Tests and Measurements, CNS 686 Career Counseling, and CNS 689 Individual Testing. Responses reflect particular issues with their experience in these courses and recommend a change should be made to enhance the curriculum.

Plan for improvement: The CNS Program will continue to work on various areas to enhance the curriculum and the learning experiences for students. Many changes have already been made. For instance, each course syllabus has been reorganized, standardized (according to CACREP national standards), and updated to strengthen the focus on counseling theory, multicultural issues, and application of skills. Also, the organization of the Program itself has been restructured to offer consistency in course offering and uniformity of student expectations.

In the upcoming year, the Program will use the results of these surveys to further develop the curriculum and Program structure. The Program will focus on

- ❖ continuing to enhance the advising process by using and regularly updating a database that outlines student progress through their program area. CNS faculty will more routinely contact students with regard to their progress and learning experiences.
- ❖ balancing student wishes with counseling standards by including supplemental material in course curriculum or highlighting aspects of the course material. For example,
 - collaboration and consultation theories, skills and practice will be further developed in the School Counseling courses (CNS 720 & CNS 725) and in CNS 618.
 - Also, School Counseling courses will enrich the topic of role expectations so that school counseling students better understand how to manage role differentiation between the expectations of the school systems and expectations of the ASCA National Model.
 - CNS 618, CNS 720 and CNS 725 will address the concerns regarding current state laws pertaining to mental health and school counselors.
 - And CNS 676 will include more case study and treatment planning practice to prepare students for on-site demands.

Changes will be made to the curriculum if they align with MSU, CNS Program and CACREP standards.

- ❖ continuing to enhance the curriculum of courses by updating course material according to up-to-date research, the needs of students and the feedback from graduates and employers. CNS faculty have made changes to course structure and material according to CACREP standards.
- ❖ continuing to fine-tune the program organization, including course scheduling, student assessments and evaluations.
 - Dr. Pender created a yearly schedule of course offerings that helps guide student advising and helps students plan their course sequence through the Program. Faculty will make changes to the schedule to ensure better course sequences for students.
 - A main CNS events calendar has been created to help guide and organize CNS duties throughout the year. Faculty members have identified roles and responsibilities for each duty. The calendar will be changed as the Program adjusts events to be more efficient and effective.
 - Faculty have created student assessments and evaluations to determine learning outcomes. Students are regularly assessed in class and as they progress through the Program as outlined in the events calendar. Faculty are currently researching methods to refine the assessment and data gathering process.

- ❖ increasing the communication between faculty and students, administration, site supervisors, etc. about program modifications by updating the CNS website regularly and contacting students in-class and through e-mail about changes. Also, CNS faculty will maintain communication with site supervisors by an on-site visit around midterm, and through phone, email, or in person contact.
- ❖ planning the initiating steps for Chi Sigma Iota, pending CACREP accreditation.

The counseling faculty is taking the proper steps to make positive changes to the structure, organization and flow of the counseling program. This will be an ongoing process, but it is necessary to meet our purpose of preparing our students for careers as professional counselors.