



**COUNSELING PROGRAM
ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
2014-2015**

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

- ❖ Multicultural counseling focus
- ❖ K-12 school counseling focus
- ❖ Diversity of faculty
- ❖ Knowledge in areas of personal self-awareness, counseling interventions, and ability to advocate for the profession

Results also reiterated that the Program and CNS students

- ❖ Achievement of program standards
- ❖ Diversity in the methods of teaching
- ❖ Supportive professions

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

Need for Program improvement. Students indicated there needs to be more courses in specific counseling interest areas and that some adjunct professors appeared to lack motivation in teaching. There were a number of comments indicating ADM 630 Methods of Research, CNS 683 Tests & Measurements, and CNS 689 Individual Testing courses need to be enhanced. In addition, students highlighted wanting more opportunities to engage in leadership and the addition of CNS 625 Legal and Ethical Issues into the 48-hour school counseling program.

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.

Students now have access to Tentative Course Sequencing that helps to better outline when classes are offered. In addition, the course sequence has been adjusted to better meet student needs. For example, we now have a summer admission that allows students to take more courses prior to starting Practicum, including Multicultural Counseling and Ethics and Legal Issues.

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. Faculty will email advisees prior to the start of each semester, at midterm and at the end of the semester when it is time to register for the next semester. In addition, Faculty will commit to being in constant contact with students who appear to be struggling.
- ❖ balancing student wishes with counseling standards by including supplemental material in course curriculum or highlighting aspects of the course material. For example,
 - students highlighted wanting to have more variety in course offerings. While it is not possible at this time to add additional courses, CNS Faculty have updated current offerings to better meet student needs. Specifically CNS 618 Issues in Mental Health Counseling now has greater focus on advocacy, policies and procedures and has an added component of special populations including sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, grief counseling, forensic counseling, spirituality and human sexuality. etc.
 - 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.
 - And CNS 676 will include more case study and treatment planning practice to prepare students for on-site demands. In addition, the students will be exposed to various assessment tools that can be utilized in the workplace.

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. CNS Faculty will update all course syllabi to address CACREP, EPSB, and CAEP standards. In addition, the yearly evaluations are used to continue to update each course.
- ❖ continuing to fine-tune the program organization, including course scheduling, student assessments and evaluations.
 - Dr. Pender continues to update the 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 currently use Microsoft Access to track student progress but are continuing to look for a more user friendly option.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ To address the students concern regarding wanting more leadership opportunities, Dr. Patel and Dr. Pender have activated the Mu Sigma Chi Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota and will continue to encourage students to serve in leadership positions within the chapter. In addition, several faculty have presented at conferences and written publishable papers with students. All CNS Faculty will continue to reach out to students and include them in these professional development opportunities.
- ❖ Lastly, this academic year we will be opening a training clinic for our student counselors. Initially, we will utilize two Practicum students and one Intern. The goal is to have an in house center where all practicum hours can be completed.

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.