



**MURRAY**  
**STATE UNIVERSITY**

**COUNSELING PROGRAM  
ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN  
2016-2017**

## 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 provide feedback on the strengths and challenges 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 utilize the feedback to determine future foci and/or changes to the Program. In addition, at the end of each semester, CNS faculty review the progress of each student on all CACREP standards and utilize this information to enhance program curriculum and develop student remediation, if necessary. Lastly, we share the reports with our Advisory Board and discuss possible changes to the program.

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

**Program strengths.** Survey participants strongly identified the:

- ❖ Approachability of faculty
- ❖ Program support
- ❖ Recognition of students as more than students (i.e., parents, family members, etc.)
- ❖ Diversity in Curriculum
- ❖ Clinical focus of program

**Site Supervisors:** Overall, the site supervisors ranked the counseling program between adequately prepared and well prepared on all standards. The highest rankings were in professional/personal growth, professional identity, ethics, and openness to feedback. Supervisors also ranked the students skills highest in career/lifestyle development (though there were three not applicable) and human growth and development. The overall ratings in actual skills were fairly consistent and at the high end of adequately prepared.

**Need for Program improvement.** Responses to program improvement included: focus more on the differences between school counseling and clinical mental health counseling, provide more school counseling focused supervision to school counseling students, be mindful of the challenges that school counseling students face in terms of completing clinical hours, and lessening focus on theory.

**Site Supervisors:** While many of the standards increased in score, there were seven areas where the scores did decrease minimally. Overall, the site supervisors rated the counseling program's preparation of students in the professional skills of leadership and the technical skills of appraisal, establishing counseling relationships and theory a little lower. One site supervisor did comment about the need for school counseling students to understand the difference between counseling in an agency setting and counseling in a school setting. This seems to be related to historical views of counseling and the continued struggle to move the counseling profession to be

more consistent with standards set forth by ASCA, ACA, and CACREP. Another site supervisor had concerns regarding the CIT's knowledge regarding the school system.

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's):** In addition to the above surveys, the CNS faculty also reviewed each CACREP standard for every student in courses the previous academic year. Below is an overview of the results.

**Met or Exceeded Core Standards:** All students met or exceeded the core standards measured in the following classes: CNS 617- Introduction to Counseling, CNS 618- Issues in Mental Health Counseling, CNS 734- Marriage, Couples and Family Counseling, CNS 752- Trauma and Crisis Counseling, CNS 686- Career Counseling, CNS 619- Foundational Counseling Techniques, CNS 624- Theories of Counseling, CNS 692- Group Counseling, CNS 725- Middle/Secondary School Counseling, CNS 790- Practicum (fall 2015, spring 2016), CNS 794- Internship I (fall 2015, spring 2016), CNS 795- Internship II (fall 2015, spring 2016), CNS 635- Human Growth and Development (summer 2015, fall 2015, spring 2016), CNS 671- Multicultural Counseling (summer 2015, spring 2016). No Core Standards were assessed in CNS 676- Diagnosis and Treatment Planning or CNS 722- Substance Use and Addictions Counseling.

**Developing or Did not Meet Core Standards:** One student did not meet standard G1h and G8e – the failure was more caused by plagiarizing the material rather than lack of knowledge of the content. These standards will need to be assessed in the research course.

**Met or Exceeded Clinical Mental Health Counseling Standards:** All students met or exceeded the CMHC standards measured in the following courses: CNS 625- Legal and Ethical Issues, CNS 618- Issues in Mental Health Counseling, CNS 734- Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling, CNS 752- Trauma and Crisis Counseling, CNS 722- Substance Use and Addictions Counseling, CNS 790- Practicum (spring 2016, fall 2015), CNS 794- Internship I (fall 2015), CNS 795- Internship II (fall, 2015, spring 2016), CNS 671 (summer 2015, spring 2016). No CMHC standards were assessed in CNS 692- Group Counseling.

**Developing or Did not Meet CMHC Standards:** One student was developing standard D7. This will be reassessed in Internship. One student was developing standard D9 and will be reassessed in Internship II.

**Met or Exceeded School Counseling Standards:** All students met or exceeded the SC standards measured in the following courses: CNS 617- Introduction to Counseling, CNS 624- Theories of Counseling, CNS 671- Multicultural Counseling, CNS 635- Human Growth and Development (summer 2015, fall 2015, spring 2016), CNS 625- Legal and Ethical Issues, CNS 676- Diagnosis and Treatment Planning, CNS 790- Practicum (fall 2015, spring 2016), CNS 794- Internship I (fall 2015, spring 2016), CNS 725- Middle/Secondary School Counseling. No standards were assessed in CNS 692- Group Counseling.

**Developing or Did not Meet School Counseling Standards:** CNS 720- Elementary School Counseling: One student did not meet standards A2, A3, A5, D3, I2, J2, K1, K3, D5, P1 or P2. There was an issue of student plagiarism and student will be reassessed in Internship. Another student in CNS 720 did not meet standard P2 or I2 and will be reassessed in Internship.

One student was developing standards in D3, J2, K2 and will be reassessed in practicum. CNS 794- Internship I (spring 2016): Two students were developing D5 (microskills) and will be reassessed in Internship II.

**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, CAEP, and EPSB), 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 and SLO's to further develop the curriculum and Program structure. While the vast majority of the students met or exceeded the Core and program specific CACREP standards, there are some areas to review.

- ❖ Adjustments that will be made to specific courses include:
  - Treatment planning, case documentation, and risk assessment has also been embedded into CNS 618- Issues in Mental Health Counseling and CNS 694- Advanced Counseling and Supervision.
  - Given the mixed results regarding theory, faculty will continue to monitor student and site feedback and determine if a change in curriculum is needed.
  - The school counseling courses (CNS 720- Elementary School Counseling and CNS 725- Middle/Secondary School Counseling) will be reviewed. The instructor will review the assignments and rubrics to ensure they are accurately measuring the above listed SLO's.
  - CNS 752- Trauma and Crisis Counseling will now have a greater focus in practical application. Students will create a crisis/ trauma scenario and demonstrate how they would use an interdisciplinary treatment team to respond to the situation.
  - Upon analyzing the Clinical Midpoint Application Examination, it was determined that question four on the adult question is not sufficiently represented on the rubric. Faculty will review question and rubric and make adjustments.
  - In addition, faculty need to identify a process for addressing SLO's measured in CNS 795- Internship II that are not met or developing. Typically students take this course in their last semester, therefore the faculty will develop a plan of action for addressing unmet standards.
- ❖ Faculty will continue keep a list of students who have not successfully met each standard and identify a future class in which those standards will need to be assessed.
- ❖ Faculty will continue to enhance the advising process by using and regularly updating a database that outlines student progress through program and continue to utilize Facebook, twitter and Instagram to better reach students and community.
- ❖ Lastly, and most concerning, is the low number in student skill in establishing a helping relationship with clients. As a faculty, we will devote more time to case study, practical experiences, and feedback to ensure this necessary component is addressed and remedied.

Changes will be made to the curriculum if they align with MSU, CNS Program and CACREP standards. Program faculty are/have:

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Mu Sigma Chi is starting its third year as a chapter of Chi Sigma Iota. Student projects for the year will include efforts in advocacy, personal and professional development and community service.
- ❖ reviewing the Midpoint Clinical Application Examination to ensure we are accurately assessing the case studies. In addition, faculty have added more case applications to several courses including CNS 617, 618, 619, 720, 722, 725 and 734.
- ❖ purchased study guides for the CPCE to be placed at both the Murray and Madisonville campuses to help students in preparing for the examination.
- ❖ Faculty will continue to encourage students to participate in advocacy activities. This past year, students in CNS 618 participated in the CACREP advocacy week completing projects in transformational advocacy, social network advocacy, political advocacy and program advocacy.

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.