

Loyola University New Orleans

Department of Counseling

Outcome Report AY 2020-2021

Program Assessment and Evaluation Overview

The program assessment and evaluation are ongoing. We follow a circular cycle of collecting data, reviewing the data, making necessary adjustments, implementing the adjustments, and collecting more data. We follow the Planning and Assessment Calendar (see Appendix A) and review the data we are obtaining through surveys, Advisory Board meetings, student feedback, NCE data, and course rubrics. We use our regularly scheduled faculty meetings and set aside time in each meeting to review items/data from the Planning and Assessment calendar and determine if we will make adjustments and how to implement the adjustments. Adjustments can range from adding a form to a significant policy change.

Additionally, we use faculty meetings to discuss other curricular adjustments that might come up in a more ad-hoc fashion. When this occurs, we collect data (e.g. survey data), review the data, and then implement the changes. If an adjustment is going to impact students, we hold focus groups in order to gain information from the students. We usually ask a staff member, one of the counselors from the on-campus counseling center, or a faculty member from another department to hold the focus groups so that students feel comfortable to speak honestly.

The following is a list of the items on the 2020-2021 Assessment and Planning Calendar that the department faculty reviewed.

- Department Annual Report
- Annual Advisory Board meeting & Annual Supervisors meeting
- Surveys (Exit, Alumni, Employer, Supervisors)
- KPI Data from Core Courses
 - Based on CACREP Standards
- NCE results
- Course Evaluations
- Clinical Review (site supervisor's reports and student evaluations of sites)
- Demographic data

Academic Year 2020-2021 Outcomes

Curriculum Changes and Adjustments

In 2020-2021, we made the CACREP group participation requirement the Racial Identity Processing Group (RIPG) as the long standing “Group Lab” that students sign up for as a co-req to the group course. The year before, the RIPG was a as a pre-requisite to beginning practicum (*2018-2019 was the pilot year for the RIPG group, which was excellent). The faculty have begun exploring more trauma-oriented coursework to enhance the student experience. The faculty offered the Crisis Counseling elective experimental course in the fall 2020 and began exploring adding further trauma oriented coursework and a trauma certificate, as well, in coming years.

The Self Study was accepted by CACREP, and a site team conducted a site visit in fall 2019. The outcome was a 2-year accreditation contingent on a report on student assessment and data collection and review that is due in December 2021. Once the report is submitted, the full accreditation will be eight years (until 2027)

In March, 2020, the worldwide pandemic was declared and the university was required to move to an online only format. Fortunately, we were able to do this in a fairly streamlined manner as we had hurricane preparedness plans that were already in place and worked well. Students and faculty moved to 100% online format for the latter half of 2020 spring and summer semesters. Students were required to move to teletherapy format. We offered trainings in the summer for working with children in play therapy and adults using teletherapy ethically and with best practices in mind. In the fall 2020, the university adopted a “hyflex” plan. In Counseling, we had some hyflex courses and some online only courses to meet the needs of diverse students and faculty with diverse health needs. Hyflex course were mixed online and in person and synchronous. Online courses were synchronous. Student in clinicals were required to follow the expectations of their agencies. Most agencies stayed in the teletherapy mode through the 2020 fall semester, but some began having in person sessions again, or a mix of teletherapy and in person. We continued to offer trainings to students and the community in teletherapy to support our students, alumni, supervisors, and community counselors.

Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling Accreditation (MCFC)

The MCFC track was added due to overwhelming student interest in pursuing and specializing in this area. The faculty included the MCFC accreditation in the current CACREP 2019 Self Study. The MCFC accreditation Self Study was accepted by CACREP and was reviewed by the site team when they visited the program in fall 2019 and approved the MCFC accreditation.

CACREP Mid-Cycle Report

The next mid-cycle report will be due in July 2023.

College

The program resides in the College of Nursing & Health (CNH). The School of Nursing and the Loyola Institute for Ministry (LIM) are also housed under CNH.

Assessment and Planning Calendar Activities

- Department Annual Report: Faculty review of the 2019-2020 annual report suggests that the department is continuing to thrive, is profitable, and receives positive feedback from a variety of data sources.
- Annual Advisory Board meeting and Annual Supervisors training & meeting: Both meetings were held the same day in fall 2020 (virtual).
- The Advisory Board was impressed with the program curricular modifications made during the current year and previous year. Committee members endorsed the Racial Identity Processing Group and the adjustment to make it the CACREP required group that is also a lab requirement for our Group course. The committee was pleased to know the faculty attained accreditation in the MCFC accreditation.

Surveys (Alumni, Employer, Exit)

- Alumni Survey ($N=6$)
Administered in September, 2020. Responses were received between September, 2020 and October 2020. This survey is sent to alumni three years after graduation.

Alumni reported either attaining or being very close to attaining licensure. 83% of Alumni reported having a mental health job at the time of the survey (5/6). 30 % reported working as school counselors. 45 % in private practice, 15% agency. 80% or more of Alumni report overall satisfaction at the “*strongly agree*” or “*agree*” level in all CACREP core areas. 1 student reported that they “disagree” that they were fully prepared in culture and social advocacy. 100% said they would recommend the program, would repeat the program, and feel prepared to be counselors. They also reported feeling exceptionally prepared compared to peers from other local programs and that the labs (client actor) were exceptional. They report feeling strong in understanding counseling relationships, research, and ethics.

Thoughts for improvement include: better preparation for building a private practice, more prepared to compete for professional jobs, treatment planning, social justice advocacy, working in non-profit settings, working with educational evaluations, more trauma training, including faculty in racial identity processing development

- Employer Survey 2020 ($N=9$)
Employer survey was administered in September, 2020 and all responses were received in October. Employers showed strong support for graduates of our program who are working for them in the field. They selected “*Strongly Agree*” or “*Agree*” (the two highest fields) in all of the survey questions. In the open response area, employers identified clinical relationship, autonomy, professionalism, counseling relationships, intake and risk assessments, consistent caseloads, and ethical awareness as some of our graduates’ strengths. Some areas for improvement one employer (the others didn’t comment) was in ethical flexibility and understanding nuances in ethical matters (it was

reported that Loyola graduates can be rigid in this particular area). No curriculum changes were recommended by any of the employers, however.

➤ Exit Survey 2019-2020 Students ($n = 9$)

All nine students reported they secured employment at the time of graduation in the counseling field. They all described feeling competent in attention of professors, knowledgeability of professors, and preparedness for clinical work at time of graduation as evidenced by 100% responding that they “*Strongly Agree*” or “*Somewhat Agree*” in all areas surveyed. Most students felt fully prepared in all of the core coursework. However, in n diversity, legal issues, and assessment & psychometrics, three students reported feeling underprepared.

The exit survey was also sent in Spring 2021 ($n=6$) and Summer 2021 ($N=0$). Data has not yet been entered and will be reported in the next outcome report.

The 2015-2016 survey showed four respondents who reported concern with the diversity training, however all students reported feeling prepared in diversity training for the 2016-2017 surveyed graduates. In this current survey, eight reported feeling prepared in diversity training, while three disagreed on that measure. The faculty have been working to further integrate diversity into the curriculum and throughout the program, including broaching (see examples listed below).

- Beginning with the current (2020) cohort, all students were/are required to participate in a Racial Identity Processing Group as a co-req with the group course as the group lab.
- Faculty have been working with Students Addressing Race and Privilege (SARP) to come up with ways to continue to integrate diversity awareness. Beginning with the 2017 new student orientation, we added a diversity exercise that is led by current students for incoming students. We included the diversity exercise in the 2018 and 2019 cohort orientations. We are also working with SARP to bring in more outside speakers. The counseling faculty and SARP agreed to work together on projects that include: (a) further infusing the topics of diversity, social justice, and privilege into existing coursework; (b) finding ways to include social justice topics in the interview process and student orientation; and (c) pursuing extracurricular opportunities for faculty and students both on and off campus.

➤ Course Evaluations

Faculty reviewed the course evaluations in 2019-2020. It was determined that we would continue to work on diversity integration.

- Added a requirement for all students to participate in a Racial Identity Processing Group as the longstanding Group Lab (instead of an ad hoc requirement). This is paid for using lab fees.
- Continue to modify syllabi, required readings, and assignments in ways that continue to expand diversity in a variety of ways (cases used, order to readings, inclusion in assignments, etc.) and meet 1x/semester to review updates with faculty.

- CE results: ($N = 19$) 17/19 passed the NCE in 2020-2021
- Faculty determined that the students are scoring well above students at other CACREP-accredited institutes in all areas tested. Because we have always had a high pass rate, we believe the pandemic is likely what disrupted the pass rate this year.
- Clinical Review (site supervisors reports and student evaluations of sites)
 - Site Supervisors Survey (2020) ($N=9$) consistently report that the students are very well trained and very professional. Supervisors report students are prepared in all CACREP Core academic and clinical areas as evidenced by scoring students as *Strongly Agree*, or *Agree* on 90% of surveyed criteria. One supervisor expressed concern by marking “disagree” in social/cultural preparedness and lifespan development. The supervisors report the strengths of the students to be professionalism, counseling process, rapport building, openness in supervision, theory, ethical considerations, conceptualization, micro-skills. The supervisors report that the students seem adequately prepared except one supervisor expressed developing counselor identity and one said their intern needed to work on empathy.
- Demographics review (gender, ethnicity, etc.)
 - Although our demographics are still primarily Caucasian females, we continue to sustain or increase our student populations in non-white (BIPOC) students. In 2020-2021, we have 96 students enrolled total and 17% are BIPOC/ non-white students. Our incoming cohort in 2021 has an increase in BIPOC enrollment to 33%. We have also increased our population of students who identify as non-cis, non-binary, queer, and trans.

Faculty continue to work on how to increase diversity within the department. The university has set graduate tuition at a rate that is two times higher than the next most expensive counseling program in our area and we have limited options for scholarship and assistantships. We have been working with the Chief Diversity Officer in order to try to increase our diversity in students, faculty, and staff, as well as ensure retention. Some adjustments we implemented, so far, include:

- At the end of the 2020-2021 AY, faculty were able to get funding to hire a consultant to help the faculty understand the needs of current students, work with current students and SARP to integrate more diversity in students and curriculum as well as create more and more inclusive classroom experiences. This process will start in the Fall of the 2021-2022 AY
- Hiring practices. We recently hired two faculty members and a staff member who are people of color, including our new Clinical Director for the counseling clinic.
- Recruitment of students. We are actively recruiting students of color and have continually given assistantships, when available, to students of color.
- Work with students of color to provide as much support as possible and to assess how marginalized students are experiencing the program.
- Addressing students of color to assess and support student success. How are marginalized students doing? How can we support students?

Ad Hoc Assessment and Evaluation Activities

Clinic. The new Clinical Director started in the summer 2020 and began teaching in the fall 2020. She has a reduced teaching load in order to manage the clinic. History: Students and faculty opened an on-site clinic at Loyola University New Orleans. The city of New Orleans is losing mental health services due to under-funding, and several sites have closed or stopped accepting counseling interns as they move to insurance models. The few facilities that are still open often have long waitlists. In accordance with the Jesuit values and our need to educate our students, the faculty and a student worked together to secure partnerships and gifts from the Musicians Clinic of New Orleans, the Preservation Hall Foundation, the City of New Orleans, and the Brett Thomas Doussan Foundations to offer clinical mental health services. The administration has helped secure office space to convert into clinical counseling rooms. The clinic opened in spring 2019. When the pandemic started, we moved the clinic to a tele-therapy model without difficulty. We also held trainings for students and community members on ethical models for working with both children and adults in teletherapy.

Student-led group. Our student body formed a committee called the Students Addressing Race and Privilege (SARP) in 2015 and have been active in both the department and university. Their main goal is to increase awareness and training opportunities regarding diversity, social justice, and privilege within the counseling program. The counseling faculty and SARP agreed to work together on projects that include: (a) further infusing the topics of diversity, social justice, and privilege into existing coursework; (b) finding ways to include social justice topics into the interview process and student orientation; and (c) pursuing extracurricular opportunities for faculty and students both on and off campus.

Success Stories AY 20-21

Laura Alexander received the University Ignatian Award (one graduate student in the entire university is chosen annually for this award).

Eleanor Harrison received the Mimi Heebe Excellence in Play Therapy Award.

Dylan Kolesa & Laura Alexander received the Regina Matthews Oehmig Award for Excellence in Counseling.

Arlette Murillo received the Excellence in Scholarship Award

Tyler Jones received the Clinical Excellence Award.

Nikki Piazza the Social Justice and Advocacy in Counseling Award.

Diana Mirfiq received the Counseling Professional Advocacy Award.

Faculty are presenting at many conferences, agencies, and schools regionally.

Students are presenting at many conferences with faculty and on their own, including national level (American Counseling Association).

Several alumni have been accepted into doctoral programs around the country.

The Play Therapy Center received renewal as both an Approved Center (AC) (university designation) of play therapy and as an Approved Provider of Play Therapy education (CE designation) from the National Association for Play Therapy.

Other Faculty Successes:

Ebrahim, C.

Louisiana Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (LACES), President (2020-2021)

Louisiana Counseling Association (LCA), Chair, Mentoring Task Force

Ebrahim, C., Bojan, K., & Klaffky, M. (2020, October). *Suicide or Autonomy: Navigating Our Own Values when Working with Clients Contemplating End of Life Decisions*. Presentation to the annual conference of the Louisiana Counseling Association. Baton Rouge, LA.

Steen, R.L.,

Sarah Zoghbi, Penny Roberts, Miranda Pollock & LeAnne Steen (2021) Activity Groups as Mental Health Interventions for Creative Arts Professionals, *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, DOI: [10.1080/15401383.2021.1989353](https://doi.org/10.1080/15401383.2021.1989353)

**WWL Great Day Louisiana
January 2021**

*Completed 2-part interview on a document published on the
Play Therapy Center website and social media sites.*

6 Rules of Thumb (Garry Landreth) for Parenting during COVID

Segment 1: 3 Rules of Thumb

Segment 2: 3 Rules of thumb

Service Publications:

Steen, R. L. & Makant, H. (2020). *Covid 19 Resources for kids & parents*. LUNO Play Therapy Center.

Steen, R.L. (2020). 6 of Garry Landreth's Rules of Thumb for Parenting during COVID. (English and Spanish)

APPENDIX A: Counseling Department Calendar of Planning and Assessment

Loyola University New Orleans

Calendar of Key Assessment Activities

- Exit survey administered (Departmental) 15 May 1-15
- Alumni survey administered June 15
- Employer survey administered 15 June
- Supervisor survey administered 15 June
- Annual Report Due July 15
- Review Annual Report Meeting November Faculty
 - Previous AY National Counselor Examination (NCE) results
 - Review previous AY survey Data
 - Exit (Dec/May); Alumni, Employer, Supervisor (June)
- Outcome Report Posted October
- Advisory Board Meeting November
- Supervisors Meeting & Training November
- Discuss Faculty Course Evaluations (Spring/ Summer) November Faculty Meeting
- Clinical Review Meeting December Faculty
 - Site Supervisor Reports; Student Evaluations of Sites
- Advisory Board & Supervisor Meeting Review Meeting December Faculty
 - Review minutes, action items, etc.
- Exit survey administered (as needed) December 1-15
- Review Outcome Report January
- Discuss Faculty Course Evaluations (Fall) April