

**Report of Program Evaluation for
Graduate Counseling Programs in
Community, Marriage and Family, and School Counseling
Fall 2009**

The following report of the program evaluation for Graduate Counseling Programs in Community, Marriage and Family, and School Counseling is based on input from current and past students, personnel in cooperating agencies, college faculty, staff, and administration. The report contains modifications to the programs based on this evaluation.

Based on communication with students and graduates who relocated due to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the Graduate Counseling faculty proposed a change in the curriculum requirements for the Community and School Counseling programs from 54 hours to 60 hours. This proposed change was approved by Graduate Council and by the College administration and was implemented in Fall 2006 as demonstrated in the revised Graduate Handbook, Practicum Manual, and Internship Manual and curriculum guidelines. (The Marriage and Family Counseling program was a 60-credit hour program prior to Fall 2006).

In 2006 and again in 2009, surveys were distributed to alumni of the Graduate Counseling Programs at OLHCC, and to employers and supervisors of our students and alumni. The information that the program faculty gathered from these surveys has assisted us in decision making for the programs in Community, Marriage and Family, and School Counseling. The results of these surveys can be seen in the addendum.

Each semester, graduating students respond to a Graduate Exit survey. The information from these surveys are reviewed and analyzed for program decisions. The data from these surveys have been part of the overall evaluation of the program. Course sequence has been modified, practicum and internship student evaluations have been improved, program curriculum has been modified, and several new courses have been added to the curriculum.

During the semesters when students are enrolled in practicum and internship, they receive performance evaluations from site supervisors, as well as program supervisors. In addition to the written evaluations, the practicum and internship coordinator is in verbal communication with site supervisors during the semester regarding students= performance. These evaluations are reviewed by the practicum and internship coordinator, brought to the department faculty meetings, and the information is utilized in program evaluations and decisions.

Each student enrolled in practicum and internship engages in both group and individual supervision with graduate counseling faculty supervisors. Students are evaluated by their individual and group supervisors and these evaluations are discussed in department faculty meetings. Additionally, during the students= practicum semester, the student applies for candidacy. Students are evaluated on their academic and clinical skills before being considered for candidacy. In the past three years, only one student who has applied for candidacy was declined. A remediation was designed for that student, and the following semester the student reapplied and was granted candidacy.

Because OLHCC has a counseling and training center which is part of the graduate counseling programs, practicum students must do their practicum here at the college in the counseling and training center. Students can also elect to complete part or all of their internship at the counseling and training center. That allows the faculty and clinic director to supervise the student=s clinical work and make the necessary supervision interventions quickly. Each counseling room within the counseling and training center has a video camera and there is a viewing room in the center where supervisors can view the session as it is occurring. Students get immediate feedback when needed. The students tape all of their sessions during practicum and the tapes are reviewed in supervision with the faculty supervisors. Program faculty meet regularly to review and discuss students clinical growth and address any concerns supervisors may have with a particular student and these issues are brought to the regular monthly program faculty meetings.

The clinic director has monthly meetings with the practicum students to go over client charts and other professional responsibilities that students have in the counseling and training center. As a result of this feedback, the center director has implemented mini training sessions on various topics such as assessments, play therapy, depression and suicide screening among others. Professional behavior is modeled and feedback is given to students as needed. Ms. Joan Fischer, M.A., LPC-S, LMFT, is the Clinic Director of the counseling center and she, with input from program faculty, has implemented various means of evaluating the students clinical performance in the center. The results of these evaluations have been instrumental in improving the practicum and internship experiences for the students. An example of one of these changes has been the development of two levels of forms for case notes. Students in practicum utilize form A, and the more advanced internship students form B.

Students who complete their program of study in the Community, Marriage and Family, and School programs of counseling must pass both a written exit exam and an oral competency exam in order to graduate. The Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) is utilized for the written exit exam and results of the exam are analyzed as part of ongoing evaluation of the program effectiveness. If a student does not successfully pass the CPCE written exam, they must postpone their graduation until they are able to retake the exam. After an unsuccessful attempt to pass the CPCE, faculty put together a remediation plan for the student so that the student can be successful when they retake the exam.

The oral competency exam consists of the students presenting a theory (or combined theories) that they use when counseling. They must demonstrate to the faculty committee that they have an understanding of the background of the theory and can implement the theory in a counseling session. In addition to describing the theory and how they use it, they must show a 15-20 minute video taped demonstration of the theory in a counseling session with an actual client. Students are then given a written case study and they must conceptualize the case and describe how they would use their counseling skills to work with the client represented in the case study. These presentations are graded on a rubric. If a student does not successfully demonstrate their counseling knowledge and abilities during the oral exam, the student is given one week to prepare a follow-up presentation. If the student is not successful in the oral exam the second time, they must take an additional semester of internship and their program supervisor works with them so that they can be successful the following semester when they re-

take the oral exam. The scoring rubrics and faculty discussions are then evaluated to determine what, if any, changes should be implemented in the programs to assist the students in acquiring the necessary competencies. Over the past three years, 41 students have taken the exit exams with 40 students successfully passing the exams and graduating from the graduate counseling programs.

The National Counseling Exam (NCE) is offered every fall and spring to students in the program. Since 2007, 41 OLHCC graduate counseling students have taken the NCE at the OLHCC testing site and 31 students have successfully passed.

Students complete course evaluations at the end of each semester. These course evaluations are then reviewed by program faculty to determine the possible need for program modifications.

In 2008 the department received feedback from a doctoral study in which OLHCC students answered questions on using spirituality in counseling with clients. In the study, students reported that they felt that they did not receive enough information on the use of spirituality in counseling during their graduate program. When faculty polled students in classes regarding the need for a special topics class on spirituality in counseling, the majority stated that they would take such a course as one of the electives in their program of study. In the Spring of 2009 the program offered a class on Spirituality in Counseling taught by Dr. George Hay. The course received positive feedback from the students and will be offered again in the Spring 2010.

Based on the observations in practicum and internship of students= hesitancy to address issues of sexuality with clients, the program added four training modules to our supervision groups. Pre and post tests were administered before the first module and after the last module. The results of these post tests showed that students were more aware of their lack of knowledge and comfort in discussing the topic of sexuality with clients after the modules. Students who took part in the test program stated that they needed more information and training in counseling clients on sexual topics and we are offering a special topics course in the Spring 2010 on Sexuality in Family Counseling.

Use of Post-Graduate Survey from 2006 and 2009 to Guide Program Development

From the responses to the Post-Graduate Survey results in 2006 and 2009, and the Employer/Supervisor Survey results in 2006 and 2009, the program has made the following adjustments in the curriculum:

- § 65% reported that they perceived the objectives of the program were related to societal needs and problems. We have increased community outreach through the program=s counseling center and included practicum/internship students in this outreach. In COU 641 (Community Counseling), COU 630 (Introduction to Marriage and Family Counseling) COU 602 (Social and Cultural Counseling), and COU 623 (Foundations of School Counseling) a greater emphasis has been placed on the advocacy role of counselors.
- § 93% stated that the curriculum was designed to assist them in their professional preparation appropriate to the field of counseling. The program faculty strives to continue to enhance our program to fulfill the above stated goal. Practicum and Internship courses continue to evolve to prepare students for the counseling profession. The director of the counseling center is continually reaching out to the community and to the college to increase the number of clients which are seen by our practicum and internship students.
- § Students reported that they did not feel that the research course prepared them adequately to conduct research. Dr. Lillian Range has been teaching the research course over the last two years and has all students complete a research project where they propose their intended research project to a college IRB committee, conduct surveys, use SPSS (which the college has installed on computers in the research classroom) to run statistical analyses, and write a research report. She also encourages students to submit their research findings to journals, and to put poster presentations together that they can submit to professional conferences. Two of our current graduate students have presented their poster presentations at a professional conference.
- § Students are encouraged to attend professional conferences and also to present with program faculty at the conferences. Over the past several years, we have had 7 students in our graduate counseling program who have presented at LCA or LAMFT (professional conferences in Louisiana).
- § While an overwhelming number (86.2 %) reported that they believed that the graduate counseling program had sufficient full-time faculty to support the program, we continue to have four full-time faculty with doctoral degrees (all are licensed professional counselors in Louisiana and three are approved LPC supervisors in Louisiana), a counseling center clinic director who has a master=s in counseling, is a licensed professional counselor, a licensed marriage and family therapist, certified Reality therapist, and an approved LPC supervisor. Dr. Lillian Range (who teaches the research

course) is a full-time faculty member in the undergraduate psychology program, a licensed psychologist in Louisiana and Mississippi, and has over 20 years of teaching experience at the college level. Dr. Range is editor for the Journal of Death Studies, and is widely published in the field of mental health. Mr. Alvin Montgomery is a master level licensed professional counselor and approved supervisor, licensed addictions counselor, has certifications in clinical hypnotherapy, addictions, Reality Therapy, and has taught a special topics course on Reality Therapy for the graduate counseling program. Mr. Montgomery is a full-time faculty member and coordinator of undergraduate counseling and behavioral science programs.

- § Graduate Counseling faculty continue to be available with regular office hours for students in the program. Additionally, Ms. Joan Fischer, Counseling Center Clinic Director, is available Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. for consultation and supervision.
- § Suggestion that video taping earlier in the program would be useful was followed by a statement that the respondent understood that the program had already implemented this change. Many of the courses use video taping of role plays in the classroom. These courses include: Community Counseling, Marriage and Family Counseling, Social and Cultural Foundations, Chemical Dependency, Practicum, and Internship.
- § Suggestions were made by several students that the program add training in trauma and play therapy. The program has added a course in Sexual Trauma (which covers sexual trauma and general trauma), and 3 levels of Play Therapy courses.
- § Students reported that they would have liked to have more electives in their program. Students have also requested more electives in reflection papers and in advising meetings. In response, we have modified our curriculum to give 9 hours of counseling electives in Community and School programs, and 6 hours of electives in the Marriage and Family program. We have rotated special topic courses in Brief Therapy, Spirituality in Counseling, Reality Therapy, and Sexuality in Family Therapy, and are planning to introduce other special topic courses over the next several years.
- § Students have requested that we provide better outreach to the community to attract more clients to the program's Counseling Center. The Clinic Director has instituted a growing outreach program which has resulted in greater numbers of clients from the community being served by the practicum and internship students in the counseling center. She has also worked with faculty and staff at the college to encourage students at the college to come into the counseling center. We have recruited post-graduates who are earning LPC hours to volunteer time at the counseling center to provide confidential counseling for our graduate students (who otherwise would have had to seek outside counseling). Personal counseling is part of the requirements for graduate students in the counseling program, and this allows them to obtain that counseling at no charge while maintaining privacy and confidentiality.

- § Employers/Supervisors reported that students who complete the graduate counseling program at OLHCC need more training in charting and treatment planning. We have increased training in charting and treatment planning in the program (see attached case note forms). College supervisors and the Clinic Director check students= charts weekly and the Clinic Director has a meeting with each student who is in the Counseling Center to check all charts. During the Practicum, Internship, and Diagnosis and Treatment courses, and in supervision students must practice treatment planning.
- § Employers/Supervisors reported that students are limited in connecting theory and practice. Because of this report on the surveys and because some students struggle with this task on their oral exams, we are requiring students to make this connection when they present their cases in supervision. We have seen a marked improvement in students= ability to connect theory and practice since we have implemented this change in supervision.

Results of Post-Graduate Survey - Spring 2009

All alumni of the graduate counseling program that we had addresses on file in the alumni office were sent the post-graduate survey. Since this survey was sent out four years post-Katrina, we still continue to have difficulties obtaining reliable contact information on our alumni. Realizing the difficulty of obtaining correct contact information, we attempted to contact all graduates who had a phone number on file to notify them that the surveys were being sent out and to request that they complete and return them in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided with the survey. A request was made that they provide us with their current employers so that we could send an employer/supervisor survey to those employers/supervisors. We were able to locate 44 of our graduates and surveys were sent to them and to their employers/supervisors. Out of the 44 surveys sent, only 15 were returned completed. The following is a summary of the results of the data in those 15 surveys for a return rate of 34 percent.

Out of the 15 alumni who returned surveys, 3 were males and 12 females. The ages of the respondents were as follows: One did not respond to this question, one was 21-25, four were 26-30, two were 31-40, two were 41-50, and five were 51 or older. Fourteen respondents were white, one black, and none were from other ethnic groups. One of the respondents reported income between \$6,000 and \$8,000 dollars, two between \$25,000 and \$30,000, three between \$20,000 and \$35,000, three between \$35,000 and \$39,000, and six reported income of over \$40,000. Fourteen respondents were master level counselors and one had an earned doctoral degree in counseling.

Of those 15 alumni of the graduate counseling program at Our Lady of Holy Cross College (OLHCC), nine had completed their bachelor=s degree at OLHCC. Four graduated with

a specialty in Community Counseling, six with a specialty in Marriage and Family Counseling; and five with a specialty in School Counseling.

All 15 respondents reported that they were currently employed in the counseling field. One of the respondents had under one year of post-master=s counseling experience, 10 had one to four years, 3 had five to ten years, and 1 had over 11 years of post-master=s counseling experience. Three (20%) currently held LPC licenses in Louisiana and two (13.3%) held LMFT licenses in Louisiana. Ten reported that they were NCC certified. Eleven (73.3%) reported that they had passed the NCE (licensure examination). Three had not taken the exam and one had taken it and was not successful. Given the high percentage of those passing the licensure examination within 1 to 4 years post-masters (70%), and the low number of those licensed within 1 to 4 years, it would suggest that some are still working toward the 3,000 hours of supervised experience before they can be licensed.

One hundred percent of those surveyed reported that objectives of the counseling program at OLVCC had been made known to them while in the program. In reporting on the objectives of the program, thirteen (86.7 %) stated that they perceived the objectives of the program to be related to societal needs and problems. Eleven (73.3%) stated that the objectives were related to their personal goals. Nine (60%) stated that the objectives were related to access to employment opportunities. Objectives related to professional skills were reported in 13 (86.7 percent) of the surveys.

Over eighty-six percent of those surveyed believed the curriculum in the counseling program was designed to meet the objectives of the program, help the students meet certification and licensure requirements, apply to future employment and challenge and stimulate students

intellectually. Ninety-three percent stated that the curriculum was designed to assist them in their professional preparation appropriate to the field of counseling.

The enhancement of clinical skills was highly reported in the surveys (14 respondents or 93.3%) as well as ethical/professional behavior (14 respondents or 93.3%). Gaining skills in research were reported at 46.7 percent, a much lower percentage possibly due to the fact that most of these respondents would have graduated prior to our modifying the research class. Additionally, there is only one research course offered in the master=s program and master=s students seldom choose to write a thesis.

Alumni reported that during their master=s program at OLHCC they were minimally aware of professional and research activities of the faculty in the program. However, thirteen (86.7%) reported that they were aware of faculty presentations at state and national professional conferences. These respondents reported that they believed the program had sufficient full-time faculty in the program to meet the program and student needs. All agreed that there was sufficient consultation with program faculty and that the faculty provided thoughtful feedback and assistance with class work. All but one respondent (93%) stated that they received adequate access time with their advisors and with program faculty other than their advisors. One hundred percent also reported that their experience was that program faculty had expertise in a wide range of areas.

Those surveyed reported that they felt that there was good communication among faculty and students and that faculty members were interested in the welfare and professional development of the students. All stated that all faculty were well prepared for the classes they taught and that students were encouraged to express divergent and unique ideas in class. They felt that students in the program were allowed to be assertive with faculty without fearing

repercussions and that faculty offered students sufficient praise and favorable comments for their performance. Additionally, ninety-three percent agreed that faculty offered adequate feedback regarding student=s progress in the program.

They unanimously felt that they were provided adequate assistance in their practicum and internship placements and that there was adequate support in clinical supervision in the program. It was also reported that they felt that the clinical training component provided an individualized approach to aid them in integrating clinical theory and practice. Eight percent described having the opportunity to be involved in program review and one hundred percent reported having involvement in the evaluation of both courses and instructors while in they were in their graduate program.

Eighty-seven percent stated that if they had a friend with similar interests, they would advise him/her to enter the graduate counseling program at OLHCC and that if they (the respondent) had it to do over again, they would enter the program. The other two respondents did not respond to the above two questions.

Based on the data provided from these surveys, most of these alumni felt that the graduate counseling program at OLHCC had provided them with skills necessary for their professional development and entry into the profession of counseling. Areas for consideration are continuing to build the research component of the program by providing greater research emphasis with the opportunity to participate in research, sharing information of faculty research and professional activities with students, and continuing to provide challenging and stimulating intellectual stimulation of students. It is hoped that as we get further from the displacement of so many of our alumni following Hurricane Katrina and addresses stabilize, we will have a greater response to the surveys when we distribute them in the future.

Results of Evaluation Survey Sent to Employers/Supervisors Spring 2009

Thirty-five program evaluation surveys were sent to employers/supervisors. These names and addresses were provided to the graduate counseling program at Our Lady of Holy Cross College (OLHCC) by alumni that we contacted by telephone prior to sending out the surveys. Of the thirty-five surveys sent, seven were returned completed. The survey instructions requested that employers/supervisors evaluate the graduate counseling program at OLHCC by indicating their personal evaluation of the level of knowledge and skills that the employee/supervisee held as a result of completing the graduate counseling program. The results of those seven surveys follow.

Five of the respondents reported that they were both the graduate's employer and supervisor. One reported that they were the supervisor. One reported that it had been awhile since they had an employee or intern from OLHCC and, therefore, did not complete the survey. However, they requested that we send interns to them if possible. One of the respondents reported that they supervised one student intern and one employee from OLHCC and reported that "both are excellent therapists."

One hundred percent of those responding to the survey reported counseling skills, case conceptualization, at above average to excellent.

NCE Results From 2006 to 2009

Examination Date	Number Tested	Number Passed
4/22/2006	7	6
10/21/2006	2	2
10/21/2006	4	2
4/21/2007	5	4
10/20/2007	14	13
4/12/2008	6	6
10/18/2008	8	4
4/18/2009	8	4

CPCE Data From 2006-2009

Spring 2006
6 of 10 Passed

National Mean = 88.3	National SD = 10.79
Individual Scores	Passed Y/N
60	N
66	N
95	Y
76	N
60	N
84	Y
85	Y
100	Y
88	Y

Summer 2006
9 of 9 Passed

National Mean = 87.99	National SD = 11.55
Individual Scores	Passed Y/N
105	Y
83	Y
97	Y
100	Y
81	Y
65	Y
95	Y
77	Y
84	Y

Fall 2006
4 of 5 Passed

National Mean = 87.12	National SD = 12.25
Individual Scores	Passed Y/N
91	Y
94	Y
105	Y
104	Y
68	N

Spring 2007
8 of 9 Passed

National Mean = 87.99	National SD = 11.55
Individual Scores	Passed Y/N
81	Y
86	Y
109	Y
84	Y
82	Y
89	Y
87	Y
65	N
93	Y

Fall 2007
12 of 13 Passed

National Mean = 87.12	National SD = 12.25
Individual Scores	Passed Y/N
81	Y
95	Y
72	N
77	Y
90	Y
94	Y
80	Y
79	Y
85	Y
86	Y
88	Y
103	Y
82	Y

Spring 2008
8 of 8 Passed

National Mean = 87.75	National SD = 14.55
Individual Scores	Passed Y/N
84	Y
100	Y
96	Y
95	Y
101	Y
89	Y
90	Y
109	Y

Summer 2008
1 of 1 Passed

National Mean = 86.61	National SD = 12.95
Individual Score	Passed Y/N
80	Y

Fall 2008
5 of 6 Passed

National Mean = 88.89	National SD = 14.36
Individual Scores	Passed Y/N
103	Y
79	Y
72	N
86	Y
88	Y
85	Y

Spring 2009
4 of 5 Passed

National Mean = 88.89	National SD = 14.36
Individual Scores	Passed Y/N
88	Y
68	N
95	Y
105	Y
93	Y

All documentation is kept in the Graduate Counseling Department at Our Lady of Holy Cross College, and is available for review by contacting Dr. Carolyn White at cwhite@olhcc.edu or (504) 398-2149.