

The Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education
Department of Counselor Education
Northeastern Illinois University

Department of Counselor Education

Executive Summary Report

Program Evaluation

2017-2018

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Systematic Evaluation Executive Summary

The Department of Counselor Education (CE) at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) has been accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) since 1994. In accordance with the 2009 CACREP standards, the Department of Counselor Education at NEIU continuously engages in program evaluation activities for the purposes of program improvement for the following 4 programs: Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC), Family Counseling (FC), Rehabilitation Counseling (RC), and School Counseling (SC). The information on this Executive Summary of the program evaluation is based on data gathered from the following sources:

- NEIU Institutional Data Digest;
- site supervisor evaluation of students in Practicum and Internship courses;
- student performance on Departmental Proficiency Exam (DPE);
- formal data collection regarding perceptions of program effectiveness from soon-to-be graduates, perspectives of alumni (2018 graduates), employers of graduates, and follow up survey of site supervisors;
- National Counselor Examination (NCE) pass rates (for graduates seeking licensure as Professional Counselor in Illinois);
- the Illinois School Counselor examination pass rates.

As of the fall 2019 semester, there are 216 actively enrolled graduate students in the Department of Counselor Education (CMHC= 91, FC= 45, SC= 55, RC= 25). According to NEIU's Institutional Data Digest, the retention rates for the Counselor Education programs from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018 are as follows: (CMHC = 81%, FC = 76%, RC = 70%, SC = 96%).

Forty students (CMHC=13, FC= 6, RC= 5, SC= 16) graduated in summer of 2018 and received their respective master's degree in counseling.

Main evaluation findings for the 2017-18 academic year:

- Final internship site supervisor evaluations:
 - **Clinical Mental Health Counseling** site supervisors ($n = 10$) were invited to provide feedback regarding NEIU CE students' competence on a 5-point Likert scale. Site supervisors rated the students' competence as "above average" (by a

The Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education
Department of Counselor Education
Northeastern Illinois University

mean score of 4 or higher) on a variety of personal and professional traits, including: dependability and accountability ($M = 4.70$; $SD = 0.64$), respecting individual and cultural differences ($M = 4.78$; $SD = 0.42$), demonstrating ethical behavior ($M = 4.7$; $SD = 0.46$), empathic communication ($M = 4.67$; $SD = 0.47$), reflecting non-judgmental attitudes in counseling relationships ($M = 4.89$; $SD = 0.31$), applying theoretical frameworks to clinical skills ($M = 4.33$; $SD = 0.67$), and working collaboratively with clients ($M = 4.56$; $SD = 0.68$). Furthermore, personal and professional characteristics were rated as “a major strength” (71.3%), “a strength” (17.59%), and “acceptable” (10.19%); professional knowledge and skills was rated as “a major strength” (62.7%), “a strength” (22.22%), and “acceptable” (8.73%); professional development was rated as “a major strength” (56.56%), “a strength” (27.78%), and “acceptable” (7.41%).

- **Family Counseling** site supervisors ($n = 14$) were invited to provide feedback regarding NEIU CE students’ competence on a 5-point Likert scale. Site supervisors rated the students’ competence as “above average” (by a mean score of 4 or higher) on a variety of personal and professional traits, including: shows initiative and cooperation ($M = 4.71$; $SD = 0.59$), respects individual and cultural differences ($M = 4.71$; $SD = 0.59$), empathic communication ($M = 4.46$; $SD = 0.63$), demonstrates ethical behavior ($M = 4.64$; $SD = 0.48$), and working collaboratively with clients ($M = 4.31$; $SD = 0.82$). In addition, personal and professional characteristics were rated as “a major strength” (64.29%), “a strength” (22.62%), and “acceptable” (10.71%); professional knowledge and skills was rated as “a major strength” (37.76%), “a strength” (40.82%), and “acceptable” (12.24%); professional development was rated as “a major strength” (42.86%), “a strength” (33.33%), and “acceptable” (9.52%).
- **School Counseling** site supervisors ($n = 15$) were invited to provide feedback regarding NEIU CE students’ competence on a 5-point Likert scale. Site supervisors rated the students’ competence as “above average” (by a mean score of 4 or higher) on demonstrating effective relationships with students ($M = 4.87$; $SD = 0.34$), parents/guardians ($M = 4.86$; $SD = 0.35$), and school staff ($M = 4.80$; $SD = 0.40$); providing developmentally appropriate materials and

The Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education
Department of Counselor Education
Northeastern Illinois University

instruction to students ($M = 4.73$; $SD = 0.44$), promoting academic success for every student ($M = 4.93$; $SD = 0.26$), using achievement data to inform practice ($M = 4.77$; $SD = 0.42$), crisis intervention ($M = 4.92$; $SD = 0.27$), and communicating empathically to students ($M = 4.87$; $SD = 0.34$). In addition, personal and professional characteristics were rated as “a major strength” (84%); “a strength” (13.33%), “acceptable” (.81%), and “needs improvement” (.44%); knowledge and skills in guidance curriculum was rated as “a major strength” (62.67%), “a strength” (30%); knowledge and skills in individual student planning was rated as “a major strength” (73.33%), and “a strength” (13.33%); knowledge and skills in system support was rated as “a major strength” (64.44%), “a strength” (15.56%), and “acceptable” (4.44%); and accountability was rated as “a major strength” (75.56%), and “a strength” (12.56%).

- **Rehabilitation Counseling** site supervisors rated their NEIU CE student interns’ counseling skills and competence. Site supervisors rated the students’ overall competence as “above average” (by a mean score of 4 or higher). Personal and professional characteristics were rated as “a major strength” (76.67%), “a strength” (16.67%), and “acceptable” (6.67%); professional knowledge and skills was rated as “a major strength” (62.86%), “a strength” (34.29%), and “acceptable” (2.8%); professional development was rated as “a major strength” (80%), “a strength” (13.3%), and “acceptable” (6.67%).
- In the 2017-18 academic year, 82% of the CE students ($N = 87$) who took the Departmental Proficiency Exam (DPE) passed the first time (97% of CMHC, 67% of FC, 62% of RC, and 89% of SC). During the month of February and June 2019, 48 students took the DPE, and 75% of the students passed the first time.
- Exit Surveys were distributed to summer of 2018 graduates ($N = 40$). Sixty percent of the graduates responded to the Exit Survey. Approximately 80-100% of the graduates reported that their respective Counselor Education program sufficiently emphasized and prepared them in the following areas: professional identity, social and cultural diversity, human growth and development, ethics, helping relationships/techniques of counseling, and group counseling. In the areas of assessment, career counseling and research,

The Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education
Department of Counselor Education
Northeastern Illinois University

approximately 80-90% reported that their program sufficiently emphasized and prepared them in the mentioned areas. The graduates identified the strengths of the programs in the areas of professional identity, counseling skills, social and cultural diversity, and group counseling. Overall, 76% of the graduates reported they felt the program prepared them “a great deal” and 23% felt the program “moderately” prepared them in the Core CACREP areas (professional identity, social and cultural diversity, human growth and development, assessment, career development, counseling skills, group counseling, and research).

- Formal follow up studies of 2018 NEIU alumni ($n = 20$), employers ($n = 3$) and internship site supervisors ($n = 11$), demonstrated consistent favorable responses:
 - The results of the alumni survey from summer of 2018 graduates: Alumni surveys were distributed to 40 students who graduated. Approximately 50% responded to the survey. According to their report, 75% of the graduates were employed in a counseling-related field and the pay ranged between 30K – 76K per year. All graduates of summer 2018 who responded to the alumni survey reported that they obtained at least one of the following credentials post-graduation: Associate Marriage & Family Therapist (AMFT), Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), National Certified Counselor (NCC), Professional Educator License (PEL)
 - The 2018 NEIU CE alumni surveys identified names and contact information of current employers. Those individuals were then invited to report on their perception of their NEIU graduate employee’s counseling skills and knowledge. One hundred percent of employers rated their NEIU graduate employee’s counseling skills, cultural awareness, and professional counselor identity as “expected” or “better than expected.” Approximately 91% of employers rated their NEIU CE graduate employees as exhibiting and maintaining ethical behavior as “expected” or “better than expected”, and 82% reported observing a strong sense of professional counselor identity in the NEIU graduate employee.
 - Internship site supervisors ($N = 40$) of class of 2018 graduates were invited to report on their experience with their NEIU CE graduate intern. About 28% of the

The Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education
Department of Counselor Education
Northeastern Illinois University

site supervisors completed the survey. Internship site supervisors who had supervised NEIU CE students during the 2017-2018 academic year reported that their experience with their NEIU CE intern was positive, with 91% of supervisors indicating that they believed their NEIU CE intern demonstrated and maintained ethical behaviors as “expected” or “better than expected.” One-hundred percent of site supervisors reported their NEIU intern performed basic counseling techniques as “expected” or “better than expected,” and 85% of site supervisors also stated that their NEIU CE intern demonstrated “better than expected” or “expected” professional identity. One-hundred percent of internship site supervisors rated NEIU CE interns’ interpersonal skills as “expected” or “better than expected.”

- According to the spring and fall 2018 NCE report, 14 CMHC, 9 Family Counseling, and 9 School Counseling NEIU students took the NCE exam. The results show 100% of the CMHC and Family Counseling students who took the test passed on their first attempt; and 89% of the School Counseling students who took the test passed on their first attempt.
- One hundred percent (100%) of candidates who sat for the Illinois School Counselor Examination during the academic year 2018-2019 earned passing scores across all measured domains.

Key Modifications:

The assessments and follow up studies conducted for this report focused on evaluating the Counselor Education programs and Student Learning Outcomes based on the 2009 CACREP standards. The findings indicated that the Counselor Education curricula for Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Family Counseling, and School Counseling met or exceeded the 2009 CACREP standards. The following include modifications that have been made over the past year as well as current, and future modification plans:

- The School Counseling program successfully transitioned from 48-credit hours to 60-credit hours to comply with standards and recommendations.
- To address the need of developing a stronger professional identity and strengthening knowledge and application of ethics, the content of COUN 401- Professional

The Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education
Department of Counselor Education
Northeastern Illinois University

Orientation/Legal and Ethical Practices course has been slightly modified. The course continues to meet CACREP standards and no significant changes have been made to the key assessments.

- Site supervisor follow-up survey and employer surveys indicated a need for strengthening our students counseling skills in the area of crisis counseling. In response to this feedback, the department has modified the COUN 407- Mental Health Counseling to COUN 407- Advanced Clinical Mental Health Counseling. The modified course includes practice of advanced skills, including responding to crisis and trauma. In addition, the department is developing a certificate program in trauma-informed counseling.
- According to the results of the NCE as well as the self-reported exit surveys, there is a need to improve and strengthen the student's knowledge regarding Assessment, Career Counseling, and Research courses. Faculty will continue to work on identifying more effective pedagogical methods of increasing the student's self-efficacy in relation to knowledge and skills in the three areas.
- There is a significant increase in enrollment and one less core faculty. To address this, the department will work to modify the admission criteria.
- Both the exit survey from our SC students and site supervisor follow-up survey's qualitative feedback noted the need for the SC program to be modified to allow the students to graduate in the month of May to increase their chances of employment at Pre-k to 12 schools. The department is currently working with university officials to develop a plan to respond to this need.
- The department has initiated the transition process toward CACREP 2016 standards.
- The department will continue to work on identifying a method to increase survey responses from employers, site supervisors, and alumni.