



PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

The purpose of the following report is to document both the results of evaluation and feedback procedures conducted by the UCO Counseling Psychology MA program and the changes taking place due to those results. This is the first report following the implementation of the recommend evaluation procedures from the Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council (MPCAC), based on data collected in 2020 and 2021.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

Data Gathering

Starting in 2020, several evaluation and feedback procedures began to be used by the Counseling Psychology MA program faculty to both assess our current effectiveness and to help guide changes that would further improve the program. This document presents the findings from three types of evaluation:

1. Exit interview data from the 2020 and 2021 graduating classes, collected during the first week of May in those years.
2. Alumni survey data from 35 program graduates collected during in 2021.
3. A town hall meeting in December 2021 that was attended by 27 individuals, including members of all three current cohorts, alumni, and professors in the department.

Data Usage

The results of these evaluation methods were shared with program faculty, departmental administration, and college administration. Based on them, changes were then made to address aspects at the level of the program as a whole and for individual courses, consistent with procedures outlined in the program handbook.

EXIT INTERVIEW RESULTS

During their last week in the program, the graduating classes of 2020 (n = 12) and 2021 (n = 13) were asked to complete the program exit interview, gathered using an anonymous Qualtrics survey. A total of 17 (68%) students completed the survey.

Demographics

Graduating students primarily identified as white (82%), with 12% identifying as Native American/Indigenous and 4% as Latinx/Hispanic. An overwhelming majority were female (87.5%), with none identifying as gender non-binary or trans. Half (50%) of the sample described themselves as heterosexual, 31% as bisexual, 6% as homosexual, 6% as demisexual, and 6% as pansexual. The majority (63%) were between the ages of 26-30, with 31% between 21-25 and 6% between 31-35.

Most students were split between married or cohabiting (56%) and being single (44%), and none reported having children. All reported holding a job while in the master's program, with 75% reporting working more than 21 hours a week.

Program Feedback

Graduating students were asked to rate the following educational objectives on a seven-point scale from 1 (not at all well prepared) to 7 (extremely well prepared). Mean ratings and standard deviations for each are shown below.

Educational objective	Mean	SD
Knowledge and application of ethical and legal standards for counselors.	4.13	1.22
Skill in forming an effective therapeutic relationship with clients.	6.19	0.95
Learning and effectiveness in cognitive-behavioral, systems models, and evidence-based counseling skills in the assessment, diagnosis, and counseling process.	6.38	0.70
A working knowledge of group therapy processes and counseling skills.	5.19	1.07
An understanding of the importance of science in counseling psychology via being an informed consumer of applied research.	6.75	0.43
Learning and skills application in gender and culturally diverse counseling contexts.	5.06	0.97
Adequate knowledge and application of the counseling process via a capstone experience (practicum)	6.81	0.23

They were then asked to rate the clinically-oriented courses they took in terms of the knowledge or useful skills they gained from taking it on a seven-point scale from 1 (not at all useful) to 7 (extremely useful). Mean ratings and standard deviations for each are shown below.

Course	Mean	SD
Applied Behavior Analysis I	5.81	1.01
Individual Counseling	4.63	1.54
Cognitive Assessment	4.19	1.24
Applied Behavior Analysis II	5.44	1.32
Psychopathology	5.94	1.25
Legal & Ethical Aspects of Counseling	3.75	1.09
Personality & Psychopathology Assessment	5.13	1.32
Group Counseling	5.13	0.99

Advanced Counseling	6.75	0.43
Competency based Counseling	6.00	1.12
Child & Adolescent Counseling	6.56	0.70
Couples & Family Counseling	4.69	1.04
Culture & Gender Diversity	5.13	1.05
Practicum I & II	6.94	0.24

There were also several free response questions. When asked what courses or content in courses that they wished had been covered, a common theme was a desire to have “third wave CBT” such as dialectical behavior therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy covered, as well as more specific research on and evidence-based approaches to family therapy. Career counseling as a specific course was also mentioned.

When asked about the program strengths, students repeatedly emphasized that they felt well prepared for their practicum experience. Many students stated that they appreciated and enjoyed the emphasis on evidence-based practice in the program, especially in comparison to what their peers from other programs had been taught prior to their practicum experience. The ability to gain experience in our in-house clinic prior to practicum was emphasized repeatedly, as was the cohort model and the cohesion it caused to develop among students.

Finally, students were asked what their suggestions were to improve the program and several themes emerged. First was that several courses (consistent with the lower rated courses above) needed changes to the content and/or the instructor (Individual Counseling, Cognitive Assessment, Legal & Ethical, and Couples & Family). Second was clearer up-front explanation from the program about expectations while in the program, including the amount of time that would need to be spent on campus in the clinic. Students also expressed interest in having interviews prior to be offered admission, both for their own sake (to learn more about the program) and so that professors could interact with potential applicants. Third was higher levels of accountability for instructors to be consistent in following their own grading or course policies and maintaining professional standards of behavior.

ALUMNI SURVEY RESULTS

Alumni from the program who had graduated in the past decade were contacted via social media and email and given an invitation to complete an alumni survey, gathered using an anonymous Qualtrics survey. A total of 35 alumni completed the survey in October 2021, who had graduated between 2011 and 2019.

Demographics

Alumni primarily identified as white (84.3%), with 9.4% identifying as Native American/Indigenous, 3% as African-American, and 3% as multiracial. An overwhelming majority were female (75.6%), with none identifying as gender non-binary or trans. The age range was large for the sample, with 23% being under 30 years or younger, 60% between 31-40, 17% being older than 41 at the time data was collected. In terms of geographical location, 90% currently worked in Oklahoma, with the remaining split between Texas and Colorado.

Program Feedback

Graduating students were asked to rate the following statements on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questions were paired in such a way that we asked both whether their education had provided the information, and whether that knowledge had been helpful to them post-graduation. Mean ratings and standard deviations for each are shown below.

Statement	Mean	SD
My master's education provided sufficient information about the discipline's methodology, empirical content, and major theoretical and historical perspectives.	4.63	0.48
Knowledge of the discipline's methodology, empirical content, and major theoretical and historical perspectives helped me in my career and/or academic program.	4.63	0.48
My master's education provided sufficient information about the ability to think critically, synthesize information, and distinguish between "fact" and assumption.	4.71	0.45
Knowledge of conceptual competencies of being able to think critically, synthesize information, and distinguish between "fact" and assumption helped me in my career and/or academic program.	4.80	0.16
My master's education provided sufficient information about the ability to design, conduct, analyze, and interpret the results of psychological research.	4.44	0.55
Knowledge of how to design, conduct, analyze, and interpret the results of psychological research helped me in my career and/or academic career.	4.09	0.75
My master's education provided sufficient information about how to read and comprehend both experimental and conceptual material, and how to effectively express myself in written and oral form.	4.48	0.61
Knowledge of how to read and comprehend both experimental and conceptual material, and how to effectively express myself in written and oral form helped me in my career and/or academic career.	4.48	0.56
My master's education provided sufficient information about how to show an understanding of and appreciation for differences among people, and how to assist persons in communicating and problem solving.	4.48	0.61

Knowledge of how to show an understanding of and appreciation for differences among people, and how to assist persons in communicating and problem solving helped me in my career and/or academic program.	4.73	0.45
My master's education provided sufficient information about how to understand and adhere to codes of professional and ethical conduct, and how to demonstrate clinical, assessment and/or research skills.	4.39	0.85
Knowledge of how to understand and adhere to codes of professional and ethical conduct, and how to demonstrate clinical, assessment and/or research skills helped me in my career and/or academic program.	4.64	0.54
My master's education provided sufficient information about how to prepare for a psychologically related career and/or continue with more advanced education in the discipline.	4.39	0.74
Knowledge of how to prepare for a psychologically related career and/or continue with more advanced education in the discipline helped me in my career and/or academic program.	4.39	0.81

Alumni were then asked to rate how their master's degree had impacted several areas of their post-graduation life. These were rated on a seven-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with results shown below.

My graduate counseling psychology degree has:	Mean	SD
Prepared me for the career or job I intended to pursue.	6.52	0.73
Prepared me for the career or job I actually entered.	6.65	0.63
Had a beneficial effect on my general quality of life.	6.53	0.82
Prepared me for further graduate studies.	5.60	1.03

Experiences on practicum were then evaluated by rating the following statements on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Mean ratings and standard deviations for each are shown below.

Statement	Mean	SD
I feel this practicum experience prepared me for my career.	4.48	0.67
I feel that graduate program prepared me for my practicum.	4.61	0.66
I received adequate supervision while on site at my practicum.	4.35	0.90
I would recommend this practicum site to future students in the program.	4.10	1.12
Overall, I had a positive experience at this practicum site.	4.43	0.67

Two respondents indicated that they had pursued additional post-graduate education, both in a counseling psychology doctoral program that was APA accredited. Respondents were then asked about their licensure status, with 90% reporting being actively licensed for independent practice as either a licensed professional counselor or a psychologist.

When asked "If you had an opportunity to attend graduate school again, would you still attend the program at the University of Central Oklahoma?" a resounding 96.5% responded that they would.

TOWN HALL RESULTS

On December 10, 2021, the first UCO Counseling Psychology MA program Town Hall was held. Approximately one month beforehand, email invitations were sent to all current graduate students, alumni who had graduated between 2017 and 2021, and all current external practicum supervisors. The department faculty and college administration were also invited to attend. Twenty-seven individuals (below) attended this meeting, and many students who were unable to attend sent in questions with their fellow students.

Name of attendee	Program Role
Bryan Duke	CEPS Interim Dean
Darla Fent-Kelly	CEPS Interim Associate Dean
Jerel Cowan	CEPS Interim Assistant Dean
Alicia Limke	PSY Department Interim Chair
Caleb Lack	PSY Faculty / Counseling Psy program coordinator
Tephiliah Jeyaraj-Powell	PSY Department Assistant Chair
Janelle Grellner	PSY Faculty / Psychology Clinic co-director
Lorry Youll	PSY Faculty
Jackie Maass	PSY Faculty
Mark Hamlin	PSY Faculty
Vickie Jean	PSY Faculty
Aster Yeoman	Current student
Valentina Riveros	Current student
Lyndsy Bitzer	Current student
Kelsey Scrivner	Current student
Aimee Blackwell-Lawson	Current student
Jack Downs	Current student
Elena Shimanek	Current student
Benjamin Siess	Current student
AnaMarie Lopez	Current student
Rachel Hixson	Current student
Karlee Ogden	Current student
Andrew Hedges	Current student
Haley Langford	Program alumni
Ryan Briedel	Program alumni
Alyssa Danker	Program alumni

Dr. Bryan Duke opened the town hall by setting ground rules, including enforcement of professionalism and not making any personal attacks. The floor was then opened to questions and feedback from attendees, with Drs. Lack, Limke-McLean, and Duke primarily fielding the questions.

Several concerns were noted, and have been grouped below by theme as opposed to a timeline of when they were asked in the meeting.

Program concerns

Students commented on the lack of an orientation day or period prior to beginning the program. Students were also concerned that they had not been given a copy of the program handbook, or

even made aware that it existed during their first semester in the program. Concerns about the probation status from MPCAC were expressed. Students also expressed concern about a lack of forewarning about how many hours they would need to be spending on campus outside of class time (e.g., for supervision and clinical work).

Clinic concerns

Students noted difficulty completing needed work in the UCO Psychology Clinic (e.g., paperwork, review of session recordings) due to limited hours. It was explained this was due to a reduction in student worker funding over the past several years, but efforts are being made at the college level to procure funding to address this. Students also noted that the clinic procedures manual was not the most current and needed to be updated.

Feedback procedures

Students and alumni both commented that they felt their feedback in the past had not been taken into account, or had been ignored. They felt this had occurred both from student evaluations as well as when attempting to directly addressing concerns with specific professors. They even mentioned fear of retaliation if they gave negative feedback to certain professors. Students also requested more regular feedback on progress, both from classes and the program as a whole.

Course concerns

Students and alumni expressed a lack of consistency across professors in terms of sticking to a syllabi (timeline and material), using rubric based rather than subjective grading, and a lack of clear feedback concerning assignments. Concerns were noted about professors teaching a cultural diversity class who were of the majority culture, as well as a lack of breadth in instruments covering in the cognitive assessment course. Students also expressed concern that they were required to speak about highly personal issues in certain classes, and were not told this would be happening beforehand.

In addition to concerns, a number of strengths and positive feedback were provided. This included that students were much more well prepared than their peers from other institutions when going on their external practicum experience, and specifically mentioned how useful the practicum course meetings were in preparing them for licensure and post-graduation. Students also expressed how useful it was to see professors actively displaying the skills they are teaching, such as psychotherapy. Alumni expressed that – even with some of the issues mentioned above – they have never not recommended the program to others and feel very well prepared for the real world and practice of counseling.

PROGRAM & COURSE CHANGES

In response to student and alumni feedback detailed above, the following changes are being made at both the program and individual course level, effective spring 2022.

Program changes

1. Potential applicants being considered for admission will engage in an interview prior to admissions decisions being made.
2. All incoming students will attend a day-long orientation session to both the program as a whole and the UCO Psychology Clinic in the summer prior to their start date.

Course changes

1. Individual Counseling (sections of this course will be staffed by an instructor whose expertise demonstrates an ability to provide meaningful feedback to increase basic counseling micro skills and preparing the students to succeed when seeing their first clients)
2. Cognitive Assessment (the course content is being broadened to include a wider range of cognitive measures that are covered in depth, including non-verbal measures)
3. Couples & Family Counseling (the course content is being broadened to include more recent, evidence-based interventions for couples and families, such as Emotionally Focused Therapy, Gottman Method, and Cognitive-Behavioral Couples Therapy, as well as more frequent assessment and feedback)
4. Cultural and Gender Diversity (sections of this course will now be taught by an instructor from an underrepresented or diverse background)
5. Legal & Ethical Aspects of Counseling (sections of this course will now be taught by an instructor whose expertise demonstrates an ability to display and convey high familiarity with the content, which will have an increased focus on ethical issues and concerns, with a corresponding decreased focus on more forensic issues)