

Department of Counseling and Human Services

Assessment Plan Report, 2018-2019

The Department of Counseling and Human Services uses a department assessment plan to outline specific assessment/data collection points for each academic year. The purpose of this report is to organize and share the results of the various department and student assessments and analyze department efforts that occurred during the 2018-2019 school year.

1. Student Satisfaction Survey

Each November, the first-year cohort (i.e. students who begin their graduate program during the summer) is surveyed to gain important information regarding student satisfaction with admissions, advising, course experiences, faculty, etc. The survey consists of 28 questions which use a Likert scale for responses (*Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree*). Additionally, there are four essay questions regarding admissions, registration, advising and instruction. Using a Blackboard organizational shell, students are sent an initial email asking for their voluntary, anonymous participation in the survey. Students are told that the results will be included in the overall assessment of the Department of Counseling and Human Services and reported to CACREP. A second email was sent to remind students to participate. The following narrative describes descriptive statistics from the 2018 Student Satisfaction Survey Results (n = 51, 75% of new students completed this voluntary survey).

Positive notable findings from the 2018 DCHS Student Satisfaction Survey include:

90% of first year students strongly agree or agree that *“the initial advising appointment with the faculty enabled me to answer most of my questions about the program.”*

82% of first year students strongly agree or agree that *“the Student Resource Office (SRO) Staff was knowledgeable, helpful, and available to assist me.”*

98% of first year students strongly agree or agree that *“the application process was smooth and easily understood.”*

96% of first year students strongly agree or agree that *“the faculty are knowledgeable in their field of instruction.”*

94% of first year students strongly agree or agree that *“the coursework I have completed thus far will enable me to become an effective counselor.”*

94% of first year students strongly agree or agree that *“as a result of the lab experience, I feel I have grown personally.”*

92% of first year students strongly agree or agree that *“as a result of the lab experience, I feel I have grown professionally.”*

90% of first year students strongly agree or agree that *“so far, the program experience has met my overall expectations.”*

Notable findings (below 80%) that require attention and possible implementation of changes in the department:

75% of first year students strongly agree or agree that *“I am always able to find resolution for any problems I may experience as a student in this program.”*

78% of first year students strongly agree or agree that *“Faculty members are available to help me when it is needed.”*

68% of first year students strongly agree or agree that *“the Developmental Assessment Matrix (DAM) adequately informs me of my progress in knowledge, skills, and self-awareness throughout the program.”*

2. Practicum and Internship evaluations

All UCCS practicum and internship site supervisors are required to complete evaluations for their students and these evaluations (along with site supervisor feedback received throughout the semester and during site visits) are considered when assigning final grades for fieldwork. The following represents a sample of specific reported strengths of CMHC and SC practicum and internship students. Areas for growth and development follow.

Students typically take the practicum course during their third semester in the master’s degree program. Students typically take both internship courses during their last two semester in the master’s degree program.

CMHC Practicum - Strengths

100% of practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS practicum students demonstrate the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in clinical mental health counseling

100% of practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS practicum students use the principles and practices of diagnosis, treatment, referral and prevention of mental and emotional disorders to initiate, maintain and terminate counseling.

100% of practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS practicum students apply multicultural counseling competencies to clinical mental health counseling involving case conceptualization, diagnosis, treatment, referral, and prevention of mental and emotional disorders.

98% of practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS practicum students promote optimal human development, wellness and mental health through prevention, education and advocacy activities.

92% of practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS practicum students demonstrate the ability to modify counseling systems, theories, techniques and interventions to make them culturally appropriate for diverse populations.

100% of practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS practicum students demonstrate the ability to recognize his or her own limitations as a clinical mental health counselor and to seek supervision or refer clients when appropriate.

CMHC Practicum – Areas for development

69% of practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS practicum students apply relevant research findings to inform the practice of clinical mental health counseling.

53% of practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS practicum students demonstrate the ability to analyze and use data to increase effectiveness of clinical mental health interventions and programs.

76% of practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS practicum students demonstrate appropriate use of diagnostic tools, including the current edition of the DSM, to describe the symptoms and clinical presentation of clients with mental and emotional impairments.

CMHC Internship- Strengths

91% of internship supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS internship students demonstrate effective attending, body language, verbal and nonverbal encouragers, paraphrasing, reflection of content/meaning and feelings, open and closed ended questions, summarizing, pacing, unconditional positive regard, empathy, congruence, able to establish trust and rapport, and aware of ethical and cultural issues in counseling.

91% of internship supervisors strongly agree that UCCS internship students apply appropriate record-keeping standards for the setting, are able to generate session notes, reports, letters, collaborative paperwork, etc. at the appropriate professional standard for a graduate student in fieldwork.

92% of internship supervisors strongly agree that UCCS internship students Able to generate clinical hunches based on client information, able to clarify the client's presenting problem, recognizes developmental, cultural, social and system dynamics of the presenting problem, able to identify wellness and prevention variables, and able to elicit client strengths and resources

92% of internship supervisors strongly agree that UCCS internship students Apply appropriate record-keeping standards for the setting, able to generate session notes, reports, letters, collaborative paperwork, etc. at the appropriate professional standard for a graduate student in fieldwork.

94% of internship supervisors strongly agree that UCCS internship students Consistently dresses professionally, punctual for sessions and supervision, is prepared for supervision, follows all policies and procedures, consistently acts like a professional, contributes to the agency team in an effective manner, consistently demonstrates ethical practice, understands own limitations and areas for growth, appropriately consults with supervisor, demonstrates appropriate boundaries with clients and uses effective self-care strategies to maintain own health and wellness.

CMHC Internship- Areas for Development

87% of internship supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS internship students demonstrate the ability to remain calm, focused and grounded in a crisis, able to use de-escalation skills, able to help stabilize a client's affect, able to work with the client to identify immediate needs, able to help the client identify immediate resources and coping skills, able to link client with referral services when appropriate, and aware of ethical and cultural issues in crisis counseling.

87% of internship supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS internship students demonstrate the ability to set realistic, collaborative, therapeutic goals to honor client's concerns and address presenting symptoms, uses effective therapeutic strategies which are developmentally appropriate and consistent with client's needs and personality, and aware of ethical and cultural issues in treatment planning.

55% of internship supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS internship students (Effective opening and closing of a group, linking and blocking group members when appropriate, able to

build group trust and cohesion, applies group theory, able to respond effectively to group stage development, identify and work with group dynamics and therapeutic factors and their application to group process and effectiveness, aware of characteristics of effective group leaders, and aware of ethical and cultural issues in group counseling

SC Practicum- Strengths

100% of school counseling practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS school counseling practicum students demonstrate the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in school counseling.

100% of school counseling practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS school counseling practicum students demonstrate self-awareness, sensitivity to others and the skills needed to relate to diverse individuals, groups and classrooms.

100% of school counseling practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS school counseling practicum students demonstrate the ability to recognize his or her limitations as a school counselor and to seek supervision or refer clients when appropriate

100% of school counseling practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS school counseling practicum students assess and interpret students' strengths and needs, recognizing uniqueness in cultures, languages, values, backgrounds and abilities.

100% of school counseling practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS school counseling practicum students assess barriers that impede students' academic, career and personal/social development.

SC Practicum- Areas for Development

80% of school counseling practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS school counseling practicum students conduct programs designed to enhance student academic development.

70% of school counseling practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS school counseling practicum students implement strategies and activities to prepare students for a full range of post-secondary options and opportunities.

60% of school counseling practicum supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS school counseling practicum students use referral procedures with helping agents in the community (e.g. mental health centers, businesses, service groups) to secure assistance for students and their families.

SC Internship- Strengths

94% of internship supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS internship students demonstrate effective attending, body language, verbal, nonverbal, encouragers, paraphrasing, reflection of content/meaning/feelings, open/closed ended questions, summarizing, pacing, unconditional positive regard, empathy, congruence, able to establish trust and rapport, honors student's worldview, values and perspective.

93% of internship supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS internship students demonstrate the use of cultural sensitivity and competencies in working with at-risk students, those from low/high SES, children of color, students with diverse backgrounds, sexual orientations and identities; demonstrates multicultural awareness and how these issues can impact school and personal safety.

98% of internship supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS internship students Seeks supervision regarding professional issues that impact their work, utilizes and incorporates feedback in a productive manner, establishes an effective working relationship with site supervisor and other professionals in a position to give feedback.

SC Internship- Areas for Development

88.6% of internship supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS internship students demonstrate the ability to understand the multiple components to become an effective school counselor, demonstrates advocacy for faculty, students, and families, utilizes and consults on ethical concerns, demonstrates educational leadership skills, is aware of current substance abuse and other social emotional issues of students, knows how to make effective referrals to outside sources, is aware and knows how to implement effective crisis response within the school setting.

89% of internship supervisors strongly agree or agree that UCCS internship students demonstrate the ability to generate ideas and understanding based on student/family Information, able to clarify student's presenting problem, recognizes developmental abilities, cultural, social and systems dynamics of the presenting problem, able to elicit students' strengths and resources.

4. CPCE Exam

Each spring (March), our graduating students take a comprehensive exam which consists of three parts. These three sections include the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE), a Specialty Exam (CMHC or SC) and a Personal Growth/Self Awareness Essay. Our students routinely score very well on the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam. Virtually all UCCS content area mean scores for the last eight years (2010 – 2018) are above the national means. The faculty discuss student scores each spring during at least one department meeting (i.e. timing varies depending upon when we receive the scores). To maintain this excellence, faculty will continue to focus on teaching essential content which aligns with CACREP Standards.

The 2019 CPCE Means for UCCS students and the National Sample are listed below:

Area of Focus	National Mean (2019)	UCCS Mean (2019)
Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice	13.0	11.3
Social and Cultural Diversity	10.1	9.5
Human Growth and Development	10.4	9.7
Career Development	11.8	10.5
Counseling and Helping Relationships	12.0	10.8

Group Counseling and Group Work	11.5	10.2
Assessment and Testing	10.7	10.6
Research and Program Evaluation	11.7	10.7

Additional CPCE statistics for the 2019 CMHC and SC graduates:

15% of UCCS students scored at or above the 90th percentile among counseling graduate students in the country

4 students were in the 96th percentile

1 student was in the 97th percentile

1 student was in the 99th percentile

5. Specialty Exam

There are two different Specialty Exams – one for Clinical Mental Health Counseling and one for School Counseling. Both exams were developed by UCCS faculty and are designed to assess specific Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling knowledge areas and CACREP program standards according to the program. During the 2017-2018 school year, the DCHS faculty re-examined CACREP program content areas and decided to make minor revisions to both exams to enhance the diversity of the content areas covered.

The Clinical Mental Health specialty exam consists of twenty-five multiple choice questions. Questions on the exam assess the areas of counseling foundations, counseling prevention and intervention, diversity and advocacy, assessment, research and evaluation and diagnosis.

Statistics for the spring 2018 administration are:

Minimum Score – 72, Maximum Score – 96, mean – 81.04, SD – 7.57, 100 possible points

91 % of students passed on the first attempt (i.e. two students failed). The students who failed passed the exam on the second attempt which is within the comprehensive exam policy for this section of the exam.

The School Counseling specialty exam consists of thirty multiple choice questions.

Questions on the exam assess the areas of foundations, counseling, prevention and intervention, diversity and advocacy, assessment, research and evaluation, academic development, collaboration and consultation, and leadership.

Statistics for the spring 2018 administration are:

Minimum Score – 73.38, Maximum score – 96.69, mean – 87.99, SD – 6.09, 100.018 possible points

94 % of students passed on the first attempt. The student who failed passed the exam on the second attempt which is within the comprehensive exam policy for this section of the exam.

6. Developmental Assessment Matrix Report

All students in the Department of Counseling and Human Services are formally evaluated on three program candidate learning outcomes (CLO's) at the completion of each semester. Students are evaluated on a standardized, program rubric called the Developmental Assessment Matrix (a.k.a. "123's). During the first year of graduate study, faculty discuss individual student performance each semester, in each course, and assign scores in three specific areas: Counseling Knowledge, Counseling Skills, and Self Awareness/Personal Growth. Student Developmental Assessment Matrix scores are used to identify student strengths, areas for improvement and to determine if the student is ready to be released for fieldwork (i.e. practicum and internship).

The results of Developmental Assessment Matrix interventions for the 2017-2018 year are as follows:

Students flagged for (there is some overlap in the three categories):

Self Awareness/Personal Growth	6
Counseling Knowledge	0
Counseling Skills	4

Increase in advising time (e.g. Bi-monthly advising meeting with faculty advisor)	3
Required to meet with department chairperson and advisor	2
Required to meet with the entire faculty	6
Recommended for personal counseling	4
Implementation of a remediation/success plan	4
Not released for practicum and moved to a three year program	2
Not released for internship and moved to a three year program	2
Required to sit out for one semester	1
Removed from the program	1
Chose to leave program after being flagged for intervention/implementation of gatekeeping interventions	0

7. National Counselor Exam

All Clinical Mental Health and most School Counseling students take the National Counselor Exam (NCE) in April of the spring semester in which they graduate. Department faculty track these scores as this is one of the main licensing exams our students take and tracking the scores each year help the faculty gauge student content knowledge in comparison to CACREP and non-CACREP schools across the country. Our students do incredibly well on this exam. Over the past 8 years, our average pass rate is 96.5%. Our pass rate for 2019 was 98%.

8. Exit Survey

In December 2014, all DCHS faculty met to discuss important areas of inquiry for the new exit survey. Questions were drafted and revised until the faculty reached consensus on the most important questions to ask while keeping the survey to a manageable length. The DCHS Exit Survey consists of 14 demographic questions, 17 counseling knowledge and skills questions, 4

faculty questions, 1 CSI question, 3 department questions, 3 CMHC specialty questions and 3 SC specialty questions. For the 4th time, the DCHS Exit Survey was administered during the first week of May 2018. All graduating students received an email invitation and reminder to participate in this voluntary, anonymous survey. Eleven students completed the survey equating to 28% of 2018 CMHC and SC graduates.

Significant findings from 2019 Exit Survey Results:

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they are capable of complying with professional ethical and legal standards.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they are culturally and socially aware and are able to work with a wide range of people.

91% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they know the importance of analyzing and using data to increase effectiveness of counseling interventions and programs.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they value individual differences and understand culturally appropriate practices for clients and/or students.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they use effective communication, counseling and consultation skills.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they are able to use effective communication/counseling skills to consult and collaborate with other professionals.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they are knowledgeable about the appropriate use of client/student assessment instruments and strategies for my specialty area.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand their professional limitations and seek out consultation and supervision when appropriate.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand the importance of their professional identity.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand the importance of continuing education and lifelong learning after graduation.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree understand how to evaluate and work with clients/students from a developmental perspective.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand how to help clients/students identify strengths and healthy coping strategies.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand how to use self-care strategies to support their own wellness to avoid burnout as a counseling professional.

91% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand the importance of systems theories and know how to apply these perspectives to clients/students.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand counseling theories and techniques in their specialty area and know how to apply them with clients/students.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand how to intervene in a crisis situation and use trauma informed counseling strategies.

FACULTY

27% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that faculty were available to address their questions and provided quality information and feedback.

45% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that faculty are helpful, responsive, and interested in their well-being and in my development as a counselor.

55% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that faculty care about their personal and professional success in their program.

38% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that faculty provided them with opportunities for professional development and growth outside the classroom.

9% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates/current CSI member strongly agree or agree that being a member of CSI contributes to my professional development. 9% of graduates were not a member of CSI.

64% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they were able to find resolution for any problems they experiences as a student in their program.

72% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that the quality of instruction contributed to their overall development as a counselor.

73% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that faculty provided constructive feedback and supervision regarding my counseling skills and professional identity.

CMHC Specialty

80% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand how to diagnose effectively.

90% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand how to conduct a biopsychosocial intake interview.

90% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand how to engage in case conceptualization to develop and implement an effective treatment plan.

SC Specialty

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand the value of comprehensive school counseling program.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand the importance of collaboration with parents, administration, and community members.

100% of survey participants/May 2019 graduates strongly agree or agree that they understand the need to provide advocacy and leadership through my school counseling program.

Topics address in additional comments section:

- These last couple of years have transformed my life. When starting I never could have imagined that I would feel as confident as I do to start working in the field.
- More support throughout the program would be beneficial. Plus, some sort of lab experience during the second year can help the cohort stay connected with each other. Finally, inclusiveness needs to be worked on by a few of the professors.
- It would be helpful if school counselors had their own separate ethics class for Ferpa laws...or if the ethics class was more equally divided between HIPPA and FERPA laws.
- The communication between faculty and the student body about important events, such as Comps, was poorly executed. There was unnecessary panic and worry about test details and answers were not communicated well.

Overall, the DCHS faculty members are pleased with the results of the new exit survey. Specific areas of strength are clearly highlighted and areas for discussion and possible changes are also clear. The DCHS faculty used an 80% strongly agree and agree threshold for department areas to study and discuss. These areas for consideration include: how to effectively work with addictions related concerns, membership in CSI and professional development, how to resolve problems effectively as a student and knowledge and skills related to diagnosis. The faculty will address these results throughout the 2017-2018 school during weekly department meetings and implement any changes during the current and/or following academic year.

9. Alumni Survey (administered every three years)

In November of 2017, an alumni survey was administered through Alumni Relations, Office of University Advancement. This is the first alumni survey to be administered since 2014. Approximately 550 surveys were sent. It is unknown whether the Office of University Advancement has correct email address as UCCS has only allowed students to keep their UCCS email address indefinitely for the last two years. Of the 550 surveys, we received 98 responses or a return rate of 17.8%. The survey results were distributed to the faculty in the department and the Dean of the College of Education at the beginning of the fall 2014 semester (August). DCHS faculty discussed the results of this survey at the fall retreat on August 29, 2014.

A limitation of the survey is that 50 of the 98 students graduated prior to 2008, meaning that their feedback was somewhat dated for consideration/application at this time. For example, several students stated that they needed more training in the areas of crisis and trauma intervention and addictions and our department has required these courses of all students beginning with the 2011 cohort. Alumni also indicated that they needed more training in counseling children and adolescents. Although this remains a concern for the department, we have had an experiential play therapy course in place as an elective since 2011.

Of the respondents, 56% are Community Counseling/Clinical Mental Health graduates and 42% are School Counseling graduates. 91% are currently employed while 77% are currently employed as counselors. On a scale of 1 – 100, 63.79% believed that they had the tools that they needed to secure employment after graduation, 79.36% believed that they had been prepared to function effectively as a counselor after graduation and 77.60% believed that the department prepared them to be both persistent and resilience in the field as counselors. Some graduates identified the business aspect of counseling (i.e. private practice) as a key topic that they would have liked to learn more about before graduating. The department is both examining and implementing strategies to address this specific topic (e.g. more guest speakers in the roles and functions classes, offering a business class through the College of Business as an elective class, etc.).

On a final note, 31% of respondents indicated that they are interested in attending a Ph.D. program in Counselor Education and Supervision if one existed at UCCS. This is encouraging as the department has repeatedly discussed the possibility of a Ph.D. program as there are currently two in the state of Colorado (University of Northern Colorado and Adams State (online).) If students live in Southern Colorado, there are limited options for an advanced degree in counseling. Additionally, 33% of graduates stated that they are interested in pursuing Certification in Addictions Counseling (CAC) coursework. The department currently offers CAC course work to students; however, serving alumni in this way is an untapped opportunity for professional development.

10. Employer Survey (administered every three years)

In June of 2014, an employer survey was administered through Alumni Relations, Office of University Advancement. Because it is notoriously difficult to access employers of alumni, we attempted to have the DCHS alumni help facilitate this survey process. Each alumnus who received the alumni survey also received a link to the DCHS employer survey to give to their current supervisor. The purpose of this survey is to assess professional skills and abilities of alumni through the perspective of their current employer. Fourteen people attempted the survey and ten individuals completed all questions. Despite the limited responses (and thus limited findings), the DCHS faculty discussed the results of this survey at the fall retreat on August 29, 2014.

The following table represents some of the key findings that were discussed:

1	Dependability	90.00	100.00	96.33	4.56	12
2	Ethical	90.00	100.00	97.25	4.27	12
3	Understands and uses effective counseling skills	88.00	100.00	94.67	3.96	12
4	Understands and uses effective documentation practices	71.00	100.00	91.75	9.47	12
5	Uses supervision effectively	65.00	100.00	94.00	9.70	12

6	Personal Maturity	69.00	100.00	94.17	8.96	12
7	Adaptability/Ongoing professional development	90.00	100.00	97.33	3.82	12
8	Overall professionalism	90.00	100.00	97.00	3.36	12

Twelve supervisors responded to this portion of the survey and overall, they rated our graduates quite high (i.e. 90% and higher on a 1 to 100% scale). The highest professional area was adaptability/ongoing professional development at 97.33% and the lowest area was understands and uses effective documentation practices at 91.75%. Overall, the faculty were quite pleased with the results of this section.

The Department will continue to devise methods for gathering survey data and information from current employers of our graduates.

Need more information? Please contact Dr. Lori Notestine, CACREP Liaison and Assessment Coordinator. lnotesti@uccs.edu and 719.255.4170