

## Executive Summary 2018/2019 Academic Program Assessment (APA)

This executive summary focuses on the Program Objectives as developed in 2015. The programs to be included in this year's APA are the Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, the Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling, the Master of Arts in School Counseling, and the Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling and Supervision.

Program Objectives. There are seven program objectives under the 2015 plan. They are:

1. Professional Counseling Identity (Professional Orientation and Identity)
2. Self as Counselor (Personal Growth and Understanding)
3. Multicultural Competence (Social and Cultural Diversity)
4. Theory to Practice (Career Development, Human Growth and Development)
5. Ethical Practice
6. Clinical Skill (Helping Relationships AND Group Work)
7. Research and Assessment (Assessment AND Research and Program Evaluation)

These objectives are assessed on a four-year cycle, with the 2019 focus being on Professional Counseling Identity and Multicultural Competence.

**Table 1. Comprehensive Assessment Plan Schedule**

Academic year	Program Objectives Assessed
2015-2016	2&6
2016-2017	1&4
2017-2018	5&7
2018-2019	1&3
2019-2020	2&6
<b>GWU Program Objectives [corresponding CACREP common core areas]</b>	
1. Professional Counseling Identity [Professional Orientation and Identity]	To prepare counselors who are knowledgeable about the philosophy, history, professional organizations, credentialing, and current and future trends in the counseling profession.

2. Self as Counselor [Personal Growth and Understanding]	To develop, through self-reflection and insight, counselors who demonstrate a strong awareness of their own values and worldviews, recognize their own competencies and limitations, and recognize/acknowledge/remediate personal issues that may impact client care and who develop a personal approach to counseling and client advocacy with a clear understanding of counselor functions.
3. Multicultural Competence [Social and Cultural Diversity]	To train counselors who can recognize and understand power, privilege, and difference and their own cultural attitudes, beliefs, and effects of social location and respond to social and cultural differences and changes in our society through learned strategies for working with gender and gender spectrum issues, diverse populations, ethnic and other non-dominant groups.
4. Theory to Practice [Career Development AND Human Growth and Development]	To train counselors who understand of a range of counseling theories consistent with a developmental perspective. Counselor trainees will develop treatment plans and interventions consistent with their own theoretical orientation, a critical evaluation of the literature, client mental health needs and goals in counseling, diagnosis, and best practices in the profession.
5. Ethical Practice	To train counselors who commit to and follow professional ethics consistent with the American Counseling Association ethical guidelines who seek supervision/consultation to resolve ethical dilemmas and take personal responsibility in the event an ethical error is committed.
6. Clinical Skill [Helping Relationship AND Group Work]	To train counselors who are knowledgeable and skilled in the helping/counseling process; who are able to apply knowledge, theory, and skills to work effectively with clients in a variety of modalities (individual, group, family) and to use crisis intervention, brief counseling, and long-term approaches.
7. Research and Assessment [Assessment AND Research and Program Evaluation]	To prepare counselors who are knowledgeable and skilled in gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting data about individuals and groups to inform clinical practice.
<b>Program Area Standards</b>	To prepare counselors who meet additional curricular objectives for their specialization area in the areas of service, prevention, treatment, referral, and program management

<b>Professional Practice Standards</b>	Develop, through supervised practicum and internship experiences, an integration of the knowledge and skills needed to be successful as practicing counselors.
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**GW Evaluation:** The faculty will spend the next academic year, 2019/2020 revising the program evaluation plan to bring it into alignment with the 2016 CACREP Standards. The current plan is based on the 2009 Standards since this is the accreditation under which we are operating. Additionally, the doctoral program will be fully aligned with the 2016 CACREP Standards next year.

**Program Assessment of Professional Counseling Identity, Objective #1.** A survey of counseling alumni was conducted during 2018/2019, and respondents overwhelmingly identified with the profession of counseling, as evidenced by the fact that 100% of respondents were members of the American Counseling Association, the American School Counseling Association, or the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association. When asked whether the respondents rated the program as having met its objective of promoting a counseling identity, 71% said the program had mostly met or successfully met that objective. Employers were also surveyed, and they rated our alumni as 92% in the ‘very satisfactory to excellent’ categories in terms of understanding the history of counseling, trends in counseling, and ethical considerations in working with clients and consumers. Both alumni and employers in their qualitative comments supported the strong counselor identity, and this held for MA students in clinical mental health, school, rehabilitation counseling and for the doctoral program. Examples include ‘real life experience of professors as counselors’ and ‘GW is recognized in the field.’

**Program Assessment of Multicultural Competence, Objective #3.** A survey of counseling alumni was conducted during 2018/2019, and 65% of respondents indicated that the objective of multicultural competency was mostly met or successfully met. Qualitative alumni comments indicated that a strength of their program is the ability to practice and reflect on one’s own cultural competency as they worked with clients of diverse backgrounds in the Community Counseling Services Center. They also singled out the cultural dimensions of ethical decision making as an important strength of their programs. A survey of employers reported that 92% of their GW employees use culturally appropriate modalities in initiating, assessing, maintaining and termination of counseling services. Qualitative comments of both alumni and employers support the ‘strong Multicultural content and Ethics’ of our students and faculty. The issues of diversity and cultural competency are foundational to all counseling faculty research, and this is evident in these reports from our alumni and from employers.

## Comprehensive Assessment Plan Summary

In addition to evaluating the scheduled objectives in the plan, the faculty devoted considerable time to overall curriculum refining, following the introduction of the cohort models across all programs.

**MA Programs Lessons Learned.** All MA program curricula were revised to 60 hours during this academic year. The Clinical Mental Health Master’s program was already in a cohort delivery, and school and rehabilitation counseling were brought on board. Decisions were based on detailed analysis of current open model student participation. Students’ degree plans were studied by the faculty, and individual degree plans constructed to ensure continued student graduation rates in rehabilitation counseling during the transition. The School Counseling plan had historically been based on a cohort delivery system, and this was systematically analyzed to develop a course sequence for the additional 12 hours. By the end of the academic year, this new sequence for 60 hours had been outlined for the incoming cohort. For both rehabilitation and school programs, attention was paid to developing templates for

students to use to petition for sequence changes, and for determining transfer credits. The migration of all syllabi for core courses into Taskstream was completed and data were gathered for inclusion in the self-study to be written next academic year.

**Doctoral Program Lessons Learned.** The entire PhD curriculum was revamped. This included a new cohort-based course sequence, and a petition to the school to allow our doctoral students to take their comprehensive examinations after all content courses covered in the exam were completed. This policy was approved and our students now take their comprehensive examinations in early fall, after having the summer following their supervision year to allow a deeper study schedule with minimal course requirements. Additionally, the leadership and advocacy course, and the advanced theories course were updated to meet standards, and faculty were identified to teach these courses. To enhance the faculty areas of expertise, two new hires were completed this year, with a focus on children and adolescents, trauma, and multicultural issues in counseling. Both were tenure-accruing. The applicant pool was strong, and the university approved a third diversity hire, also on the tenure track.

**Clinical Training Enhancements.** To implement best practices in clinical training for MA and PhD level students, the faculty purchased a fully electronic health record designed for counseling clinics, Titanium. This was fully operational by the spring of 2019. The program also implemented a widely used platform to log hours of clinical work in practicum and internships, and to allow for faculty and field site supervisor approvals to be done electronically. This platform is Time2Track and all programs are now successfully implemented.