



# CAPELLA

## UNIVERSITY

PhD Counselor Education & Supervision | MS Clinical Mental Health Counseling  
MS School Counseling

## 2021-2022 Counselor Education Unit Annual Report

Capella University  
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## INTRODUCTION

This report contains highlights of recent activities, changes, and initiatives that affect the specialized accredited programs within Capella University's Counselor Education Unit (CEU). The CEU continues to focus on academic excellence through our curriculum, residency experiences, practicum and internship, and learner advising. A comprehensive assessment process guides program improvement at the course, program, and unit levels.

## COUNSELOR EDUCATION UNIT (CEU)

In 2021-2022, the Counselor Education Unit at Capella University offered three advanced degree programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP): the MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC); the MS in School Counseling (SC), which is also accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP); and the PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES).

The CEU has primary responsibility and authority for preparing professional counselors and counselor educators. One of its major responsibilities is to ensure graduate degree programs within the CEU adhere to best practices and national accreditation standards and prepare learners to become competent counselors and educators.

## THE COUNSELOR EDUCATION UNIT MISSION STATEMENT

The Counselor Education Unit helps prepare adult learners committed to leadership, advocacy, and service to become professional counselors and counselor educators. Through our competency-based curriculum and comprehensive assessment program we ensure entry-level counseling program learners have access to the knowledge and skills necessary to develop into practitioner-scholars. We help prepare our graduates to serve a diverse population of clients across a variety of therapeutic settings and situations. We also help prepare our doctoral learners to serve as scholar-practitioners committed to the ethical practice of administration, teaching, supervision, and leadership in the counseling profession.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### MS Clinical Mental Health Counseling

The mission of the CACREP-accredited Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program is to help prepare master's-level counselors to work effectively with clients across diverse therapeutic settings and situations. Learners receive academic preparation and clinical training for professional practice based upon established ethical standards for counselors and sensitivity to the complex mental health needs of a multicultural society. The CMHC program seeks to deliver its curriculum through a dynamic, interactive, and collaborative learning environment and provides learners with a strong theoretical foundation in the field of professional mental health counseling.

### *Key Program Modifications/Highlights in 2021-2022*

- Revisions were made within the foundational and clinical training curriculum to provide learners with practice quizzes and additional study materials with the goal of increasing

National Counselor Examination Scores (NCE). The Spring 2022 National Counselor Examination (NCE) test results demonstrated significant pass-rate improvements over the Fall 2021 results.

- Multiple states require additional course content exceeding CACREP foundational standards for independent counseling licensure. A new one-credit course offering for special topics in counseling was launched in July 2021 to support learners state-specific licensure course needs. This one-credit course shell provides learners with the opportunity to take the additional courses in tandem with CACREP curriculum and also allows the program to address state-mandated changes in educational curriculum.

### **MS School Counseling**

The mission of the CACREP and CAEP-accredited School Counseling (SC) program is to help prepare master's-level school counselors to serve diverse populations of students in public or private elementary, middle, and high school settings. The comprehensive school counseling standards of the American School Counselor Association serve as the curricular model and offers a comprehensive approach to the delivery and management of contemporary school counseling programs. Through coursework and clinical skills training, learners demonstrate proficiency in evidence-based counseling approaches for P-12 children and adolescents, including assessment; intervention; service delivery at individual, group and classroom levels; consultation with parents, teachers, and community stakeholders; and advocacy.

#### ***Key Program Modifications/Highlights in 2021-2022***

- Targeted course revisions were made to foundational specialty area curriculum to provide learners with practice quizzes and additional study materials related to both the National Counselor Examination (NCE) and Praxis examinations. In Spring 2022, more than two-thirds of learners passed the NCE. In addition, more than three-fourths of learners passed the Praxis exam in 2022.
- Revisions of the SC practicum and internship courses were completed to incorporate a site supervisor and stakeholder feedback for the purpose of program evaluation and enhanced program delivery opportunities.

### **PhD Counselor Education and Supervision**

The mission of the CACREP-accredited PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) program is to help prepare doctoral level scholar-practitioners to pursue leadership positions within counselor education, counseling and supervision, and research. The program utilizes the highest professional standards of counselor educator and supervisor training in a climate of collaborative scholarly inquiry to ensure all learners have the knowledge and skills necessary to fully participate and enhance the counseling profession. We help prepare our learners and graduates to assume counseling leadership positions at a regional, state, and national level.

#### ***Key Program Modifications/Highlights 2021- 2022***

- Thirty-five CES graduates completed dissertations during the reporting period.

- As part of continuous quality improvement, minor curricular changes were made to the first three courses of the restaged CES course sequence to support learner efficacy in the area of writing and research. Additional microlearning pieces specific to research skills were added. Continued improvement measures related to course resequencing and providing research and writing support are ongoing due to variability of learner outcomes during the reporting period.

### CEU Diversity Statement

The Counselor Education Unit (CEU) in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Capella University believes a diverse learning community is critical to preparing future practitioners. In an inclusive learning environment that values individual differences, we prepare learners to serve their clients and communities while embracing these values of inclusivity and diversity.

## CEU FACULTY AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

### Core Faculty

Core faculty in the CEU support all accredited programs regardless of their specialization and primary teaching assignments. The CEU hired four new core faculty between July 2021 and June 2022: Dr. Casey Baker, Dr. Vera Chimbanda, Dr. Azra Karajic Siwec, and Dr. Rebecca Sametz. Additionally, the following faculty were hired in the first two quarters of 2021 and were inadvertently excluded from the 2020-2021 annual report: Dr. Melinda Paige and Dr. Rhett Brandt.

### Professional Staff

The Counselor Education Unit (CEU) is housed within the Department of Counseling and Family Therapy in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences. This organization supports counselor education programs to ensure positive learner experience and the achievement of the programs' mission, goals, and outcomes. There have been no changes to school or program leadership in the past year:

- **Dr. Joshua Stanley** serves as dean for the School of Social and Behavior Sciences, providing broad strategic and operational oversight for the school and its departments.
- **Dr. Jody Neuman-Aamlie** serves as assistant dean for the Department of Counseling and Family Therapy.
- **Dr. Theresa Kasczak** serves as academic program director (PD) for the entire counselor education unit. In this capacity, Dr. Kasczak also serves as CACREP liaison. Core faculty report either to the PD or the two assistant program directors.
- **Dr. William Attridge** serves as assistant academic program director (APD) and administrator of the Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) program
- **Dr. Nicole Holby** serves as assistant academic program director (APD) and Clinical Training and Licensure coordinator for the unit.

- **Dr. Teresa Smith** serves as faculty director (FD) for Counselor Education and reports to the assistant dean. Part-time and adjunct faculty report to the FD.

## INNOVATIVE PROCESSES SUPPORTING THE CEU

### Action Analytics and CEU Assessment System

The Counselor Education Unit's assessment system provides a framework for the quarterly faculty-led review of curriculum, program procedures and policy, and learner development for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling, School Counseling, and Counselor Education and Supervision programs. The Counselor Education Academic Leadership Team (CE-ALT), comprises faculty leadership from each program, other CEU faculty leads, and program directors, and is tasked with ensuring continuous improvement and faculty governance of the assessment plan. The assessment plan establishes the guidelines for the Action Analytics process to identify the programs' strengths and areas of opportunity, and to assess the programs' effectiveness in meeting its outcomes and professional standards.

### Faculty Advising

Learners in the CEU are assigned a faculty advisor who provides guidance and support throughout their program tenure. Learners and faculty advisors interact in a digital Faculty Advising Forum (FAF) courseroom. The FAF provides important program information to support learners' personal and professional development. Each FAF courseroom is structured by geographic region, which allows for the sharing of regionally specific information and resources and an opportunity for learners to build their professional network.

An Academic Learner Review (ALR) is an opportunity for learners to consult with their program faculty advisor at key milestones throughout their graduate program starting in the first quarter of enrollment. As part of the ALR, faculty review learner progress and development as measured by key performance indicators and professional disposition assessments and create plans for strengthening future performance and professional identity development. For learners who do not attend the meeting, faculty advisors complete an ALR based on the learners' academic transcript and other documentation as needed.

## HONOR SOCIETY

Capella's Chi Sigma Iota chapter, Chi Upsilon Chi (CUC), is led by the Executive Board composed of Capella learners and guided by faculty advisors. CUC inducts new members during quarterly virtual induction ceremonies. Capella accepted 189 Capella learners into Chi Upsilon Chi who applied between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. At the start of 2022, CUC initiated monthly professional development workshops for chapter members, CU alumni, faculty, and site-supervisors.

## LICENSURE

The academic leadership team partners with the Legal and Academic Verification teams to support and resolve the licensure questions and needs of learners and alumni. Professional licensure disclosures are available for learners who wish to research requirements for licensure

by state of residence and program. Capella also provides resources to support alignment of program coursework to state required licensure content. Learners can also request assistance with state licensure concerns or questions via a digital webform.

### **NATIONAL COUNSELOR EXAM**

Through the Graduate Student Application for the National Certified Counselor (GSA-NCC) program, Capella facilitates the application process for learners seeking this voluntary National Certified Counselor (NCC) credential. One requirement for attaining the credential is passing the National Counselor Exam (NCE) or the National Mental Health Counselor Exam (NMHCE). These two exams are required by many states as part of the state licensure application. The CEU's liaison for the NCE works with qualified graduate learners to register for the NCE during the final stages of their program. Results of the NCE are provided to Capella and are reviewed by faculty to inform potential curriculum revisions.

### **CEU ADVISORY COUNCILS**

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling/Counselor Education and Supervision (CMHC/CES) and the School Counseling (SC) Advisory Councils include in their membership key stakeholders such as faculty, practitioners/site supervisors, learners, and alumni. The CMHC/CES Advisory Council meets biannually to review program and accreditation updates and explore topics relevant to the enhancement and further development of the programs. The SC Advisory Council meets quarterly to offer advice and counsel to the program director and leads on issues of importance to Capella and its learners in the School Counseling and Counselor Education and Supervision programs and shall limit its activities to advising on matters that directly concern the instructional programs. The specific purposes may include (1) assisting the program in identifying current issues in school counseling and counselor education and supervision; (2) identifying necessary entry-level skills, knowledge competencies, and professional dispositions for entry-level professional counselors and counselor educators and supervisors; and (3) assisting in program evaluation by providing recommendations based on program data. Reports from the advisory council meetings are maintained on SharePoint and presented to school program leadership teams.

### **Academic Standards and Professional Fitness Committees**

The CEU Independent Review Panel (IRP) and Faculty Review Panel (FRP) continue to support a growth-based review of learner needs, strengths, and academic/professional requirements. The IRP and FRP comprise of faculty members from the CEU, Marriage and Family Therapy programs, and faculty representation from all programs in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences.