



2023-2024 Counselor Education Unit Stakeholder Report

School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Effective 10/01/24

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

Effective 10/01/24

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Introduction

This report contains highlights of recent activities, changes, and initiatives affecting Capella University's accredited Counselor Education programs. The Counselor Education programs continue to focus on academic excellence through curriculum, residency experiences, site-based learning, and learner advising. A comprehensive assessment process guides course and program improvement.

Counselor Education Unit

In 2023–2024, the Counselor Education Unit (CEU) at Capella University offered the MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC); the MS in School Counseling (SC), which is also part of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)-accredited Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) unit; and the PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES).

The CEU has primary responsibility and authority for preparing professional counselors and counselor educators. The graduate degree programs are designed to adhere to best practices and national accreditation standards and prepare learners to become competent counselors and counselor educators.

The mission of the CEU is to prepare learners committed to leadership, advocacy, and service for careers in professional counseling and counselor education. Through the CEU's competency-based curriculum and comprehensive program assessment system the CEU is designed to provide entry-level counseling program learners with access to the knowledge and skills necessary to develop into practitioner-scholars. The CEU helps prepare graduates to serve a diverse population of clients across a variety of therapeutic settings and situations. The CEU also helps prepare our doctoral learners to serve as scholar-practitioners committed to the ethical practice of administration, teaching, supervision, and leadership in the counseling profession.

The 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, the programs prepare learners to serve their clients and communities while embracing these values of inclusivity and diversity.

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 a variety of 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 professional clinical mental health counseling.

Key Program Results and Modifications in 2023- 2024

- During the reporting period (July 2023 through June 2024), approximately 90% of CMHC learners successfully completed courses at proficient or distinguished levels on average.
- The average rate of continuous enrollment in the CMHC program during the reporting period was approximately 88%.
- In October 2023, the CEU launched elective specialization offerings for the CMHC program. CMHC learners can select one of three specializations: 1) Child and Adolescent Counseling, 2) Addiction Treatment and Recovery, or 3) General Clinical Mental Health Counseling, which includes curricular offerings to support state licensure or learner interest. The CACREP board approved this change in July 2023.

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 a variety of populations of students in public or private elementary, middle, and high school settings. The school counseling standards of the American School Counselor Association serve as the curricular model of the program, which 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; program delivery and evaluation, including service delivery at individual, group and classroom levels; consultation and collaboration with parents, teachers, and community stakeholders; and advocacy.

Key Program Results and Modifications in 2023- 2024

- During the reporting period (July 2023 through June 2024), approximately 92% of SC learners successfully completed courses at proficient or distinguished levels on average.
- The average rate of continuous enrollment in the SC program during the reporting period was approximately 87%.
- In July 2023, the CEU restaged the SC program to increase its total credits from 72 to 90. The program also added elective specialization offerings. SC learners can select one of three specializations: 1) Child and Adolescent Counseling, 2) Addiction Treatment and Recovery, or 3) General School Counseling, which includes curricular offerings to support state certification/credentialing or learner interest. The CACREP board approved these changes in July 2023.

PhD Counselor Education and Supervision

The mission of the PhD in CES program is to help prepare scholar-practitioners for the ethical practice of counseling, teaching, supervision, administration, and research. Our program utilizes the highest professional standards of counselor education and supervisor training in a climate of

collaborative scholarly inquiry to ensure all learners have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in and enhance the counseling profession fully. We prepare our learners and graduates to assume counseling leadership positions at local, state, regional, and national levels. To accomplish its mission and implement its goals, the doctoral program in CES is defined by five curricular themes: advanced clinical practice, clinical supervision, teaching, research, and leadership and advocacy.

Key Program Results and Modifications in 2023–2024

- Forty-nine CES learners graduated during the reporting period (July 2023, through June 2024).
- In July 2023, the CEU consolidated the doctoral practicum and internship courses from six 2-credit courses (one practicum and five internship courses) to three 4-credit courses (one practicum and two internship courses) to improve the site-based learning experience. The CACREP board approved this change in July 2023.
- In Q4 2023, the CEU launched a revised CES program sequence that includes the addition of three new doctoral-level research courses. The CACREP board approved this change in July 2023.

CEU Faculty and Organizational Leadership Structure

Full-Time Faculty

Full-time faculty in the CEU support all accredited programs regardless of their specialization and primary teaching assignments. The CEU hired or reassigned six new full-time faculty between July 2023 and June 2024: Dr. Ari Bendit, Dr. Joseph Campbell (promotion), Dr. Corinne Harris (promotion), Dr. Felix Morton, Dr. Jennalee Oefstedahl (promotion), and Dr. Diane Zimmer (promotion).

Administration

The 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 provide a positive learner experience and sustain the achievement of the programs' mission, goals, and outcomes. School and program leadership is as follows:

- **Dr. Jody Neuman-Aamlie** was appointed to the role of interim dean for the School of Social and Behavior Sciences in March 2024. She continues to serve as the associate dean for the Department of Counseling and Family Therapy while in the interim dean role.
- **Dr. Theresa Kascsak** serves as academic program director (PD) and leader of the CEU. In this capacity, Dr. Kascsak serves as CACREP liaison. Full-time faculty report to either the to the associate program director or the two assistant program directors, all of whom report to the PD. All the affiliate faculty report up through two hybrid/full-time assistant faculty directors who also report directly to the PD.

- **Dr. Nicole Holby** serves as the associate academic program director and administrator of the master's CMHC and SC programs.
- **Dr. Randy Astramovich** serves as assistant academic program director (APD) and administrator of the CES program.
- **Dr. Blair Vincent** serves as APD and coordinator of specializations, certificates, and innovation.
- **Dr. Rachelle Smith** serves as an assistant academic faculty director (FD) for Counselor Education and reports to the PD. Approximately half of the 80+ affiliate faculty (part-time and adjunct) report to the FD. Previously, Dr. Smith served as a full-time faculty member within the CEU.
- **Dr. Davis Schlosz** serves as an assistant academic FD for Counselor Education and reports to the PD. Previously, Dr. Schlosz served as a full-time faculty member within the CEU.

Innovative Processes Supporting the CEU

CEU Program Assessment System

The CEU's program assessment system provides a framework for the quarterly faculty-led review of curriculum, program procedures and policy, and learner development for the CMHC, SC, and CES programs. The Counselor Education Academic Leadership Team (CE-ALT) comprises faculty leadership from each program, other CEU faculty leads and PDs, and contributes to continuous improvement and faculty governance of the assessment plan. The assessment plan establishes the guidelines for the program assessment 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 faculty advisors who provide guidance and support throughout their program tenure. Learners and faculty advisors interact in an online courseroom entitled the Faculty Advising Forum (FAF). 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. The FAF also provides the framework for faculty advisors to review student's academic progress and professional dispositions during periodic Academic Learner Reviews (ALR).

Curricular Innovation

The CEU transitioned three courses (COUN 5002, COUN 5217, and COUN 5336) to the 10x teaching format in Q3 2023. A full-time faculty leads each course, and four part-time assistant instructors support them. The 10x format highlights a team-teaching approach, learner connection, and streamlined courserooms in a large, seminar-style course. Additionally, the program introduced *Skillsetter* in COUN-R5861 in Q4 2023 to support learners' development of

counseling skills. *Skillsetter* is a web-based, asynchronous training system that allows learners to practice counseling skills anytime.

Honor Society

Capella's Chi Sigma Iota chapter, Chi Upsilon Chi, is led by the Executive Board composed of Capella learners and guided by faculty advisors. Chi Upsilon Chi inducts new members during quarterly virtual induction ceremonies. Capella accepted 303 Capella learners into Chi Upsilon Chi who applied between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024.

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 to review Capella's determination of how its licensure programs meet the educational requirements for licensure by state. Capella also provides resources to support comparison of program coursework to state required licensure content. Learners can also request assistance with state licensure concerns or questions via a digital webform.

National Certification and State Licensure

The CEU facilitates the application process for learners seeking the 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). Many states also require these two exams as part of their 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 the CEU 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 key stakeholders such as faculty, district partners, 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 biannually to offer advice and counsel to program and faculty leadership. Council members offer a relevant perspective on industry trends to facilitate improvements within the School Counseling program. Because SC is dually accredited by CACREP and CAEP, its council also meets the necessary requirements of EPPs for CAEP.

The purpose of the advisory councils includes: 1) assisting the program in identifying current issues in clinical mental health counseling, 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 Professional Standards Committee (PSC) and the school Academic Honesty Faculty Review Panel (AH-FRP) continue to support a growth-based review of learner needs, strengths, and academic/professional requirements. The PSC is chaired by Dr. Megyn Shea (full-time faculty) and comprises faculty members from the CEU and Marriage and Family Therapy program. The AH-FRP includes full-time faculty representation from all programs within the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences