

2024–2025 MS in Marriage and Family Therapy Program Stakeholder Report





CAPELLA

UNIVERSITY®

Capella Tower
225 South Sixth Street, Ninth Floor
Minneapolis, MN 55402
TOLL-FREE: 1.888.CAPELLA (227-3552)
FAX: 612.977.5060
www.capella.edu

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Introduction

This report contains highlights of recent activities, changes, and initiatives that affect the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE)-accredited MS in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program. The program continues to focus on academic excellence through curriculum design, residency experiences, internship components, and student advising. A comprehensive assessment process guides program improvement at the course, program, and school levels.

MS in Marriage and Family Therapy Program Mission

The Marriage and Family Therapy program's mission is to prepare master's level clinicians to work effectively with a diverse population of clients across various therapeutic settings and situations as couple and family therapists. Students receive academic preparation and systemic clinical training designed to prepare them for work with sensitivity to the complex mental health needs of individuals and families within a multicultural society. The program curriculum, aligned with the COAMFTE standards, supports the high standards and rigor of professional practice based upon established ethical standards for therapists.

Key Program Changes in 2024–2025

In its ongoing commitment to deliver current and innovative course content, the MFT program revised nine courses to enhance the student learning experience. In addition to updating scholarly articles, revising instructional media, and adding differentiated assessments, the program incorporated interactive educational technology such as SkillBuilder (which facilitates scenario-based learning activities) and PlayPosit (an interactive video-based instructional tool with built-in knowledge checks).

Accreditation standards emphasize the importance of incorporating feedback from communities of interest and using data to inform program modifications. Based on student and faculty feedback, the MFT program decided to discontinue using the discussion platform Yellowdig and to add Engageli, a video-based learning platform for synchronous and asynchronous experiences, to more courses.

Program Highlights from July 2024 to June 2025

Accreditation

The MFT program successfully completed its reaccreditation process in May 2025. During the virtual site visit on October 14–15, 2024, site reviewers met with faculty, graduates, external site supervisors, clinical program faculty supervisors, and administrators. The site visit report, received in November 2024, confirmed the program met all standards. Following the COAMFTE spring meeting, the program received official notification of reaccreditation through May 2032.

Faculty Career Pathways Promotions

Capella University launched Career Pathways in 2023, which introduced academic ranks and established a well-defined, organized pathway for career advancement for full-time core faculty. Career Pathways acknowledges and shows appreciation for the dedication, expertise, and contributions of full-time faculty members and empowers faculty members to drive their own progression.

In 2024, the MFT program celebrated the promotion of one faculty member to associate professor and four to professor. Currently, the program's full-time faculty comprise 4 professors, 13 associate professors, and 9 assistant professors, reflecting the program's strong commitment to faculty development and academic excellence.

Faculty Development

In February 2025, the program hosted a professional development training for all faculty focused on integrating technology and AI into teaching, innovative pedagogical strategies, and balancing online clinical supervision with programmatic requirements.

Program Students, Faculty, and Site Supervisors

The School of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SoSBS) and associated clinical programs, including Marriage and Family Therapy, are committed to inclusivity and advancing the university's mission. Program administration and faculty are dedicated to training culturally competent therapists who are prepared to address complex issues facing individuals, couples, and families, as well as social, community, and political systems in a diverse and changing world.

The data below (Figures 1a–3b) provide a program snapshot of the MS Marriage and Family Therapy student, faculty, and site supervisor populations.

Figure 1a. Students – Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	MFT Students*
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.5%
Asian	2.6%
Black or African American	25.6%
Hispanic of any race	13.8%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.4%
Nonresident	0.7%
Race unspecified	2.4%
Two or more races	4.6%

Race and Ethnicity	MFT Students*
White	49.5%

*Column reflects the percentage of the total number of students active in the program between July 2024 and June 2025 that self-identified as each ethnicity.

Figure 1b. Students – Gender

Gender	MFT Students*
Female	86.5%
Male	12.6%
Other/Unknown	0.9%

*Column reflects the percentage of the total number of students active in the program between July 2024 and June 2025 that self-identified as each gender.

Figure 2a. Faculty – Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	MFT Faculty*
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.4%
Asian	1.4%
Black or African American	5.7%
Hispanic of any race	4.3%
Race unspecified	1.4%
Two or more races	1.4%
Unknown	40.0%
White	44.3%

*Column reflects the percentage of the total number of core and non-core faculty in the program between July 2024 and June 2025 that self-identified as each ethnicity.

Figure 2b. Faculty – Gender

Gender	MFT Faculty*
Female	31.4%
Male	25.7%
Other/Unknown	42.9%

*Column reflects the percentage of the total number of core and non-core faculty in the program between July 2024 and June 2025 that self-identified as each gender.

Figure 3a. Site Supervisors – Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	MFT Site Supervisors*
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.5%
Asian	1.6%
Black or African American	16.4%
Decline to provide this information	6.0%
Hispanic of any race	8.7%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.2%
Race or ethnicity unknown	0.1%
Two or more races	3.6%
White	62.9%

*Column reflects the percentage of the total number of site supervisors in the program between July 2024 and June 2025 that self-identified as each ethnicity.

Figure 3b. Site Supervisors – Gender

Gender	MFT Site Supervisors*
Female	76.7%
Male	19.2%
Other/Unknown	4.1%

*Column reflects the percentage of the total number of site supervisors in the program between July 2024 and June 2025 that self-identified as each gender.

Professional Staff

The MS in Marriage and Family Therapy program is housed within the Department of Counselor Education and Family Therapy in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SoSBS). This organization supports a positive student experience and the achievement of the Marriage and Family Therapy program’s mission, goals, and outcomes. School and program leadership is as follows:

- **Irene Abrego Nicolet, PhD, NCSP, LSSP**—Dean, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences
- **Theresa Kascsak, PhD, LPC, LCMHCS, NCC**—Assistant Dean, Counselor Education and Family Therapy
- **Kelly Heenan, PhD, LMFT, LPC, AAMFT Approved Supervisor**—Program Director, MS in Marriage and Family Therapy and PhD in Advanced Studies in Human Behavior programs

- **Natalie Richardson, PhD, LMFT, AAMFT Approved Supervisor**—Assistant Program Director, MS in Marriage and Family Therapy and PhD in Advanced Studies in Human Behavior programs
- **Tequilla Hill, PhD, LMFT-S, LMFT, AAMFT Approved Supervisor**—Assistant Faculty Director, MS in Marriage and Family Therapy program

Summary of Staff Changes

Between June 2024 and July 2025, the program hired one new full-time faculty and five part-time and adjunct faculty. In October 2024, Dr. Irene Abrego Nicolet was appointed dean of the SoSBS. In November 2024, Dr. Theresa Kascsak was appointed to the role of assistant dean, Counselor Education and Family Therapy.

Innovative Processes Supporting the MFT Program

MFT Program Assessment System

The MFT program assessment system provides a framework for regular faculty-led review of curriculum, program procedures and policy, and student development. The assessment plan establishes the guidelines for the program assessment process. As part of the comprehensive assessment plan, program faculty systematically review a range of data to evaluate the program's effectiveness in achieving its stated outcomes and aligning with professional standards. This process helps identify both strengths and areas for improvement. Key data sources include faculty end-of-course evaluations (EOCEs), course success metrics, and student continuation and graduation rates.

Faculty Advising Forum

The courseroom-based Faculty Advising Forum (FAF) is designed to support the progress of students throughout the program. A faculty advisor who is a full-time, core faculty member of the MFT program facilitates each FAF. The forums serve as a resource addressing university and MFT programmatic procedures and expectations and assisting students with questions they may have regarding any MFT academic, residency, and internship requirements or issues. Each FAF courseroom is structured by geographic region, which allows for the sharing of regionally specific information and resources and an opportunity for students to build their professional network. The FAF is available to students during their enrollment in the program to provide ongoing and consistent advising resources and enhance the overall success of students.

Academic Learner Review

The Academic Learner Review (ALR) comprises a structured series of conversations between students and their FAF faculty advisor conducted at key milestones throughout the program. The first ALR is during a students' first quarter of enrollment. Additional reviews are conducted prior to students attending residency and a final ALR occurs when students should be enrolled in site-based learning at the end of their program; this ALR helps to identify anyone who is not yet enrolled in site-based learning and who may need more support to complete the degree. The

ALR allows faculty to review student progress and development as measured by learning outcomes and professional disposition assessments and to help them create plans for strengthening future performance and professional identity development.

Student Progress Committee

The faculty-led Student Progress Committee meets twice quarterly to support student progression through the MFT program. The committee uses the ALR report to track student progress and identify students who:

- are struggling to obtain a placement site for site-based learning;
- are reaching maximum time in the program according to university policy;
- have had multiple quarters of inactivity;
- have a grade point average below that required by the academic standing university policy and the program policy on site-based learning; or
- have expressed other concerns to their faculty advisor that may impede their progression through the program.

Once at-risk students are identified, the committee collaborates with Academic Advising and faculty advisors to provide targeted outreach to support the students.

Honor Society

The Pi chapter of Delta Kappa International Marriage and Family Therapy Academic Honor Society inducts eligible new members each quarter by invitation only. An executive board composed of seven Capella students leads the chapter and two faculty advisors provide guidance. The chapter engages in philanthropic activities, awards scholarships to current students in the MFT program, and sponsors professionally oriented webinars for students and graduates.

Advisory Council

The Marriage and Family Therapy Advisory Council meets bi-annually to review program and accreditation updates and explore topics relevant to the enhancement and further development of the programs. Membership is comprised of the program's communities of interest and key stakeholders including faculty, practitioners, site supervisors, and graduates.

Professional Standards Committee

The SoSBS Professional Standards Committee is composed of core faculty from each program within the school of SOSBS. The committee continues to support an assessment-based review of student needs, strengths, and academic and professional requirements and meets weekly.