2025–2026 MS in Marriage and Family Therapy Program Stakeholder Report

CAPELLA UNIVERSITY®



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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 (MFT) 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 couples 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 Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) standards, supports the high standards and rigor of professional practice based upon established ethical standards for therapists.

Key Program Changes in 2025–2026

In Q3 2025, Capella began utilizing the custom-built Work-Integrated Learning Information System (WILIS) to enhance management of site-based learning activities, including application processing, evaluations, record-keeping, and documentation. WILIS replaces a third-party experiential learning management system. The university expects this initiative to improve operational efficiency and support stronger oversight of clinical training experiences.

During 2026, the program implemented several curricular changes, including the discontinuation of the Family Solutions Institute (FSI), which previously functioned as both a licensure preparation resource and the program's Capstone exam. The program replaced FSI with a case presentation and added the *MFT Exam Test Preparation* text to Internship III and IV coursework to support licensure readiness.

The program removed recording equipment from residency courses, resulting in modifications to residency learning activities. The redesigned residency curriculum creates more opportunities for students to bridge theory and practice through applied learning activities. Students gain experience with co-therapy approaches, engage in activities that reflect real-world clinical collaboration, and receive guided supervision and feedback based on observable clinical data, helping prepare them for success in their site-based learning placements.

The program will continue monitoring student competency outcomes and licensure examination pass rates to evaluate the impact of these changes.

To support continuous improvement and future enrollment growth, the program will host a virtual open house in September 2026 for current and prospective students interested in clinical programs. The program is also expanding engagement opportunities with alumni and site supervisors through complementary continuing education units (CEU) offerings and reviewing one-credit course options to improve curricular efficiency and responsiveness to student interests. Planned course enhancements include exploring specialized topics such as Medical Family Therapy, Sex Therapy, Trauma-Informed Practice, and Telehealth. Together, these initiatives intend to strengthen stakeholder engagement, enhance student experience, maintain curriculum relevance, and support sustainable program growth.

Program Highlights from July 2025 to June 2026

The following highlights reflect the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program's commitment to faculty development and academic excellence.

Accreditation

The program continues to maintain good standing with the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE). The required annual report was successfully submitted in January 2026, and accreditation remains active through 2032.

Faculty Career Pathways Promotions

Capella University launched Career Pathways in 2023, introducing academic ranks and establishing a well-defined pathway for career advancement for full-time core faculty. Career Pathways recognizes and rewards the dedication, expertise, and contributions of full-time faculty members while empowering them to guide their own professional growth.

Since the last annual report, the MFT program celebrated the promotion of one faculty member to associate professor and one faculty member to professor. The program currently employs 28 full-time faculty members, including three faculty serving in leadership roles (program director, assistant program director, and assistant faculty director), five professors, nine associate professors, and 11 assistant professors.

Faculty Development

The program hosted two faculty development days providing opportunities for professional growth, collaboration, and enhanced faculty engagement. Topics included navigating the doctoral publication and peer-review process, effective faculty advising practices, resources to support alumni after graduation, and the use of library-supported artificial intelligence tools to enhance teaching, research, and student support. These sessions contributed to faculty development across the areas of scholarship, student success, and emerging educational technologies.

Program Students, Faculty, and Site Supervisors

The School of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SoSBS) and associated clinical programs, including Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT), are committed to inclusivity and advancing the university's

mission. Program administration and faculty commit 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 (Tables 1a–3b) provide a snapshot of the MS in MFT program student, faculty, and site supervisor populations.

Table 1a. Students – Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	MFT Students*
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.5%
Asian	2.6%
Black or African American	27.9%
Hispanic of any race	13.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.3%
Race unspecified	4.1%
Two or more races	4.3%
White	46.7%

*Column reflects the percentage of the total number of students active in the program between July 2025 and June 2026 that self-identified as each ethnicity.

Table 1b. Students – Gender

Gender	MFT Students*
Female	85.6%
Male	13.4%
Other/Unknown	1.0%

*Column reflects the percentage of the total number of students active in the program between July 2025 and June 2026 that self-identified as each gender.

Table 2a. Faculty – Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	MFT Faculty*
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.5%
Asian	1.5%
Black or African American	7.5%
Hispanic of any race	4.5%
Race unspecified	1.5%
Two or more races	1.5%
Unknown	37.2%
White	44.8%

*Column reflects the percentage of the total number of core and non-core faculty in the program between July 2025 and June 2026 that self-identified as each ethnicity.

Table 2b. Faculty – Gender

Gender	MFT Faculty*
Female	34.3%
Male	25.4%
Other/Unknown	40.3%

*Column reflects the percentage of the total number of core and non-core faculty in the program between July 2025 and June 2026 that self-identified as each gender.

Table 3a. Site Supervisors – Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	MFT Site Supervisors*
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A
Asian	N/A
Black or African American	N/A
Decline to provide this information	N/A
Hispanic of any race	N/A
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	N/A
Race or ethnicity unknown	N/A
Two or more races	N/A
White	N/A

*Due to Q3 2025 implementation of the Work-Integrated Learning Information System (WILIS), site supervisor data is not currently available.

Table 3b. Site Supervisors – Gender

Gender	MFT Site Supervisors*
Female	N/A
Male	N/A
Other/Unknown	N/A

*Due to Q3 2025 implementation of the Work-Integrated Learning Information System (WILIS), site supervisor data is not currently available.

Professional Staff

The MS in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program is 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 MFT 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

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

Summary of Staff Changes

Between June 2025 and July 2026, the program experienced the resignation of two full-time faculty members. In response, one new full-time faculty member and two part-time (adjunct) faculty members were hired. One full-time position remains unfilled, as current faculty resources are sufficient to support program operations.

Innovative Processes Supporting the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Program

MFT Program Assessment System

The program assessment system provides a framework for regular faculty-led review of curriculum, program procedures and policy, and student development. The assessment plan establishes 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 student performance data, 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 program faculty member 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 series of structured conversations between students and their FAF faculty advisor conducted at key milestones throughout the program. The first ALR is during a student's first quarter of enrollment, another ALR takes place before the student attends residency, and a final ALR occurs toward the end of their program when the student should have enrolled in site-based learning. This final ALR helps to identify anyone who is

not yet enrolled in site-based learning and may need more support to complete the degree. The ALR allows faculty to review a student's progress and development as measured by learning outcomes and professional disposition assessments and to help the student 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 Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program. The committee uses the Academic Leadership Review (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 to program completion 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 advisors that may impede their progression through the program.

When the report identifies at-risk students, 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 Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program, and sponsors professionally oriented webinars for students and graduates.

Advisory Council

The Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Advisory Council meets biannually 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 School of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SoSBS) Professional Standards Committee is composed of core faculty from each program within the school. The committee continues to support an assessment-based review of student needs, strengths, and academic and professional requirements and meets weekly.