SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT CARD

2019-2020 Academic Year

The school counseling program at St. Cloud State University is committed to a data-driven program evaluation process where we monitor student progress from recruitment and admission through graduation and beyond, and use data to provide a continuous feedback loop to help us then improve instruction, supervision and programming. We recognize that program improvement is a continuous process that requires the willingness to acknowledge weaknesses and celebrate strengths. The following is a narrative summary of our program evaluation data which includes the identification and plans to improve weaknesses in the program.

As a CACREP accredited program, we are required to post a summary of our program evaluation annually so students, faculty, administrators, and our community partners can review and provide feedback. This report includes three sections: 1) a summary of program evaluation results, 2) changes we are making based on these results, & 3) any other future changes. We welcome your review and feedback and appreciate your support in helping us continually improve and adapt our programming to provide the best education and preparation for school counseling students.

1. Summary of Program Evaluation Results

Transition point 1 (admission)
We admitted 19 applicants to the school counseling program this spring 2019 and had 22 students graduate in spring of 2019, leaving 39 active students in the program. Of these 39 active students, 26 are fulltime (2 year cohort), and 13 are part-time. Of these 39 students, 10% are students of color, 82% are female and 18% male.

Transition point 2 (pre-practicum core)

During this academic year (2019-2020) all students with a plan of study to complete the pre-practicum core courses to successfully complete transition point 2 did so on the first try for a 100% success rate.

Transition point 3 (practicum and candidacy)

During this academic year (2019-2020) all students with a plan of study to complete transition point 3 (practicum and candidacy) did so successfully on the first try for a 100% success rate. Data from practicum evaluations indicates students are able to demonstrate sound competence with basic counseling skills. An area of growth is to continue to help students with case conceptualization of clients as while students did fine in this area, it was weaker than the use of skills. We will work to better teach students how to conceptualize client issues through better understanding of counseling theories.

Transition point 4 (internship and final comprehensive exam)

During this academic year (2019-2020) we had 22 students with a POS to move through transition point 4. All successfully completed internship on the first and all who took the comprehensive exam successfully completed for a 100% completion.

This transition point data indicates that once students are in the program, they tend to progress successfully as a goal of our program is to work hard to help ensure student success. An area of growth this data indicates is that we need to continue to better recruit students of color to help ensure more equitable representation in our student and school counselor population. We are actively working on doing this and welcome any ideas to help us with this goal.

Comprehensive Examination Data Summary

Historically, the school counseling program used the CPCE as our comprehensive exam. Our students generally averaged above the national mean overall on this exam. In 2019-2020 we switched to our program's own self-created comprehensive exam. The CPCE measures 8 core CACREP areas but does not measure the school counseling specific standards and that is one reason we made the switch. We also wanted better access to individual item data to better determine what students were learning, not learning, and then use this data to improve our teaching and curriculum.

The pilot use of our comprehensive exam which measures the 8 core CACREP standards and the school counseling standards, worked well and all test takers passed on the first try. The exam consists of 120 multiple choice questions with 12 questions per standard area. Data from this exam indicated that overall, these students had a strong command of the school counseling knowledge essential for good practice. It also provided us with some areas for growth, as students did have some trouble with a few areas including:

- Some difficulty with a few concepts related to assessment
- Some difficulty with a few concepts related to research methods

We plan to address these areas better in our instruction.

Internship Data Summary
Each semester, our site supervisors evaluate their intern supervisees using the program Intern Rating Form. In examining the data over many years, including the 2019-2020 year, our interns in general are rated quite highly in most categories. The ratings include questions regarding student knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to their development as school counselors. Areas of growth indicated from this data include:
- Continue to better prepare students for career and academic advising
- Continue to better prepare students for classroom management
- Continue to better prepare students on how school systems work

Data from the internship rating forms indicate that our interns do very well in building relationships with students, teachers, staff and administrators. Also, our students are rated highly in being professional and reliable in providing services to the schools they serve.

Student & School Counselor Feedback
We gather student feedback regularly throughout the program. Each semester students complete a course evaluation. Additionally, we regularly ask students for feedback and ideas for improvement. General feedback we have received include some of the following:

- Students in general want:
  o Timely responses to emails and questions
  o Clarity in feedback, specifically regarding practicum experiences
  o Information on current issues in the field
  o To understand how to balance the real and ideal roles of school counselors
  o To have both pragmatic as well as theoretical knowledge of the school counseling position
  o To have some flexibility on the modalities of how and when courses are offered

We also gather school counselor feedback through formal and informal means. School counselor site supervisors rate our interns each semester as well as can share their thoughts on how we can improve our preparation of students. Additionally, we speak with school counselors at conferences, site visits, and school counselor association meetings. All of this feedback helps inform our teaching and is useful data for program improvement. General feedback we have received include some of the following:

- School counselors in general want students to have:

o   More training on trauma informed care
o   More training on cultural humility and cross-cultural counseling
o   More training on working with transcripts, scheduling, and high school requirements
o   More training on 504 and SPED related topics
o   More training on addictions

We plan to continue to improve by using this student and school counselor feedback to inform our teaching strategies.

2. Changes we are Making based on this Data

Based on the above data, we are specifically taking the following actions:

1. We are working to better recruit and retain students of color. We formed a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee in our department as one step to help us better achieve this goal. We also have and will continue to consult with our admissions office on how we can better partner in this effort. We attend our Power in Diversity events on campus as well as other recruitment events to better reach out to potential students. Finally, we have audited our program policies and practices and will do so regularly to find and weed out potential barriers that might impact students of color in particularly.
2. We are working to enhance our curriculum and supervision to better address the above areas of growth identified in the data. In particular, we continue to work to identify the most current issues facing school counselors and provide teaching on evidence-based best practices to address these issues.

3. Other Future Changes

The other most significant change is that we will be updated our overall curriculum to move to a 60 credit degree requirement. The current requirement is 52 credits. In making this change, we are actively working on identifying new course content based on the data that will better enhance our preparation of school counseling students. Content we are looking at better incorporating include:

-   Trauma informed best practices
-   Increasing the infusion of social justice efforts across the curriculum
-   Increasing information on addictions
-   Incorporating play therapy training
-   Incorporating more on diagnosis and mental health disorders
-   Others: we welcome ideas one content we could add to best prepare school counselors

Overall, we believe the school counseling program at SCSU, based on our evaluations, continues to provide excellent training and preparation for future school counselors. We also recognize areas in need of improvement and are committed to this work. Thank you for taking time to read this report and if you have any feedback that you believe will help our efforts, please email Dr. Bill Lepkowski, Program Director, at wjlepkowski@stcloudstate.edu