Mission Statement

- To create a supportive and collaborative learning environment for students from diverse backgrounds and cultures to acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills essential in the practice of counseling.
- To help students become exemplary in applying essential counseling knowledge and skills in a variety of settings with individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- To promote, model, and develop our students to become leaders and advocates for ethical practice of counseling.
LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT CHAIR

To Faculty Members and Administrators,

This Program Specialization Assessment report represents a comprehensive effort to evaluate our Clinical Mental Health Counseling specialization within our Counseling Program at the University of San Diego. We are grateful to SOLES’s Director of Assessment, Dr. Karen Lee, for greatly advancing our efforts in program assessment. She and her Graduate Assistant, Annie Ngo, have been instrumental in assisting our faculty with articulating a Program Evaluation plan, collecting and analyzing valid and reliable data, and reporting on the data. Our faculty and staff recognize the need to use these findings for ongoing program improvement (as exemplified in the Appendix of this report (Table A1).

This assessment report includes data derived from multiple sources including admissions data on applicants and enrolled students, student course evaluation feedback, student exit and alumni surveys, supervisor evaluation feedback on individual student practicum performance, and site-based feedback on general program performance (e.g., communication and program strengths and weaknesses). I want to thank all the individuals who have submitted data, including core and adjunct faculty, alums, current students, and community site-based practicum supervisors.

We look forward to refining our program assessment methods and reporting in coming years based on feedback from all stakeholders. I welcome such feedback as we continue to improve our programs in our Department of School, Family & Mental Health Professions.

Sincerely,

Ann Garland, Ph.D.
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School of Leadership and Education Sciences: Counseling Program

The curriculum of the University of San Diego (USD)-Counseling Program encompasses the Eight CACREP Core Curricular Areas, the Six CACREP Specialization Domains for Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC), the Eight CACREP Specialization Domains for School Counseling, and the Nine USD-Counseling Program Objectives:

CACREP Core Curricular Areas
1. Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice
2. Social and Cultural Diversity
3. Human Growth and Development
4. Career Development
5. Helping Relationships (in a multicultural society)
6. Group Work (theoretical and experiential)
7. Assessment (approaches to assessment and evaluation)
8. Research and Program Evaluation (research methods, statistical analysis, & program evaluation)

CACREP CMHC Domains
1. Foundations
2. Counseling, Prevention, and Intervention
3. Diversity and Advocacy
4. Assessment
5. Research and Evaluation
6a. Diagnosis

CACREP School Counseling Domains
1. Foundations
2. Counseling, Prevention, and Intervention
3. Diversity and Advocacy
4. Assessment
5. Research and Evaluation
6b. Academic Development
7. Collaboration and Consultation
8. Leadership

USD-Counseling Program Objectives
1) Counseling graduates will develop strong professional identities as counselors.
2) Counseling graduates will establish helping relationships with diverse clients.
3) Counseling graduates will use research in the field and employ evidence-based practices in counseling interventions, assessments, and program evaluations.
4) Counseling graduates will use theories and models to guide their professional practice.
5) Counseling graduates will abide by relevant ethics, laws and standards of professional practice.
6) Counseling graduates will use leadership principles in their professional practice.
7) Counseling graduates will advocate for clients and for their profession.
8) Counseling graduates will incorporate the use of technology into their practice.
9) Counseling graduates will experience and understand counseling practices worldwide.
### USD Clinical Mental Health Counseling Required Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*COUN 502</td>
<td>Professional Orientation and Law and Ethics in Counseling (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>*COUN 505</td>
<td>Human Development (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*COUN 508</td>
<td>Research Methods in Counseling (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>*COUN 510</td>
<td>Career Development Across the Lifespan (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>*COUN 515</td>
<td>Multicultural Counseling (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>*COUN 520</td>
<td>Counseling Psychology: Theory and Practice (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>*COUN 526</td>
<td>Group Counseling (3)</td>
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<td>*COUN 530</td>
<td>Assessment Techniques in Counseling (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>*COUN 540</td>
<td>Clinical Interviewing (3)</td>
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### II. Clinical Mental Health Specialization Courses (24 units)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*COUN 541</td>
<td>Advanced Counseling: Diagnosis and Treatment (3)</td>
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<td>COUN 542</td>
<td>Addictions Counseling (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>COUN 544</td>
<td>Introduction to Family Counseling (3)</td>
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<td>*COUN 547</td>
<td>Risk Assessment and Trauma Intervention in CMHC (3)</td>
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<td>COUN 549</td>
<td>Psychopharmacology (3)</td>
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<td>COUN 550</td>
<td>Advanced Human Sexuality Counseling (3)</td>
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<td>*COUN 555</td>
<td>Evidence Based Theories and Techniques in Counseling (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>COUN 562</td>
<td>Evidence Based Practices with Underserved Populations: Positive Psychology</td>
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### III. Practicum Courses (9 Units)

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<th>Course Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>COUN 587P</td>
<td>Clinical Mental Health Practicum I (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>COUN 597P</td>
<td>Clinical Mental Health Practicum II (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUN 598P</td>
<td>Clinical Mental Health Practicum III (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Courses required to enroll in Practicum I
Counseling Program Student Learning Outcomes
Include Alignment with CACREP Core Standards,
CACREP CMHC Domains, and USD Counseling Objectives

**Student Learning Outcome 1:** Counseling Candidates will demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and level of professional identity as a counselor; as they pertain to professional history and philosophy, roles and responsibilities, advocacy and interagency collaboration, standards and credentials, certification and licensure, ethical and legal standards, and professional membership and service.

CACREP CORE 1: Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice
CACREP DOMAIN 1: Foundations
USD Counseling Program Objectives(s): 1 and 5

**Courses:** COUN 502/507, Practicums

**Student Learning Outcome 2:** Counseling Candidates will integrate knowledge pertaining to research, theories, and practice strategies to advocate for and serve socially and culturally diverse clients in a multicultural society.

CACREP CORE 2: Social and Cultural Diversity
CACREP DOMAIN 3: Diversity and Advocacy
USD Counseling Program Objectives(s): 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9

**Courses:** COUN 515, 550, 562, Practicums

**Student Learning Outcome 3:** Counseling candidates will utilize theories, models, research evidence, and practice strategies related to human growth and development; including the social, cultural, and societal influences on the life stages.

CACREP CORE 3: Human Growth and Development
USD Counseling Program Objectives(s): 4

**Courses:** COUN 505, Practicums
**Student Learning Outcome 4:** Counseling Candidates will utilize theories, models, research evidence, and practice strategies relating to career development at all stages of the lifespan.

**CACREP CORE 4:** *Career Development*
**USD Counseling Program Objective(s):** 4

**Courses:** COUN 510, Practicums

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**Student Learning Outcome 5:** Counseling Candidates will utilize theories, models, research evidence, and practice strategies to build helping relationships with diverse clients.

**CACREP CORE 5:** *Helping Relationships*
**USD Counseling Program Objective(s):** 2 and 4

**Courses:** COUN 520, 540/564, 555, Practicums

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**Student Learning Outcome 6:** Counseling Candidates will integrate knowledge about group dynamics, group development and process theories, group leadership styles, and group counseling methods as they ethically and professionally practice group leadership skills.

**CACREP CORE 6:** *Group Work*
**USD Counseling Program Objective(s):** 6

**Courses:** COUN 526, Practicums

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**Student Learning Outcome 7:** Counseling Candidates will incorporate ethical guidelines of the profession and research evidence when selecting, administering, and interpreting developmentally and culturally appropriate assessments for their socially and culturally diverse clients.

**CACREP CORE 7:** *Assessment*
**CACREP DOMAIN 4:** *Assessment*
**USD Counseling Program Objective(s):** 3, 5, 8

**Courses:** COUN 530, 549, Practicums
**Student Learning Outcome 8:** Counseling Candidates will evaluate and incorporate ethically and culturally relevant research findings when selecting strategies for interventions, treatments, and program evaluations.

**CACREP CORE 8:** Research and Program Evaluation  
**CACREP DOMAIN 5:** Research and Evaluation  
**USD Counseling Program Objective(s):** 3, 5, 8

**Courses:** COUN 508/509, Practicums

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**Student Learning Outcome 9:** Counseling Candidates will apply effective principles and practices for diagnosis, treatment, referral, and prevention when initiating, maintaining, and terminating counseling services for socially and culturally diverse clients.

**CACREP DOMAIN 2:** Counseling, Prevention, and Intervention  
**CACREP DOMAIN 6a:** Diagnosis  
**USD Counseling Program Objective(s):** 2, 3, 5, 7, 8

**Courses:** COUN 537, 541, 542, 544, 547, Practicums
Evaluation Components of the CMHC Specialization

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) specialization within the Department of School, Family & Mental Health Professions in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) at the University of San Diego (USD) engages in continuous systematic program evaluation by gathering data relating to the program’s mission, objectives, and student learning outcomes. Collectively these data are used to inform curricular and program planning. Figure 1 contains the various components used by Clinical Mental Health Counseling to evaluate its specialization and Figure 2 shows the forums for discussing program evaluation data.

Figure 1. Program Evaluation Components of Clinical Mental Health Counseling

- I. Review of Characteristics of Program Applicants
- II. Faculty Review of Program and Curricular Offerings using data from A. Course Evaluations and B. Exit Surveys
- III. Clinical Skills Evaluation using Practicum Evaluations
- IV. Formal Studies of Site Supervisors using the Site Supervisor Survey
- V. Formal Studies of Program Graduate Employers using the Employer Survey
- VI. Formal Follow-up of Program Graduates using the SOLES Alumni Survey
- VII. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes as described in the Comprehensive Program Assessment Plan
Figure 2. Forums for Discussing Counseling Program-CMHC Specialization Evaluation Data
Overview of Counseling Application Process

The Counseling Program at the University of San Diego has a rigorous application process. The grade point average, as shown in the undergraduate transcript of the applicant must be at least a 3.0. Applicants are required to submit a written personal statement identifying their goals, academic history, work experiences, and any other information that is relevant in supporting their quest for a counseling profession. Applicants are also required to submit three letters of recommendation that can be academic or professionally related. The recommendations must address the applicant’s academic and professional abilities, skills, and experiences, as well as include a rating and final recommendation of the applicant. Faculty review applications using the CMHC application evaluation form. Applicants who pass the round of review are invited to an interview where the CMHC group interview questions are asked of all applicants. Applicants not available to come to campus for an interview are interviewed via SKYPE. Based on the ratings from the application and interview, applicants are either admitted, denied, or placed on a waiting list. The Clinical Mental Health Counseling specialization aims for an entering cohort of 25 students, but accepts about twice that to achieve the cohort goal.

Diversity of Cohorts

The University of San Diego’s Clinical Mental Health Counseling specialization seeks to have a diverse cohort of students comprised of both male and female students and representing diversity in culture and race/ethnicity. Data on diversity of the incoming class inform outreach, recruitment, and admissions processes each year (See Figures 3 and 4). In addition, data on reasons for declining admission (collected by our Admissions Office from students who are admitted but decline our offer) inform recruitment efforts for the following year. For example, this year we made concerted efforts to reduce time between application and decision in response to feedback. We had an early admission deadline of January 8, 2014 and processed those applications, including interviews by March 7, 2014. The regular application deadline was February 21, 2014 with interviews taking place on April 4, 2014. Our goal is to maintain our high quality of applicants, as shown by the grade point averages reported in Figure 5.
Figure 3. Fall 2013 CMHC Applicant Data - Ethnicity/Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Phase</th>
<th>Applied</th>
<th>Admitted Overall</th>
<th>Matriculated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minority/International</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-minority/unknown</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data provided by the USD SOLES Office of Admissions and Outreach
Clinical Mental Health Counseling Evaluation Report - Spring 2014

Figure 4. Fall 2013 CMHC Applicant Data - Gender

Data provided by the USD SOLES Office of Admissions and Outreach

Figure 5. Fall 2013 CMHC Applicant Data - Grade Point Average

Data provided by the USD SOLES Office of Admissions and Outreach
II – A. Student Evaluation of Curricular Experiences from Course Evaluations

Course Evaluation Overview

Faculty in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences at USD are scholars committed to academic excellence and continuous improvement as they provide a variety of learning opportunities for students. Students are encouraged to provide valuable feedback to faculty and administrators regarding their educational experiences each semester. The “Course Evaluation” is one way for students to provide such feedback.

All course evaluations are anonymous and students access them through their USD MySanDiego portal. There were 150 students enrolled in non-practicum courses in the spring 2013 semester and 138 students completed course evaluations, yielding a 92% response rate.

Data collected through these evaluations are utilized to improve and enhance SOLES programs. There are four major areas for students to rate their educational experience at USD-SOLES: overall satisfaction, teaching of course material, instructor relationship with students, and course requirements and student evaluation. Students are also given an opportunity to answer open ended questions relating to their educational experience. The following report is specific to data collected from CMHC student responses to the four major areas.

Summary of Student Mean Ratings

A seven point Likert scale is used where: 7 = Strongly Agree, 6 = Agree, 5 = Slightly Agree, 4 = Neutral, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. The goal is to have mean ratings in the six to seven range. Student mean ratings for the four major areas all met this goal: 6.3 for the overall student satisfaction, 6.2 for teaching of course materials, 6.5 for instructor relationship with students, and 6.2 for the course requirements/student evaluation. These data show students highly rate their educational experiences at USD-SOLES, with the greatest strength being the faculty relationship with the student. This construct was measured with survey items such as: instructor’s investment in student learning, instructor’s respect of student, instructor’s responsiveness to student needs, and instructor availability outside of class.
Exit Survey Overview

The School of Leadership and Education Sciences - Office of Assessment administers the Exit Survey to graduating students at the University of San Diego annually. The Exit Survey affords students the opportunity to reflect on their program experiences and to provide valuable feedback utilized for program review. This report is specific to the results for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling specialization for the years 2011, 2012, and 2013. General survey items address students’ satisfaction with courses, faculty, advisors, intellectual climate, support services, and communication. CMHC graduating students are also provided with program and specialization specific survey items relating to counseling coursework and practicum experiences.

Rating Scale

Three different five-point rating scales were used in this survey. The goal is to have response ratings in the four to five range for each item, (e.g., depending on specific question, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree; or 4 = Fairly Well and 5 = Extremely Well; or 4 = Satisfied and 5 = Extremely Satisfied).

Response Rate

The response rates of USD-CMHC graduating students responding to the Exit Survey for the last three years were: six of the twelve of USD-CMHC graduating students responded to the Exit Survey in 2011, eight of the sixteen graduating students responded in 2012, and five of the eleven students responded in 2013; yielding response rates of 50%, 50%, and 45% respectively.

Factors Most Important to Overall Satisfaction with the Counseling Program-CMHC Specialization

When CMHC graduating students were asked which factors were most important in their overall satisfaction with the Counseling Program-CMHC specialization, they cited faculty, advisors, classmates, coursework, practicum experiences, and study abroad opportunities as contributing to their overall satisfaction.
Student Suggestions for Improving the Counseling Program-CMHC Specialization

When CMHC graduating students were asked for suggestions for improving the Counseling Program-CMHC specialization, they listed: communication by staff, administration and faculty; class availability; practicum site options; and consistency in program requirements.

Additional Feedback

When graduating students were asked for additional feedback, respondents offered comments regarding the length of the program, conflicting information, more practicum and internship sites, and faculty with more clinical experience.

Conclusion

Several key findings were extracted from the 2011, 2012, and 2013 Exit Survey for Clinical Mental Health Counseling students. Sixty-two of the sixty-nine survey items had mean ratings in the desired four to five range in 2013, indicating high levels of student satisfaction with faculty, advisors, the intellectual climate, university support services, course content, and practicum experiences. Areas in need of attention are: faculty-student communication, prompt feedback by faculty, and program level communication/support.
Overview of Practicum Evaluations

Clinical Mental Health Counseling students at USD receive supervised clinical experience through CMHC practicum placements and courses. Practicum supervisors complete an assessment of CMHC practicum students regarding their counseling skills and discuss the assessment results with the students. The assessment tool is designed to assess and track CMHC practicum students’ growth in skills as suggested by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Each skill or behavior is rated on a 5-point scale, with a desired rating of Effective (4) or Highly Effective (5) to indicate demonstrated competency equal to that of an independently functioning professional clinical mental health counselor. The practicum assessment form contains 50 items which address the eight core curricular areas of CACREP: 1) professional orientation and ethical practice, 2) social and cultural diversity, 3) human growth and development, 4) career development, 5) helping relationships, 6) group work, 7) assessment, and 8) research and program evaluation.

Evaluation Cohorts

Because the practicum evaluation form is designed to assess and track CMHC practicum students’ growth in skills as suggested by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, this report presents aggregate data from fall 2012 practicum II students (8), alongside aggregate data from spring 2013 practicum III students (9).

Clinical Competence Skills

Measures of the clinical competence skills are divided into four areas: attending and relationship building (9 items), clinical assessment and diagnosis (13 items), prevention and intervention (11 items), and professional skills and behavior (17 items). The mean ratings for 49 of the 50 measures of clinical competence skills for spring 2013 CMHC Practicum III students were higher than the mean ratings for fall 2012 CMHC Practicum II students, showing a learning progression of clinical competence skills in the practicum courses. It should also be noted that the Spring 2013 Practicum III mean ratings were all within the desired four to five range, indicating demonstrated competency equal to that of independently functioning professional clinical mental health counselors.
Onsite Supervisor Comments

Onsite supervisors were asked to provide comments about practicum students’ strengths, opportunities for growth, and goals. Some of the strengths identified by onsite supervisors were CMHC Practicum students’ abilities to demonstrate: learned knowledge, documentation skills, various intervention strategies, appropriate levels of advocacy, compassion, self-awareness, sensitivity to ethical and legal issues, a professional demeanor, appropriate clinical language usage, warmth, and support. Some of the opportunities for growth identified by onsite supervisors were for CMHC Practicum students to work on: greater sense of self-confidence, differential diagnosis, workload management, self-care, and self-reflection. Some of the goals suggested by onsite supervisors were for practicum students to continue to: increase self-trust, develop counseling skills and treatment planning, improve case note skills, and seek out varied clinical experiences and clients.

Practicum Evaluation Conclusion

Clinical Mental Health Counseling students are benefiting from the practicum experiences at USD. As students progress from their second practicum experience to their third practicum experience, they are becoming well prepared to practice as professional clinical mental health counselors.
IV. Site Supervisor Survey Results

Overview

During the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Practicum/Community Partner Meeting held on February 13, 2014 at USD, the office of assessment elicited community partner input and feedback regarding major aspects of the USD-CMHC specialization by having community partners complete an electronic program evaluation in one of the USD-SOLES computer labs. The program evaluation contained questions about aspects of the Counseling Program-CMHC Specialization, program areas of strength and areas in need of strengthening, counselor preparedness and employability, and communication between program representatives and community partners. The community partner representatives (n=18) were comprised of practicum site supervisors (n=11) and employers (n=7).

Counselor Preparedness

When asked to compare how well USD-SOLES prepares students for counseling practice in comparison to other institutions, 82% (9 out of 11) of site supervisors answered as prepared or more prepared than other counseling graduate programs.

Counseling Program-CMHC Specialization Attraction

When asked what aspects of the USD-SOLES Counseling Program-Clinical Mental Health Counseling Specialization attracted your organization to offer a practicum experience to USD-CMHC students, respondents cited the university’s wonderful reputation for being a high quality educational institution, positive experiences in the past with other organizations, administrators genuinely interested in student development, excellent communication with administrators, administrators open to feedback, and positive experience with one student from the first cohort.

Communication Levels between Community Partners and Program Representatives

Site supervisors were asked to rate how well aspects of the USD Counseling Program-CMHC Specialization have been communicated to them on 5 items using a four-point Likert scale where four was Very Well, three was Adequately, two was Minimally, and one was Not At All. Combining responses, 90% (9 out of 10) of site supervisors rated the level of program communication as Very Well or Adequately regarding the role of the USD-SOLES CMHC Director of Field Experiences; similarly, 90% (9 out of 10) regarding logistical information relating to practicum experiences, 80% (8 out of
10) regarding requirements and responsibilities for clinical supervisors at practicum sites, 70% (7 out 10) regarding requirements and responsibilities of USD-SOLES CMHC students at practicum sites, and 70% (7 out 10) regarding roles for USD-SOLES CMHC Faculty regarding practicum supervision.

Overall 80% (8 out of 10) of site supervisors reported being Very Satisfied or Satisfied with the level of communication by USD-Counseling Program representatives on practicum opportunities and requirements.

**Major Strengths of the Counseling Program-CMHC Specialization**

Comments by site supervisors regarding the major strengths of the program and specialization included: overall quality of students (professional, motivated, energetic, quick learners), great preparation in theory and evidence based practice, students’ willingness to take on challenges, non-defensive and open to supervision, students’ awareness of self-care, and diverse curriculum that stresses cultural competence and ethical obligations.

**Counseling Program-CMHC Specialization Elements in Need of Strengthening**

Comments by site supervisors regarding elements of the program and specialization that should be strengthened included: facilitating counseling groups, conducting the initial clinical interview, greater hours available for practicum over the full academic year, completion of basic coursework before practicum, basic assessments, screening prior to practicum, offering classes later in the evening for more availability to complete practicum during the day, stronger emphasis on cultural competency, pre-practicum skills (rapport building, trust, ability to engage clients), more experiential learning and practice, explaining to students that the initial clinical hours are slower due to need for training, assisting students on how to work with core issues, and how to incorporate different mediums of treatment.

**Consideration for Employment**

When asked how likely are you (or someone in your organization) to hire a USD-CMHC alumni in the future when a position opens, 90% (9 out of 10) of site supervisors surveyed responded Very Likely or Likely.
Overview

During the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Practicum/Community Partner Meeting held on February 13, 2014 at the University of San Diego, the office of assessment elicited community partner input and feedback regarding major aspects of the USD-CMHC specialization by having community partners complete an electronic program evaluation in one of USD-SOLES computer labs. The program evaluation contained questions about aspects of the Counseling Program-CMHC Specialization regarding counselor preparedness, as well as future employment opportunities. The community partner representatives (n=18) were comprised of site supervisors (n=11) and employers (n=7). This report summarizes the responses of the employers.

Counselor Preparedness

Employers were asked to rate how well the USD Counseling Program-CMHC Specialization prepared students on 8 items using a four-point Likert scale where four was Well Prepared, three was Adequately Prepared, two was Minimally Prepared, and one was Not Prepared. Combining responses, 100% (7 out of 7) of employers rated the program in preparing counseling students to work effectively as collaborative team members as well prepared or adequately prepared; similarly, 100% (7 out of 7) for demonstrating ethical practice, 86% (6 out of 7) for expressing knowledge of a full range of intervention strategies for various clients, 71% (5 out of 7) for completing case documentation and other administrative requirements in a timely and accurate manner, 71% (5 out of 7) for evaluating practice, 57% (4 out of 7) for working effectively with clients and staff from diverse backgrounds, 29% (2 out of 7) for conducting assessments, and 17% (1 out of 6) for linking clients to community resources. When asked to compare how well USD-SOLES prepares students for counseling practice in comparison to other institutions, 67% (4 out of 6) of employers answered as prepared as or more prepared than other counseling graduate programs.

Consideration for Future Employment

When asked how likely are you (or someone in your organization) to hire a USD-CMHC alumni in the future when a position opens, 100% (7 out of 7) of employers surveyed responded Very Likely or Likely.
VI. Alumni Survey Results

Response Rate

During the 2012-2013 academic year, the assessment office within the School of Leadership and Education Sciences at the University of San Diego administered an alumni survey. This report contains results specific to graduates of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling specialization within the Counseling Program and serves as a formal follow-up of CMHC graduates, by capturing their perceptions and evaluations of major aspects of the CMHC specialization. Forty-four graduates were sent email invitations to complete the online survey and nineteen of them responded, yielding a 43% response rate.

Employment

When graduates were asked: which of the following statements describes your work experiences following completion of your program and specialization, 74% of them indicated they were hired in a new position at a new organization, experienced a promotion, and/or received a pay increase. Of the respondents who indicated they were hired in a new position at a new organization, 30% had learned about their job from an alumnus or someone affiliated with the USD-CMHC specialization. Graduates reported working at a variety of centers, facilities, universities, and research organizations, some of which serve as USD-CMHC practicum sites. Eighty-seven percent of the employed graduates were employed within their field of study as: psychosocial rehabilitation specialists, therapists, program coordinators, mental health therapists, counselors, intake specialists, and treatment coordinators. Seventy-three percent of survey respondents reported that their organization had hired other USD-CMHC students or graduates.

Application of Knowledge and Skills

When graduates were asked about the frequency of applying their USD-CMHC acquired knowledge and skills to their professional work, 95% of them indicated daily or weekly usage. Graduates were asked to indicate how well prepared they were in ten areas relating to the CMHC profession. These items ranged from knowledge of intervention strategies for various clients to applying effective strategies to promote client understanding of and access to a variety of community resources. Using a four-point scale, where Well Prepared was a four and Adequately Prepared was a three, the mean ratings by graduates for all ten areas were in the desired three to four range. In a
related question, graduates were asked to indicate their overall level of satisfaction with the knowledge and abilities they gained in the USD Counseling Program-CMHC Specialization; the mean rating was 8.4 using a 10-point scale, where very satisfied was a ten and very dissatisfied was a zero. These data are supported by graduates’ responses to: what ways did your program of study enhance your effectiveness in your workplace.

**Program Satisfaction**

When graduates were asked to describe the quality of faculty advising and mentoring they received while in the USD Counseling Program-CMHC Specialization, respondents cited positive experiences with faculty in terms of connections to the community, availability, guidance, and support. These comments were echoed in graduates’ responses to: if you had to identify just one course and/or experience in the program that benefited you the most, which one would that be and why. Respondents cited faculty, diagnosis and theory courses, practicum/internship experiences, and the multicultural-internationalization experiences as benefitting them the most. Graduates were also asked to offer suggestions for program improvement and they suggested more internship options, increased job placement assistance, and increased engagement with community resources and agencies.

**Conclusion**

Several key findings were extracted from the 2012-2013 Alumni Survey for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling specialization within the Counseling Program at the University of San Diego - School of Leadership and Education Sciences (see Figure 3). Graduates experienced an increase in employment level and salary, found employment in their field of study, and were able to apply their USD - CMHC acquired knowledge and skills to their professional work. Graduates benefited from various aspects of the program, such as qualified professors and mentors, meaningful coursework, valuable multicultural/internationalization experiences, and high quality practicum/internship experiences. Eighty-nine percent of graduates who responded to the alumni survey said they would recommend the University of San Diego to other people interested in graduate education, indicating high levels of satisfaction with the program. Overall, alumni deemed the Clinical Mental Health Counseling specialization within the Counseling Program at USD-SOLES to be highly effective in preparing them with the knowledge and skills needed to be professional clinical mental health counselors.
Figure 3. Summary of Survey Results for Clinical Mental Health Counseling Graduates and Alumni.
During the Spring 2014 semester, the Director of Assessment held various meetings with Counseling Program faculty, both adjunct and core professors, to develop the Counseling Program Assessment Plan which contains student learning outcomes, assessment methods, and benchmarks aligned with CACREP Core Standards and Domains. The individual meetings with faculty were to ensure alignment of identified CACREP standards to capstone assignments in each course, as well as to collect student learning outcomes data. Counseling candidates were assessed on ten learning outcomes, using multiple assessment measures (e.g. case studies, exams, projects, papers, presentations, and surveys). Data from employers, alumni, practicum supervisors, and faculty reveal Counseling candidates are demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and behaviors equal to that of an effectively functioning clinical mental health counselor. A full report of assessment findings can be found on the SOLES Assessment website.
### Appendix - Use of Findings to Inform Program Modifications

#### Table A1. Evidence of Use of Findings to Inform Program Modifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Evaluation Component</th>
<th>Forum for Collecting or Reviewing Data</th>
<th>Summary of Findings (with date)</th>
<th>Proposed Actions</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review of Program Applicants using applicant's goal statement, academic and work experiences, professional recommendations, CMHC application evaluation form, and interviews.</td>
<td>Admissions' Program Meetings</td>
<td>Data on reasons for declining admission (collected by our Admissions Office from students who are admitted but declined our offer) informed recruitment efforts for this year. Time between application acceptance and final decision about applicants were cited as taking too long. (Spring 2013)</td>
<td>For the Spring 2014 application process, the department needs to review applications using a timelier timeline so as not to lose the interests of qualified candidates.</td>
<td>This year (Spring 2014) we made a concerted effort to reduce time between application and decision in response to feedback. We will know by Fall 2014 if the changes we made were effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Skills Evaluation using practicum evaluations</td>
<td>Monthly departmental or bi-weekly program meetings, as well the annual department retreat and annual review of students</td>
<td>Based on feedback from practicum site supervisors and students (e.g., exit survey and practicum evaluations), we changed the structure of the practicum I, II, III series this year. Students and site supervisors reported that the previous structure, which required a very limited Practicum I experience in the first year, did not provide an optimal learning opportunity because students were not allowed to engage in counseling practice. It was not optimal for sites to have practicum students committed to the site for the brief 100-</td>
<td>For the Fall 2013 semester, the new model moves the full-year practicum experience to the final year of the program, when students have finished all of their core courses and several specialty courses. They have the opportunity to engage in practice at a deeper level and the professional development opportunities are much richer when placed in a site for a longer duration of time.</td>
<td>At the end of the Spring 2014 semester, the office of assessment will present the department with a practicum evaluation report showing the progress of practicum III students from their practicum II levels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
hour experience. In addition, the sites did not like the limited time commitment, or the placement of students near the start of their graduate training when they had received minimal training.

Table A1. Evidence of Use of Findings to Inform Program Modifications (continued)

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<td>Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes as described in the Comprehensive Program Assessment Plan</td>
<td>Meetings with SOLES Assessment Office Representative</td>
<td>The Director of Assessment met with Counseling Program Faculty during the March 2014 monthly meeting and then met with fulltime and adjunct faculty individually to discuss the program assessment plan, collect data, and revise syllabi to align with CACREP standards.</td>
<td>To ensure the assessment of student learning to become an integral part of departmental activities, faculty have agreed to include assessment as an agenda item for all future meetings (from Spring 2014).</td>
<td>For the remainder of the Spring 2014 semester, a representative from the assessment office will continue to meet with Counseling faculty to gather and compile student learning outcomes data, which will then be analyzed and discussed by faculty at the departmental retreat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Faculty Review of Program and Curricular Offerings using data from Course Evaluations and Exit Surveys | Monthly departmental or program meetings, Annual Faculty Review Meetings, Meetings with Adjunct Faculty, as well the annual department retreat | Course evaluation data inform hiring of adjuncts every year and core faculty merit pay decisions. One adjunct faculty member was not asked to return based on the course evaluations over several semesters. Each faculty member uses Exit survey data and their course evaluation feedback to refine teaching methods, content, and resources (text, web-based info, etc.). | Example 1: Adjunct Professor [x] was not asked to return for future teaching assignments due to student comments and ratings in the course evaluation (Fall 2013 semester). Example 2: Prof. Shuttleworth eliminated the text book by Egan for her COUN 540 course based on student comments in the course evaluations and core faculty feedback. This change is reflected in the difference between her Fall 2012 syllabus and her Fall 2014 syllabus to be used for the next course offering. | Example 2: Prof. Shuttleworth eliminated the text book by Egan for her COUN 540 course based on student comments in the course evaluations and core faculty feedback. This change is reflected in the difference between her Fall 2012 syllabus and her Fall 2014 syllabus to be used for the next course offering. |
Faculty did not find the material helpful in comparison to the other two textbooks used.

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<tr>
<td>Formal Studies of Site Supervisors using the Site Supervisor Survey</td>
<td>Communications between Director of Field Services and Site Supervisors, Communications between Program Director and Site Supervisors, Community Partner Annual Meeting, Meetings with SOLES Assessment Office Representative</td>
<td>In previous years the Director of Field Services communicated with Site Supervisors via phone or email to gather feedback about the program. The Program Director would also visit the sites to gather verbal feedback from Site Supervisors about the program. Site Supervisors were concerned about the practicum readiness level of students because the Practicum I course was offered very early in the program. The first systemic Site Supervisor Survey was administered</td>
<td>Feedback received from Site Supervisors about the practicum sequence have been acted upon by the department, the practicum sequence was moved to the end of the program to allow students to practice the counseling profession after learning the necessary knowledge and skills. The more recent feedback received from Site Supervisors is progressing through the practicum sequence after completing their core course. Data regarding student progress is captured in the practicum evaluations and will be analyzed at the end of the Spring 2014 semester. Recent feedback from Site Supervisors will be discussed during the faculty meeting.</td>
<td>Students are progressing through the practicum sequence after completing their core course. Data regarding student progress is captured in the practicum evaluations and will be analyzed at the end of the Spring 2014 semester. Recent feedback from Site Supervisors will be discussed during the faculty meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in February (2014). The findings have been shared with the chair and program director. The findings will be discussed with program faculty during the upcoming faculty retreat (summer 2014).

Supervisors via the Site Supervisor Survey will be discussed during the faculty retreat (summer 2014).

Table A1. *Evidence of Use of Findings to Inform Program Modifications*  (continued)

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| Monthly departmental or program meetings, as well the annual department retreat, Meetings with SOLES Assessment Office Representative | Findings from the 2012-2013 Alumni Survey for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling specialization within the Counseling program at the University of San Diego - School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) were very positive. Graduates experienced an increase in employment level and salary, found employment in their field of study, and were able to apply their USD - CMHC acquired knowledge and skills to their professional work. Graduates benefited from various aspects of the program, such as qualified professors and mentors, meaningful coursework, valuable multicultural/internationalization experiences, and high quality practicum/internship experiences. Eighty-nine percent of graduates who responded to the alumni survey said they would recommend the University of San Diego to other people interested in graduate education, indicating high levels of satisfaction with the program. Overall, alumni deemed the Counseling Program-Clinical Mental Health Counseling specialization at USD-SOLES to be highly effective in preparing them with the knowledge and skills needed to be professional clinical mental health counselors. The 2013-2014 Alumni Survey Report is due to come out in April of 2014. The department will review the findings once it is received from the Assessment Office. | Review the 2013-2014 Alumni Survey Report once it is received from the Assessment Office. | Awaiting the Alumni Survey Report for 2013-2014. |

Table A1. Evidence of Use of Findings to Inform Program Modifications (continued)
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Studies of Program Graduate Employers using the Employer Survey</td>
<td>Community Partner Annual Meeting, Monthly departmental or program meetings, as well the annual department retreat,</td>
<td>Because many of the CMHC Practicum Site Partners employ USD alumni, we administered an Employer Survey to them while they were in attendance at our USD-CMHC Practicum Fair (February 2014). The Office of Assessment shared the results with the department chair and program director. The survey results will be discussed with program faculty during the upcoming faculty retreat (summer 2014). An electronic Employer Survey was sent out via email in April 2014 to capture feedback from additional Employers. Data will be shared with the department once it has been compiled by the assessment office.</td>
<td>Employer Survey data will be reviewed and discussed during the departmental retreat (summer 2014).</td>
<td>Awaiting complete Employer Survey Report to discuss during departmental retreat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>